ETERNITY DISRUPTED AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING: NEGATION OF *IMAGO DEI* AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN WESTERN CULTURE: A CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

It is contended that the *raison d'être* for the turmoil in contemporary Western society, appertaining to certain existential controversies, are the secular humanist ideologies advocated by zealots of Marxist derived dualistic Critical Theory, as expressed through Critical Race and Critical Gender Theories. The articulation of these theories is forced through the guise of an abstruse social justice proposal, connected to Identity politics, and the search for meaning arising from the postlapsarianism that transpired in the primeval Garden of Eden. Conflict is taking place in a context of social confusion and moral anarchism reflecting a 'battle of ideas', a *Kulturkampf* of relativist ideologies against established Judeo-Christian orthodoxy in an attempt to force a reformulation of the core values, tenets, *mores,* and ethics sustaining extant Western civilization. Society is thus faced with a *Zeitgeist* of mounting heterodoxy, based on the heretical *eritus sicut Deus* of Genesis 3:5, envisaging destruction of the uniqueness and identity of the pinnacle of the Creator's work, the *sui generis* human beings made in his image. The pivotal Judeo-Christian creeds, particularly the Fatherhood of God concept with the ensuing *Imago Dei* dogma of humankind, are under threat of elimination from pervasive humanism and a spiritual neo-paganism in antithesis of society's religious, cultural, and liberal democratic political foundations. In this manner, the very *Sittlichkeit* of established culture itself is under existential onslaught. The conclusion reveals, through application of Rabbinical Jewish hermeneutical strategies, the primordial origins and enduring reiterations of these heretical ideologies plaguing Western society, the finale of which will only be resolved in the eschaton.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	-	America First Legal
ANSIRH	-	Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health
BBFC	-	British Board of Film Classification
BLM	-	Black Lives Matter
CGT	-	Critical Gender Theory
CRT	-	Critical Race Theory
CSJT	-	Critical Social Justice Theory
CT	-	Critical Theory
ECLA	-	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
EU	-	European Union
JPS Tanakh	-	Jewish Publication Society Tanakh
LXX	-	Septuagint
MTD	-	Moralistic Therapeutic Deism
NAS	-	New American Standard Bible
NIV	-	New International Version Bible
NKJV	-	New King James Version
SBC	-	Southern Baptist Convention
SCOTUS	-	Supreme Court of the United States
UK	-	United Kingdom
US	-	United States
USA	-	United States of America

WSJ - Wall Street Journal

All quoted Biblical scriptures are from the English Standard Version (“ESV”) unless otherwise indicated.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> *"America is in a state of revolution. It's not the kind of revolution with competing armies or a Coup d'état. It's an invisible revolution along the axes of race, gender, and identity that is shaking the foundations of our country."* (C. Rufo, 2022).

The prime assertion in this study is that disorder in Anglo-American society emanates from various antagonistic, existential, secular humanist[1] Identity ideologies. Although these ideologies are vigorously and hegemonically advocated by contemporary radical[2] proponents, their origin can be traced to primordial events in the Garden of Eden.[3]

Identity activists comprise, in the main, a cohort of feminist extremists,[4] supported by a determined abortion lobby, progressive politicians, racial and ethnic militants, LGBTQ+ campaigners, together with motley tribes of socio-anarchists. The agenda of these groups is to execute a cultural colonization of society, in the name of aberrant Identity politics[5] through

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1 'Secular humanism' refers to "a set of beliefs that emphasises the importance of reason and of people rather than religion" (Cambridge, Secular, 2022). Secondly, a less succinct description is that proposed by Professor Paul Kurtz (regarded as the 'Father' of secular humanism), when he states that, "Secular humanism is the point of view that holds it is possible to lead a good life and contribute significantly to human welfare and social justice without belief in a theistic religion" (1983, p. vii). The ongoing question remains, however, as to the verifiable origin of the values, ethics and morals upon which humanists base their grasp of a "good life", "social welfare" and "social justice". Thirdly, a psychological perspective of the term 'secular humanism' is as follows: "a philosophy which espouses reason, ethics, and the search for human fulfillment, and specifically rejects supernatural and religious dogma as a basis of morality and decision-making" (Sam, Secular Humanism, 2013). R. Guénon uses the narrow term "individualism" to describe humanism (Crisis, 1942, p. 80).

2 The term 'radical' is applied herein not in the philosophical sense, as in the 'root' or origin of the matter, but in the contemporary, vernacular, sociological, and political sense implying an extreme position contrary to accepted and traditional norms of the constituent society.

3 Harvard University's Adrian Vermeule perceives that, "All human conflict is ultimately theological" (2019).

4 The ideology of Feminist extremism (radical feminism), can be described as that "predicated on the notion of political correctness: a system of laws and policies that encourage proper expression and behaviour while discouraging improper forms" (McElroy, 2008). The consequence of exhibiting "improper forms", that is, those forms considered alien to the idiosyncratic ideology, values, and praxis of radical feminists, concludes in legal sanctions. The political correctness of radical feminists, as a class, contravenes the "natural rights origins of classical liberal and 19th century American feminism" - anchored in individualist feminism' (McElroy, 2008). This is particularly so through denying inalienable individual rights of freedom of speech and religion by a totalitarian driven class of feminism. Inevitably, societal disruption occurs through this conflict.

5 In 1977, a Statement was released by the radical feminist organization, the Combahee River Collective. The contents reveal that the members, in striving for equality while rebutting 'oppression' due to their race (black), gender (female), and sexual preference (lesbian), conclude that, "This focusing on our own oppression is embodied in the concept of Identity Politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own Identity (Combahee, 1977). The manifesto's use of the term, 'Identity politics', is the first recorded instance of the term in contemporary literature (Izenberg, 2016, p. 144). The mentioned 'radical politics' approach is prescient of a forthcoming strategy vigorously adopted by Identity ideologues,

the guise of an idiosyncratic concept of social justice. The conclusion verifies that these ideologies, inimical to the prevailing Judeo-Christian tenets upon which the present classic liberal democratic [6] political framework of Western culture[7] is founded, emanate from treasonous transactions in the utopian Garden, as recounted in Chapter 3 of the first book of the canon, the *Bereishit*.[8]

The social upheaval, exhibiting an emotivist[9] moral anarchism, amounts to a 'battle of ideas and ideals' comprising an internal clash within extant Western civilisation.[10] The clash indicates a *Kulturkampf* [11] of neo-Gnostic inspired

Ideologies, free of a coherent moral paradigm, confronting entrenched Judeo-Christian credal orthodoxy,[12] with its clear moral and ethical principles, and the "history of facts".[13] Polarization

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particularly the extreme feminist cohort, in their aim for a reformulation of society structured according to their narrow ideologies.

6 Notable intellectual, Yoram Hazony, refers to liberalism as "an Enlightenment political tradition descended from the principal political texts of rationalist political philosophers such as Hobbs, Locke, Spinoza, Rousseau and Kant" and supported by "countess recent works elaborating on these views" (Democracy, 2019).

7 UK Philosopher and historian, Niall Ferguson, clarifies that the term, 'Western civilization', was "always meant to be more elastic, like its close relative, 'Judeo-Christian culture'". The purpose being to "maximize the number of Americans and American allies that could identify themselves with it during the cold war when the terms were most in vogue" (Future, 2021). The close interrelationship between the two terms is somewhat self-explanatory for Judeo-Christian culture gave vent to, and remains the founding underlay of, Western civilization.

8 The Book of Genesis.

9 Moralistic 'emotivism' is a term employed by Alasdair MacIntyre when referring to relativist, subjective, and reductive moral construals devoid of verifiable, objective, origins (1981, Virtue, p. 19).

10 A comprehensive description of the concept of a Civilization has been compiled by Princeton and Harvard University professors Guelzo and Hankins. They state as follows, "A Civilization is a complex system of customs, practices and beliefs that bind a society or a family of societies together over long periods of time". The authors posit with respect to the internal order of Civilizations, "To survive, a Civilization needs systems of internal order usually defined by customs, laws and magistrates. Above all, it needs moral and spiritual resources that generate loyalty to recognized authorities and allow individuals to actualize their full potential as human beings" (2021). This perception of Civilization is adopted here. It is to be noted, at this early stage, that it is precisely the demise of "moral and spiritual sources" through the compromise and negation of cultural Christianity that has resulted in the societal morass, relating to Identity and meaning, that so adversely affects present Anglo-American civilization.

11 *Kulturkampf* – clash of cultures.

12 The term, 'Judeo-Christian orthodoxy', has as a point of reference the fundamental Creeds of the Christian Church, for instance, the Apostles Creed; Nicene Creed; Chalcedonian Creed; the Reformed Articles of Religion of the Church of England of 1571; the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Divines in 1643; the Baptist Faith and Message of 1925 (revised 1963), and similar. These creeds are seen as reflecting the pillars of established, fundamental, traditional, orthodox Protestant dogma.

13 Italian philosopher Augusto Del Noce perceived the crucial interplay between the "history of ideas" and the "history of facts" (2014, p. x), which finds actualization in the current societal maelstrom. Del Noce stressed the importance of the "history of ideas" for apprehending the 20th century as, during that period, "Western culture was profoundly affected by the philosophies of history of the

of society, therefore, stems from a demagogic attempt to politically and, contrary to Constitutional safeguards, legally enforce a reframing of the long-standing, fundamental, values sustaining Western culture[14] into an 'authoritarian-populist',[15] secular, humanist, idea of the 'common good', reflecting partisan and parochial political Identity theories. As a corollary, society is specifically faced with an anomalous *Zeitgeist*[16] of mounting agent-centred moral relativism, through a reductionist humanist heterodoxy, in a receptive matrix of liquid post-modern[17] cynicism envisaging the destruction of the individual uniqueness and self-worth of the pinnacle of the Creator's work, the *sui generis*[18] human beings made in his image (*cf.,* Gen. 1:26-27; 2;7; 2:21-23).

The cultural Christian values,[19] which constitute the core tenets, *mores,* and ethics underpinning Western civilization[20] and which values sustain the conferred *imago Dei*[21] of humankind, are under threat of extinction. The proposed replacement thereof is a form of pervasive non-religious, spiritual, secular ideology, via applied cultural neo-Marxist dialectic materialism,[22] itself initiated upon ancient Hellenist Gnostic, dualistic, construals. The effective

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previous century" in the areas of "Idealism, Marxism and Positivism" (2014, p. x), much of which underly the advent of Identity politics - the latter being a colloquial term for broad-based civil rights.

14 Anglo-American' or, alternatively, 'Western' cultures, refer to the 'North Atlantic' (Taylor, C., 2007, p. 3) group of nations such as the Anglo-spheres of North America, United Kingdom and Ireland; and including West European nations like France, Italy, Spain and Germany and nations in the antipodes, together commonly viewed as comprising the 'Western world'. Oswald Spengler uses the term, "West-European-American" culture (1916, p. 3); Kaufmann refers to "Anglophone" countries (2021); and Roger Scruton, the "Anglosphere" (Future, 2021), but mainly implying English speaking countries. Harvard professor Samuel Huntington uses the term 'free world' or simply 'the West, indicating "the West as a civilization or political entity", the two concepts being inextricably connected (Clash, 1996, p. 55).

15 A phrase coined by Princeton University professor Jan-Werner Müller (Democracy, 2021, p. 6).

16 *Zeitgeist* – the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.

17 Modernity and Postmodernity are both considered as "hostile to Christianity" (Veith, 1994, p. viii), and so give birth to the subsequent post-Christian milieux.

18 *Sui generis* – one of its own kind; unlike any other kind; of its own class.

19 Prof. Weigel posits that Western civilization is founded on a synthesis of "three mutually reinforcing pillars: Jerusalem, Athens and Rome". That is, Judeo-Christian religious precepts, Greek philosophy and rationality, and Roman law (not forgetting the compelling rationality of Roman philosophers Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Musonius Rufus, for example). He elucidates that the "great lessons", derive from the three foundational principles, "interacted over the centuries to produce the civilization of the West", including the best of the various Enlightenments, and the political concept of democracy (Pope, 2022).

20 The interconnected terms, 'cultures' and 'civilizations', are used interchangeably herein and refer to Western societies anchored on Judeo-Christian tenets, and practicing a classic liberal democratic and constitutional republican polity, subject to the Rule of law. Still, cognizance should be taken of Spengler's proposition that although there exists a dichotomy between culture and civilization, the former results in the latter, for "civilization is the inevitable destiny of the culture" (1916, p. 31).

21 *Cf.,* Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7.

22 'Cultural Marxism' refers to "a collection of ideas rather than a collection of people" (Mahlburg, 2020).

outcome is that the very *Sittlichkeit*[23] of modern culture itself, developed over centuries of representative liberal democratic polity,[24] is accordingly subject to lethal onslaught[25] through the internal ideological collision of these competing cultures. Political scientist Glenn Ellmers elaborates that, "the crisis of our country (America) is also the crisis of Western civilization,[26] of civilization itself" (2021, p. xvii). And, although the social disarray initially arose within Anglo-American cultures, the destructive secular humanist ideologies stimulating the contest for identity and meaning have spread to other Judeo-Christian grounded cultures. Examples include various European and Scandinavian nations,[27] the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada - all of which are established participants of the Western tradition - and to some lesser extent, third world countries like Cuba[28] and South Africa.[29] It is axiomatic that what occurs in American society does not remain localised. The world witnessed this so-called 'Butterfly effect' in the financial crash of 2008-2009 which, due to systemic economic globalisation policies in the mode of a pathogen, eventually spread insidiously throughout the world at large,[30] leading to a macro contagion.[31] The heterodoxic ideologies will no doubt also have growing influence in non-Western societies world-wide, as is already clear from the prevalence of abortion and same-sex marriage in several countries of Africa and Asia.

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23 *Sittlichkeit* – ethical life; moral order of society.

24 Legal theorist Robert George deduces that, "Any critic of liberal moral and political thought who aspires to be in the least fair-minded must begin with a forthright acknowledge of the genuine contributions of the liberal tradition to the identification and protection of valuable human liberties" (Moral, 1993, p. vii). The "liberal tradition" referred to is that of a classical liberal democratic polity rooted upon the natural law heritage sustaining Western civilization. See note #14 above.

25 The core principles reinforcing Western civilization face a mortal threat. Firstly, those tenets relating to the dignity, equality, and divine, *sui generis,* origin of all human beings. Secondly, the natural law precept that "truths are built into the world and into us that are accessible through human reason". Thirdly, that the principle of the rule of law is "superior to sheer coercion in ordering society and conducting public affairs" (Weigel, Pope, 2022).

26 The term, "crisis of Western civilization", is described by cultural theorist Eberstadt as a critical shift in the "tectonic plates underlying Western civilization" (Secularism, 2018). He refers to the theological and philosophical foundations buttressing society.

27 Europe, that is, the European Order, was created as such by several nations at the 1814 - 1815 Congress of Vienna where Europe's future was "shaped for much of the 19th century" (Haass, 2017, p. 21ff.). Ensuing revolutions and wars mitigated the cultural Christian tenets upon which the liberal democratic polity of these nations were founded, creating a moral and religion lacuna appropriated in more present times by State driven and populist ideological secularism. It needs to be said that the membership constitution of Europe is rapidly increasing with the addition of further nations to the European Union, such as the Balkans and other former USSR states. Adherence to the principle of democracy is a prime requirement for admission.

28 Kumar, A., Cubans, Sept. 26, 2022.

29 For Instance, the approval of same-sex marriage (Civil Union Act, 2006) and transgender rights (2003).

30 Japan indicated that they will recognise same-sex partnerships (Nakamura, Tokyo, 2022).

31 In remote Australia, the Director of the Institute for Public Affairs warns that "freedom of Speech and the country's cultural institutions are under threat" from Identity ideologies emanating from the U.S. (Durkin, 2021).

The highly divisive Identity[32] hypotheses, involving race, sex and gender (in various articulations), are in their etiological essence a desperate search for meaning. The search evolved from a context where the original dignity, nobility, value, purpose, transcendent identity, and therefore ontological security of persons, was lost through a rejection, in the *axis mundi* of the primeval Garden, of the divine qualities and purpose conferred upon the first humans, Adam and Eve, by their Creator. The predicament of humanity ensuant upon this rejection, followed by their ejection from a paradisical utopia, has been made patent throughout history in multifarious representations. Continuing antinomianism, consequent upon the First Couple's exile, commenced with the sin of their first born, and will indubitably remain unresolved until the events of the coming eschaton unfold in an ultimate restoration of the typological Garden scene.

Concomitant with the postlapsarian redefining of individual self-image and self-worth, is the attempted replacement, in the dominant post-truth[33] environment through the hegemonic agenda of dedicated identity protagonists, of the Fatherhood identity of the Creator. As a replacement, a concoction of androgynous and often feminine identities of pagan, polytheistic, eclectic, and sometimes henotheistic, gods are promoted. To achieve this, a nihilistic and absurdist attempt to reconstruct[34] and redefine the core doctrines of Judeo-Christianity is underway. The *raison d'être*[35] for the specific focus of assailment on the Fatherhood of God concept is to enable the pivotal dependant doctrine of the created *imago Dei* of humankind to likewise be compromised. In substitution therefor, a narcissistic and esoteric *eritus sicut Deus* identity (Gen. 3:5), resulting in an auto-fabricated *imago hominis* can rationally be embraced

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32 According to Sociologist Philip Rieff, 'Identity' is a synonym of the 'sacred self' which is derived from the 'sacred order' hierarchy (2006, p. 4), thereby establishing the transcendental nature of individual personhood.

33 Professor Marion Montgomery summates that fabrications of the mind should emanate from truth, not truth from the mind (Metaphysical, 1993). This summation succinctly describes Gnostic philosophy, the foundation of heretical Identity ideologies currently permeating contemporary, post-truth, society.

34 Ideological reconstruction occurs through a process of 'deconstruction', a theory promoted by Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). In its simplest form, the theory means to 'take something apart in order to expose its inherent contradictions' (Holland, 2022). Derrida advocated deconstructionism in what he referred to as a "'gesture of distrust' towards prevailing notions". Notably, his critics claim that Derrida's deconstruction theory comprised "a no-holds-barred attack on truth and meaning" (Benjamin, 2004). The foremost American deconstructionist, J. Hillis Miller, in his 1976 essay, 'Steven's Rock and Criticism as Cure', advanced the concept further by claiming that "Deconstruction is not only a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself; its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air" (1985, pp. 27-49). The Fatherhood of God concept, the bedrock all of Judeo-Christianity and the founding precept of Western civilization, has become the primary object for Derrida's deconstruction and the object of refabrication by secular humanists in order to accommodate their heretical Identity ideologies, all leading to an *imago hominis.*

35 *Raison d'être* – reason or justification for existence.

by secular humanist and neo-paganist acolytes alike. Similarly, germinal dogmata concerning original sin, the necessity of the atonement coupled with the succeeding resurrection, and the soteriological imperative through the Redeemer-Messiah of Israel, can equally be sublated upon negation of the Fatherhood creed. This attempt inexorably clashes with the West's cultural Christian *Weltanschauung*[36] and, hence, has to be understood as a militant[37] spiritual attack upon salient Judeo-Christian doctrines.[38] The fallout from events in the Garden has resulted in continual critical challenges to customary theological precepts throughout subsequent history, and now culminates in the current period of social disorder, a *Sturm und Drang-Zeit*,[39] in search of meaning.

In June 2021, Richard Howe, Provost of the Seminary affiliated to the US Southern Baptist Convention - the largest denomination in the USA - made the following astute observation, "to effectively engage with the culture, you will need a deeply integrated understanding of theology, philosophy, and apologetics". It is anticipated that this treatise, involving the above three criteria[40] and more, will assist in elucidating the origins of the cultural, political, philosophical, legal, religious and spiritual challenges to the inerrancy of cogent cultural Christian[41] doctrines underlining society. This is particularly so with respect to the heretical, self-deification, tenets of the *eritus sicut Deus* concept adopted so enthusiastically in a post-Christian[42] milieux, notably by extreme feminist actors – the ideological descendants of Eve.[43]

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36 *Weltanschauung* – worldview; philosophy of life.

37 French philosopher, Chantal Delsol, clarifies the distinction between the existential threat to Christian civilization and that to the Christian faith. She emphasises that the latter, "will survive forever". She adds that, "as long as there is a single Christian on earth, the Christian faith will survive" (Bertoglio, 2022).

38 Sociology professor, Grace Davie, emphasises the "enduring role of Christianity in shaping European culture, despite growing evidence of secularization" (2021, p. 277).

39 *Sturm und Drang-Zeit* – a period of storm and stress.

40 The explanation of philosophy by Thomas Aquinas is of pertinence here, "The study of philosophy is not that we may know what men have thought, but what the truth of things is" (Judy, Aquinas, 2020). In fact, both aspects are necessary, that is, first to "know what men have thought". Secondly, to personally ascertain "what the truth of things is". This is the approach adopted here.

41 'Cultural Christianity' refers to the practical iteration of Judeo-Christian tenets in society. According to theology Professor Chad Pecknold, "Cultural Christianity has dominated the Western world for the better part of two millennia" (In Defense, 2021).

42 Also referred to as a 'post-structural' or a 'post-modern' milieux. The term, 'post-Christian' does not imply a totally secular or an irreligious society without religious believers. It indicates, instead, a setting in which "biblical faith and the biblical view of human nature, community, origins, and destiny no longer shape culture, society, and public life in a decisive way". In other words, a society "without transcendent reference points of any kind" (Weigel, Pope, 2022).

43 The term, 'radical feminism' is described by the founders of the Combahee River Collective, as, "a perspective from within feminism that calls for a radical re-ordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts. Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy by challenging social norms and institutions, rather than through a purely political process" (Combahee, 1977). The confrontational agenda of extreme feminism is self-evident, hence the ensuing societal turmoil.

The attempted elimination of a theistically conferred identity has inevitably led to the consequent search for an alternative personal identity,[44] culminating in the adoption of autonomous self-formations in a post-structuralist, agent-focused, political culture devoid of empirical truths, transcendentalism, rationalism, and moral legitimacy. The situation is exacerbated by the endemic rise of secular humanist ideologies intersecting with post-modern[45] New Age occultism expressed through pluralist, syncretic, spiritualism and the sited, contextual, morality of neo-pagans, humanists, and reprobate theists. To the detriment of the Church and its testimony of the Apostolic tradition, compromised theists increasingly capitulate to the circumambient, politically correct, 'woke'[46] culture focused on irrational claims of a self-identity bereft of transcendence but endorsed through statutory laws and juridical decisions of the highest courts of Justice.

The parlous societal conflict between the moral imperatives of orthodox Judeo-Christian tenets and that of assorted secular humanist ideologies, *sans* moral equivalency, will be examined using a theocentric and apologetical dialectic methodology, employing a broad historical – redemptive exposition. Theological substantiation[47] of the propositions stated above will be defended using intricate hermeneutical and exegetical strategies[48] indicating that certain mortal events, arising through a *leitmotif* [49] of the Edenic Garden scenario, are reiterated through the millennia. This claim is evident from archetypical personages and events recounted in both First and Second Testament passages and typologically manifested (*cf.,* 1 Cor. 10:6, 11) through the aeras, into the extant milieux of Western society. Nonetheless, the ultimate application and resolution thereof will only occur in the episodes of the coming eschaton, heralding advent of the blessed eternal order (*cf.,* Rev. 21 - 22), a supposition in keeping with the *leitmotif*, as corroborated through applied Rabbinical hermeneutical comprehensions of prophetic texts.

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44 The core idea of a human being consists of a personal Identity. Washington University history professor, Gerald Izenberg, perceives that, "In the contemporary Western imagination, nothing about the self seems more self-evident than the idea that we have, or seek, an Identity" (2016, p. 1).

45 Terms 'Postmodern' and 'postmodernity', are used interchangeably despite some differences in application. The terms refer not only to the period of late 20th century and early 21st, but equally to postmodernism as an endemic existent "secular ideology", distinguished by "relativism", "deconstruction", and "post-Marxism", in prevailing culture (Veith, 1994, p. 19, 22).

46 'Woke' culture, also referred to as 'woke' politics, is the colloquial term for politically correctness within the ambit and context of the pervasive Identity ideologies plaguing Western society.

47 Identity Politics cannot be fully conceived other than through a theological lens for, in its essence, Identity ideology, as described by Georgetown University political theorist, Professor Joshua Mitchell, is a "ghastly distortion of Christianity". Mitchell concludes that "politics matter, our nations matter" (Politics, 2021).

48 See chapter 2, 'Hermeneutics'.

49 *Leitmotif* – A dominant and recurring theme.

The arranged order of the eight chapters of the treatise will explicate and endorse the central contention, namely, that the Identity crisis facing Western society has a spiritual origin in the Edenic Garden.[50] However, the literary interpretive methodology first needs to be determined in order to enable a lucid reading of the principal Genesis pericope. The determination will be followed by a validation of the hermeneutical strategy required to theologically authenticate the meta-narrative. Chapter 2, 'The Hermeneutical Challenge', deals with these crucial concerns. The purpose of the remaining Chapters, 3 – 7, is to justify the initial principal contention and to develop and endorse the meta-narrative, acting as the overall function of this discourse in tracing the roots of the Identity conflict from prehistoric origins through to an ongoing contest. These chapters will signify that the meta-narrative is supported by an enduring Garden *leitmotif,* appertaining to select Edenic events, which *motif,* far from being a statis, constitutes an active continuum through the epochs from inception until restitution in the eternal order. Upon establishment of the literary and hermeneutical approaches to the Genesis narrative in Chapter 2, the chief aspects of certain antinomian events in the Garden are examined in Chapter 3, 'Transactions in the Garden at Eden'. Application of foundational theological principles established in Chapter 3, denotes their ongoing relevance from paradisical origins through to a contemporary setting in Western society and beyond. Chapter 4, 'Rise of the Occult', examines the aftermath of antinomianism events in the Garden. Expelled from the secure and bucolic Garden, the First Couple is exposed to a vacuous, secular, postlapsarian condition, devoid of absolutist parameters, and compelled to fabricate their own identity, ethics and meaning of life. A consequence of exile is the advent of diverse versions of esotericist paradigms, coupled with humanist secularism and immorality which advance unabated into a receptive, plastic,[51] 'New Age'. Chapter 5, 'The Gnostic New Age' further develops, in the prevailing milieux, the theme touched upon in preceding chapters regarding the emergence of primitive Gnostic, arcane, principles as exemplified by the wiles of the malevolent Serpent and emulated by the First Couple. Chapter 5 sets the tone for a philosophical, theological, and ideological consideration of pervasive Gnostic constructs as reiterated in a post-structuralist 'New Age'. The seminal importance and ubiquitous influence of elemental Gnosticism, and its iteration of neo-Gnosticism, upon popular Identity ideologies is revealed here. Chapter 6, 'The Social Revolution', identifies sundry critical displays of the social conundrum. The purpose is to gain a notion of the metaphysical root sources animating the cultural morass facing Western society and to dialectally apply theological, philosophical,

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50 The primary contention will be validated mainly through a development of metaphysical concepts more so than through historical events.

51 Theology professor Carl Trueman attests that, "the idea that the self is something plastic – that we can shape in any way we wish - is the West's reigning idea of selfhood" (Plastic, 2022). This is very much a Gnostic hypothesis, prevalent in the creation of prevailing Identity ideology.

political, and legal hypotheses raised earlier. Chapter 7, 'The Contemporary Struggle for Orthodoxy', examines the range of religious, political, philosophical, sociological, theological and legal backgrounds within which the Identity ideologies were able to manifest, expand, and affect society. Chapter 8, the 'Conclusion', is a synthesis of the preceding arguments and provides a compelling and panoptic exegetical clarification of the theological veracity of both the primary contention and the meta-narrative itself. The perpetual relevance of the Edenic Garden events - from primeval origins to final articulation in the eternal order - being the *leitmotif* from which both the primary contention and the meta-narrative are justified - will be demonstrated through applied ancient Jewish Palestinian Rabbinical hermeneutical methodologies. The presentation will therefore confirm the overwhelming victory, perfection, totality, sovereignty, omniscience, and omnipotence of the Redeemer-Messiah's choate soteriological and eschatological program for humanity, as commenced in the Edenic Garden. Despite numerous indefatigable and insidious challenges throughout ensuing human history, the Creator's divine providence remains supreme.

To accommodate contentions emerging from disparate worldviews, cognizance has been taken of St. Thomas Aquinas' instructions to his students on dealing with disputed matters. Aquinas' advice can be summarized as follows:

"In disputations of this sort you should above all use authorities acceptable to those with whom you are disputing; with Jews, you should appeal to the authority of the Old Testament; with those who reject the Old Testament, you should use only the New; with Christians who have split off from us, you should rely on the authority of both Testaments and those Church teachers that they accept. And if you are disputing with people who accept no authority, you must resort to natural reason".[52]

The aforegoing Aquinian strategy is substantially adopted herein.

Israeli political theorist, Yoram Hazony, points out that there is an "astonishing amount of ignorance", whether concerning political, cultural, theological or philosophical knowledge, surrounding the crucial issues challenging personal identity and the core principles of the Western democratic order. He adds that "many well-intentional Conservatives really do not know anymore why one would need to preserve and strengthen these things".[53] The overall objective of this work, by extension, is to add to the body of knowledge of these issues which,

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52 Aquinas, 1256-1259; 1269-1272; *Quaestiones de Quolibet Quodlibetal* IV, q.9 a3c, in Busa)(*cf.,* Greggs, S., Natural Law, 2021, pp. 8-9.

53 Hazony, Y. Conservatism, 2022, p. 9.

as lamented by Hazony, is sadly lacking. In so doing, humankind's vital search for identity and meaning is recounted. The poignant words of C. S. Lewis describe this search as follows: "Human history is the long, terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy".[54] This treatise recounts the essence of that existential story.

[54] C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, 1952, p. 49.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HERMENEUTICAL CHALLENGE[55]

> *"Literalist and midrashic modes of Biblical exegesis were indeed features of early Christian preaching"* (R. N. Longenecker, 1999).

2.1 Introduction

The pivotal question in this treatise is whether or not the current social turbulence in Western society arises from treasonous events in the Edenic Garden. It is claimed that societal conflict emanates from heterodoxic ideological challenges to traditional Judeo-Christian tenets underpinning the classical liberal democratic political tradition of the West. Established values and freedoms giving credence to western culture such as ethics, morality, social justice and the common good of society are in danger of negation through populist-authoritarian, Statist endorsed, Identity political policies. The primary aim, then, is to examine the theological, philosophical and spiritual foundations of controversial social issues which, at their root, comprise a search for meaning and identity, both personal and social. The objective is to ascertain whether or not these foundations are based on heterodox beliefs originating from the fallen nature of humankind as recounted in Genesis 3. A convincing methodology is necessary to validate the aforegoing. Consequently, it will be established that, in the first instance, a literal-historical reading of the Garden narrative is valid and necessary. Secondly, upon application of Second Temple period Rabbinical hermeneutical and exegetical strategies to prophetic events, it will be made clear that the underlying principles fomenting contemporary societal strife originate from Edenic events. These underlying principles are reiterated in various forms and scenarios throughout Biblical history, and ensuing ages, into the present post-modern environment. It will be shown that a final, ultimate, reiteration of antinomian events will occur in the coming eschaton. In the result, the societal discord troubling Western society arises from primordial, secular humanist (an iteration of practical atheism), heterodoxic behaviour by the First Couple, Adam and Eve. The broad solution to heterodoxy is Judeo-Christian orthodoxy, for these are core theological issues. Accordingly, after examining specific current manifestations of reiterated antinomianism, an apologetical, redemptive, solution is applied in each instance, utilizing the aforementioned ancient Jewish exegetical practises.

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[55] A Christian evangelical and apologetical approach is adopted throughout this study.

Hence, prior to a consideration of seminal events in the Garden of Eden, is the necessity to decide on the precise exegetical approach to be adopted in relation to the book of Genesis as a whole, and the pericope of Genesis 3 in particular. A literal-historical understanding of the Garden narrative has been widely rejected in the post-truth era. Instead, it has been deemed pseudo-history or an untrue parable, a legend, myth, fable or, generally, a canard. However, upon a consideration of these views it is apparent that the narrative does not fall into any category as being untrue, despite much polemic to the contrary (*cf.,* Mortenson, 2016, p. 7; Ostling, 2011, p. 23; Lewis, 2017, p. 331). Theologian Dwight Longenecker points out that the atheist, "misses the remarkable fact that the Judeo-Christian stories, from the beginning, are presented as history"[56]. Just because the "stories" are religious, does not denote that they are untrue myths or any other category of fantasy literature.

As a further example of the controversy surrounding the historicity of the Garden events, in 2013 Zondervan Books published the text, 'Four Views on the Historical Adam' (Barrett, M. (ed.), 2013). Of the six contributing scholars, all professed evangelicals,[57] two claimed Adam to be a myth; three acknowledged a historical Adam but differ, incongruously, as to which aspects of Genesis 1 - 3 are literally true; and only one scholar averred the historical and literal[58] truth of Adam, Eve, and the Fall.[59] In the same vein, evangelical[60] scholars, such as Hendel in the compilation 'Poetic Myths in Genesis', considers the numerous contended "varieties of mythoi in Genesis" without refuting the postulate that the narrative of Genesis is a myth.[61] Likewise, renowned academic, Gordon H. Johnston, avers that the Genesis creation account is significantly derived from Egyptian creation myths despite some differences.[62] Furthermore, Pagels submits in the work, 'Adam, Eve and the Serpent in Genesis 1-3', that "The wild profusion of gnostic myths can be traced to a single scriptural source, Genesis 1 – 3". Pagels goes on to add that, "the whole controversy between orthodox and Gnostic Christians is a battle over the disputed territory of the first three chapters of Genesis" (2000,

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56 Longenecker, D., Myth, 2022.

57 The term 'evangelical' is aptly defined by the Bebbington Quadrilateral whereby four essential criteria should be complied with, namely, "Biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism" (Stonestreet, Mainline, 2021).

58 'Literal', not as a 'wooden' literalist, but as grammatically and historically true. In other words, as "plainly" true, that is, as "its human authors and original audience would have understood it", in what can be termed an "originalist approach" (Sanders & Safarti, 2013, pp. 9-10).

59 *Cf.,* Mortenson, 2016, p. 8.

60 A 2022 survey of evangelical Christians revealed that only 40% believe that the Bible should be read literally (Newport, F., Literal, 2022).

61 The claim of the Genesis 3 narrative as mythical is defeated by the immanentization of a physical, historical, literal, Redeemer as forecast initially in Genesis 3:15, and thereafter throughout the canon in sundry contexts.

62 Johnston, G. H., 2006; 2008.

p. 412). Patently, much polemic surrounds the interpretation of the Genesis chapters by theists[63] and non-theists alike.[64] Perhaps, the final words on this topic should be those of C. S. Lewis, who responds to his friend Corenius in the essay, 'Myth Became Fact', by stating that just as "myth transcends thought, incarnation transcends myth".[65] Lewis perceptively posits that the historically verifiable immanentization of the Redeemer-Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, remains not only incontrovertible but specifically defeats all challenges to a grammatical-historical[66] reading of the canons' redemptive narratives.

Generally speaking, 'New Atheists' like the activist, Richard Dawkins, simply dismiss all religion as superstition.[67] These cynics base their emotivist and irrational viewpoint on an unsubstantiated assumption of a mythological[68] or allegorical thesis. Atheists and Identity Ideologues negate the legitimacy of the transcendence, the uniqueness and dignity of humankind, and the moral parameters[69] implicit in the early chapters of Genesis account. They specifically dismiss the Fatherhood of God concept, and thus the ensuant *sui generis* and *imago Dei* nature of humankind.[70] Consequently, they are free to promote their objectives, namely, a relativist personal identity with a contextual morality devoid of objective or rational requirements - a prevalent view in post-modern[71] times. To the contrary, one of the greatest

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63 The universalist theologian, David Bentley Hart, claims that Genesis 1- 3 was a story, "distilled out of the wanton intermixture of four unrelated passages" and refers to the "impeccably honest serpent of the Eden narrative" (Tradition, Ch.5, 2022).

64 A prevalent contention are the theories arising from applied Historicism, in which it is alleged that "the truth of a philosophy is determined on the basis of its appropriateness to a certain period and a certain historical purpose". In this manner, the "enduing validity of truth is denied" (John Paul II, Pope, Fides, 1998, Para. 87).

65 Lewis, C. S., Myth, 1970, p. 343.

66 Within the Western exegetical tradition, as in the Jewish tradition, a literal interpretation is paramount. In his classical work on Biblical Interpretation, Louis Berkhof concludes that, "there is an oft-repeated hermeneutical rule, that the words should be understood in their literal sense unless such literal interpretation involves a manifest contradiction or absurdity" (Principles, 1950, p. 85).

67 *cf.,* Simmons, 2019, p. xi.

68 Professor René Girard (1923 – 2015), explains the supposed mythology of canonical scripture as follows: "Christian revelation is the paradoxical victim of the knowledge that it provides. Absurdly is conflated with myth, which is clearly is not, and doubly misunderstood by both its enemies and partisans, who tend to confuse it with one of the archaic religions that it demystifies. Yet all demystifying comes from Christianity. Even better: the only true religion is the one that demystifies archaic religions" (2010, Battling, p. xviii – xix).

69 Heretical Socinians, Pelagians, Gnostics, and other Rationalists (from Descartes onwards), deny the veracity and efficacy of original sin dogma (Mary, D., 2006).

70 *cf.,* Chapter 6.4.2 herein.

71 Post-modernist theory can be understood as an "epistemological scepticism about enlightened modernism and its belief in universally accepted truths". The purported demise of the "universal truth paradigm", often achieved through a scientific rationalist process and resulting in objective and absolutist knowledge, is accredited to the rise of cultural identity ideologies encompassing "relativism of different knowledges arising from multiple wisdoms" (Ulanowsky, 1998, p. 272). In prevailing society, agent-centred relativism is evident in the contested areas of truth, morality, identity, meaning, values, and social justice.

Latin Patriarchs of the Church, Augustine Bishop of Hippo (himself not adverse to the occasional allegorical perspective), in a practical approach, affirms the historicity of the Genesis saga by stating that "allegorical interpretations may be suitably put upon Paradise without giving offense to anyone, while yet we believe the strict truth of history, confirmed by its circumstantial narrative of facts" (1890, p. 369). The literal veracity, morality, theology, and historicity of Genesis was likewise affirmed by significant Patriarchs such as Clement, Tertullian, and Irenaeus (Geisler, 2014, p. 1).

The pivotal issue of transcendence represents a core component of the current 'battle of ideas', the societal struggle in maintaining fundamental and long standing Judeo-Christian values and dogma. The reliability, historicity, and purpose of both Testaments, and the authenticity of the soteriological agenda of the Creator, relies implicitly upon the book of Genesis, the *Bereishit*, for its foundation as societies' inerrant word of the Divine. This contest has vital implications as the very etiological core and, hence, ontological status of humankind is affected. According to Mortenson (2016, pp. 11-12), "A person's view of the origin of man will profoundly affect his view of the purpose and meaning of life, his moral values and his perspective of life after death" (to which can be added: the seminal issues of personal identity[72] and protological determination). The philosophical constructs of Erich Fromm (1996, p. 17), who himself believed that "the concept of God was a historically conditioned expression of an inner experience", allow him to concede that certain ideas polymorph into cultural ideologies and this process "usurps the place of the underlying reality". This conclusion explains the vacant and irrational[73] underpinnings of those ideologies empowering the present secular, humanistic, anti-theistic, materialist and determinist agenda confronting the historicity and reality of Biblical narratives.

The fundamental doctrines of the Church emerge within the first eleven chapters[74] of the *Bereishit* and this underscores the critical consequence of those chapters for the integrity of

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[72] René Girard clarifies that, "Once in our history, the truth about the identity of all humans was spoken but no one wanted to hear it; instead we hang ever more frantically onto our false differences" (2010, Battling, p. x). His statement reflects the core truth underlying the social conflagration in Western culture, namely, a rejection of the *imago Dei* of humankind, as emanating from the Fatherhood of God doctrine, in favour of a fabricated, secular, *imago hominis.*

[73] "Rationality", says psychologist Steven Pinker, should be the "lodestar for everything we think and do". He continues, "yet, in an era blessed with unprecedented resources for reasoning, the public sphere is infested with 'post-truth' rhetoric" (Rationality, 2021), that is, relativistic constructs in the fields of morality, politics, and the Behavioural sciences.

[74] The first 11 chapters of Genesis reveal the "Primeval History" of humankind, setting out all cardinal narratives from which the pivotal doctrines are deduced (Elwell, 1996, p. 284). Germinal doctrines include the nature of God (Ch. 1ff.), of man (1:26ff), of creation (Ch. 1ff), of evil (3:1,15ff), sin (3:4ff), and redemption (3:15ff).

the message as proclaimed by the Church. This is particularly so concerning pivotal issues such as the Fatherhood concept of God, the corporate solidarity of imputed sin, and the promise of redemption, ensuing from early Genesis events. It is therefore not surprising that "Genesis 1 – 11 is the main focus of the undermining of Biblical authority in our time, including within the Church" (Sarfati, 2015, p. 9). The issue of the hermeneutical and exegetical methodologies utilised in interpreting Genesis are therefore crucial in validating an orthodox outcome and the pivotal contentions asserted herein.

Later in this treatise when considering the issue of Constitutional interpretation by the US Supreme Court, the concept of originalism, contextualism, becomes pertinent. In legal and political circles the term, 'Constitutional originalism', denotes that "the Constitution should be interpreted according to its original meaning"; that is, "according to the intent of the Founders" (Steelman, 2022). In other words, in accordance with the original context, much like exegesis of the Genesis saga. When exegesis of the Constitution is not undertaken in this manner but, instead, through a process of eisegesis, the original, literal, and historical meaning and application is lost. Hence, the Supreme Court's 1973 wrongful decision in Roe versus Wade permitting abortion,[75] and many other legal aberrations which have caused devastation in Western society. Unsurprisingly, there is a close nexus between an attitude of inerrancy of the scriptures, particularly that of the Genesis narrative, and Constitutional originalism. A 2011 study by Columbia Law School concluded that, "support for politically conservative issue positions and a cultural orientation towards moral traditionalism and are all significant predictors of an individual preference for originalism". As a consequence, "originalism has currency not only as a legal proposition about Constitutional interpretation, but also as a political commodity and as a culturally expressive idiom" (Greene, 2011). Stated differently, "legal scholars have found that belief in the Bible as literally true helps predict adherence to originalism" (Steelman, 2022). Therefore, holding to a view of inerrancy of the scriptures has far-reaching implications, not only for validation of Judeo-Christian precepts, but also for society as a whole, particularly in the areas of theology, law, and politics.

2.2 Redactors of the First and Second Testaments.

To proceed further with the issue of the authenticity and historicity of the Genesis chronicle, it will be beneficial to ascertain how the redactors of the canons understood the personages and events therein contained. Primarily, the First Testament scribe, Moses, audibly received the *Bereishit* narrative direct from the Creator. In Numbers 12:6-8, it is recounted that "With him

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[75] Roe v. Wade was overruled on June 24, 2022.

(Moses) I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles". The Creator therefore used clear and simple language to communicate the narrative, not riddles or other obscure literary techniques. In other words, it is straightforward history, easy to understand, literal and historic. King David emphasised the literality of creation in Psalm 33:6 as follows: "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host". Verse 9 is in support, "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm". Noah and the flood narrative is plainly mentioned in Isa. 54:9 (*cf.,* Ps. 29:10; Ps. 104:5-9,19; Ps. 136:5-16; Ezk. 14:14-20), and so on.

The Apostolic redactors of the Second Testament gave credence to the veracity and inerrancy of the first canonical book by endorsing many of the pericopes therein, through either direct quotations, allusions, typology, thematic motifs, or references. Even when metaphors were used by Jewish scholars, the "underlying subject" (Scott, 1997, p. 112), of the metaphor was always acknowledged. All four Gospels used Genesis in this way as did most of the other apostolic writings. The diverse literary strategies do not at all detract from the historicity of the Book, for there are some 200 direct references to the events or characters cited in Genesis by the Second Testament redactors. This includes 22 direct references to Genesis 3 alone. Jesus himself quoted directly from Genesis (*cf.,* Matt. 19:4-5, 8; Mk. 10:6-8; Mk. 13:19), thereby implying that the words of the *Bereishit* should be taken literally. This postulate is specifically endorsed by Matt. 19:4, where Jesus says, *apropos* the issue of gender in the Genesis creation account, "have you not read…" (*cf.*, Gen. 1:27; 5:2). The Gospel of Mark records this even more emphatically, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female'" (Mk. 10:6). Generally, the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke record that Jesus referred his listeners seven times to the written words of the *Tanakh*, by asking, "have you not read…". In like fashion, Jesus quoted scripture three times to Satan in refutation of the temptations directed at him, each time countering with, "It is written" (Matt. 4:1-10) - a manifest usage of a grammatical-historical exegesis in Jesus' interpretations of the scriptures. Likewise, St. Paul[76] endorsed the historicity, and a literalist rendering, of Genesis by quoting directly therefrom in his *Hauptbriefe,* to wit, Romans 4:17 using the preface, "as it is written" (*cf.*, Gen. 17:5). Further examples are found in Rom. 4:18 (*cf.*, Gen. 15:5) and Rom. 9:12 (*cf.*, Gen. 25:23). In such manner, Paul quoted directly from Genesis twice in 1 Corinthians (for instance, 1 Cor. 15:45, "so it is written" [*cf.*, Gen. 2:7]); four times in Galatians, and again in the equally salient letter to the Ephesians. Apart from his direct quotations from Genesis, in his epistles Paul additionally alluded to incidents, *motifs,* and narratives therein. Paul, and

[76] Rabbi Saul of Tarsus is interchangeably referred to herein as Apostle Paul, St. Paul, or simply 'Paul'.

fellow Apostle Peter, both slighted the use of mythology in prevailing theological thought in their early Church milieux (*cf.,* 1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:16). In his second letter (2 Peter 3:5-6) St. Peter recounts, in a literal-historical method, the Genesis creation epic, including the Flood narrative. For good measure, Peter recognised a literal view of a future apocalyptic finality to the "heavens and earth" (2 Pet. 3:7; *cf.*, Rev. 21:1). From the aforegoing, it is obvious both Paul and Peter firmly validated the authenticity and inerrancy of the Genesis saga. Necessarily, then, to reject the inerrancy of the Genesis narrative is to reject the historicity of the Messiah of Israel, Jesus, and the integrity of his words. The same argument applies to the Apostolic redactors. And, to dispute the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth has been continually attempted over the centuries and always without success - as is evident in the discrediting of Docetic and Gnostic heretical views surrounding the historic and literal person of Jesus. Even Roman historians such as Cornelius Tacitus, and Suetonius, the writer Lucian (2nd C., C. E.), and Thallus (1st C., C.E.), all affirm the existence of Jesus as does the Gnostic Cerinthus, and the Greek philosopher, Celsus (*cf.,* Yoder, Apologist, 2021). It should also be mentioned that the genealogies set out in 1 Chron. 1, and in reverse order in Luke 3:23-36, commence with the line of Adam. If the historicity of Adam is summarily dismissed so too must all the Biblical personages recounted in the curated genealogies, and the Messiah himself who descends from Adam through the distaff line. Stated alternatively, if Adam is not understood as a literal, historical, person then no sin would have entered the human race and there would be no need for a Redeemer.

In like manner, the historicity of Biblical events, such as the great flood, is given credence through extra-Biblical accounts such as in the writings of Berossus, the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, the Targum Neofiti (Day, 2011, p. 213), and in many others. It is thereupon posited that in the corporate memory of diverse people groups is contained innate awareness of the deluge saga. John Day (2011, p. 211) reached the deduction that, "It has long been recognised by modern scholars that there is a connection between the account of Noah's flood in Genesis 6-8 and the Mesopotamian flood tradition". But, apart from extra-canonical sources, dismissing even the credible testimony of Jewish General Josephus,[77] archaeological verifications for the historical Jesus keep emerging. An example being the authentication of the Ossuary of the Disciple, James, Bishop of the nascent Jerusalem Church. The Hebrew inscription on the Ossuary is specific in identification for it translates as, "James son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" (Tombetti, 2019). In the Israel National museum in Jerusalem, lies the identified sarcophagus

[77] Josephus Flavius (c. 37 -110 C.E.)

of King Herod the Great,[78] a significant personage of the Gospel narratives, with many other archaeological items and scientific[79] discoveries presenting. In a similar vein, the much disparaged account of the annihilation of the sodomite cites of Sodom and Gomorrah, (Gen. 19), finds validation in the 'Scientific Reports Journal' of September 20, 2021. The Report was compiled by a large team of researchers in a fifteen year multidisciplinary study, involving twenty one co-authors in ten US States together with other countries. The voluminous Report concluded that an "asteroid entering the atmosphere resulted in a massive fireball that exploded about 2.5 miles above the ground. The resulting blast was about 1,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima atomic bomb and destroyed the region. The event devasted the city which had been settled since about 4,300 B. C. E. Air temperatures in the region rose above 3,600 degrees Fahrenheit". Furthermore, the scientific researchers suggest that "the Biblical account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah may have been the result of eyewitness accounts of the meteor strike" (Bunch, *et al*, 2021).

Early Rabbinical sources, particularly of the Palestinian school rather than the Alexandrian school with their allegorical[80] penchant, likewise affirm commitment to the historicity of events redacted in the *Bereishit*. In the context of a discussion as to the extent of Adam's free will in the *Bereishit* account but also relevant to the issue of historicity, George Foot Moore (1971, p. 479), in his formative study on 'Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era', asserts that "to such contrary speculations, which have been rife in the Christian theology of the West since Augustine, there is no parallel in Judaism". The same sentiment indubitably applies to the context of the Genesis saga as a whole. To this day, Orthodox Jewish scholars[81] firmly

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78 A Press release by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on May 8, 2007, confirmed the discovery of King Herod's Sarcophagus at Herodium, Israel (Hebrew University, 2007).

79 In February 2022, the results were revealed of a study by scientists of Oxford University's 'Big Data Institute' who have "taken a major step towards mapping the entirety of genetic relationships among humans: a single genealogy that traces the ancestry of all of us". The study, "generated genomic data from hundreds of thousands of individuals including thousands of prehistoric people (and 231 million ancestral lineages, to some 50,000 generations past) to produce a map of how individuals across the world are related to each another" (Wong, Human family, 2022). The study concluded that, "the ancestral relationships of all humans who have ever lived can be described by a single genealogy or tree sequence, so called because it encodes the sequence of trees that link individuals to one another at every point in the genome" (Wohns, Unified, 2022). The claim that all humans descend from a single couple of humans, is tentatively verified by recent scientific studies.

80 Jewish Rabbi, Mark Gottlieb, confirms that, "ancient Jewish hermeneutical principles insist that scripture cannot be shorn of its contextual sense or meaning" (Valor, 2022), despite an exegete's allegorical penchant.

81 When prominent UK Judaic scholar, Rabbi Louis Jacobs (1920-2006), "deviated from the traditional orthodox dogma regarding the literal revelation of the Torah", he was summarily "excommunicated from the orthodox establishment" (Nadler, 2011).

adhere to a literalist reading, in the first instance, of the scriptures.[82] It will be valid, wherefore, to emphasize herein the literal and historical authenticity of the events, transactions, and *Dramatis Personae* recounted in the book of Genesis.

2.3 The Hermeneutics of Early Palestinian Judaism

2.3.1 Introduction

Upon the departing point of the historical-grammatical composition of the book of Genesis, it then becomes necessary to determine the hermeneutical methodologies to be utilised in understanding the narratives recounted therein. Ascertaining how the Rabbinical scribes from early Judaism of the Second Temple period, and thereafter, undertook exegesis of the book of Genesis is the germinal enquiry to be explored. The period of early Judaism closely covers the Second Temple period and is "the term used to refer to the phenomena in Judaism dating from around the end of the third century B. C. E., until the end of the second century C. E." (Charlesworth, 1985, p. 59). It is this formative period that will no doubt cast light on the exegetical approach used by early Jewish scholars. It is contended that early Jewish exegetical strategies have strongly influenced the canonical writings of early Christian scholars and scribes, including the Apostolic redactors, and have been instrumental in the compilation of their doctrinal convictions. Charlesworth, in discussing the Jewish heritage of Christianity, attests that "Christianity was the heir of over a thousand years of traditions, both written…and oral" (1985, p. 61). In fact, Christianity in its nascent years was viewed by both its opponents and adherents as a sect within Judaism itself, for early Christianity "did not envisage itself as a new religion but as a true manifestation of Judaism" (McKnight, 1993, p. 57). In the result, it is inconceivable to detach Christianity from its foundational roots within an early Jewish exegetical framework.

2.3.2 The Problem of Allegory.

Sectarian schools of interpretation certainly existed within early Judaism but, by and large, two prominent schools of thought prevailed. Hence, it has to be ascertained whether the matrix of the Apostolic redactors was predominantly the Hellenistic Judaism of the Alexandrian school, or whether it was the Palestinian Judaism of the Rabbinical Pharisees and Qumran sectaries. The significance of this question is the position that if the Jewish scribes used mainly Alexandrian Hellenistic allegorical practices to interpret canonical scripture, then it would be

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[82] According to Rabbi Professor Allan Nadler, in current orthodox Jewish thought, the term 'literal', as relating to scripture, implies "an insistence on its inherent textual perfection as inerrant, immaculate and unchanged divine writ" (2011).

very difficult, to say the least, to assert a historical-grammatical, *peshat* (the literal, plain, sense of the scripture) reading of the *Bereshit.* The struggle against Hellenistic influences on Judaism by Palestinian Rabbinical exegetes, was due to the Greek tendency to allegorize much of scripture in order to arrive at a subjective, 'deeper meaning', no doubt influenced by pervasive, esoteric, Platonic Gnosticism. Such an interpretation could result in a conclusion devoid of objective, contextual, constraints. This submission is evidenced by the writings of Philo[83] who freely admits his use of allegory in interpreting the narrative of Genesis, and which indubitably results in some fanciful derivates. Philo concluded that, "These things are not mere fabulous inventions, in which the race of poets and sophists delights, but are rather types shadowing forth some allegorical truth" (Philo, Creation, LV1 [157]). In so doing, Philo impliedly acknowledges the historicity of the types, presumably the *dramatis personae* in Genesis 3, but yet builds thereon to fabricate subjective, allegorical, 'truths' over and above the plain, literal, and historical sense, in order to suit his idiosyncratic reading of events.

The subject of Hellenist influence in Jewish exegesis has been the topic of much debate through the years. Prominent Biblical scholar, C. G. Montefiore, disputed that St. Paul was representative of Palestinian Judaism and insisted that he is best read through the lens of his Greek matrix (Davis, 1962, p. 1). Montefiore's assertions, like those of Bultmann (Quarles, 1996, p. 458), have been soundly defeated by subsequent scholars such as Neusner, Vermes, Saunders, and Charlesworth. The latter, for instance, claims that "the old – and in some circles still dominant – view of Christian origins is unacceptable. It portrays Christianity as a Greek-oriented religion clearly distinct from Judaism" (1990, p. 19). However, the free use of Hellenistic allegory was not a dominant feature of mainstream Palestinian Judaism and is not a significant part of Second Testament canonical writings, excluding Paul's limited use thereof in his letter to the Galatian Church (Gal. 4:21-31), and perhaps in his 1st Corinthian epistle (9:9-10), with apocalyptic literature excepted. Paul must principally be considered in terms of his Palestinian Rabbinical context although, no doubt, he was to some minor degree influenced by his Greek environment particularly in regard to rationality and rhetoric. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the *Sitz im Leben* of Christianity in general, and the Apostolic redactors in particular, was the background of an early Palestinian Rabbinical Judaism exegetical inheritance, generally free of a pervasive Hellenistic allegorical hermeneutic.

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83 Richard Longenecker comments that the "most prominent Jewish allegorist of the first century was Philo of Alexandria" and who "was the inheritor of Stoic and Platonic ideas" (Exegesis, 1999, p. 30).

Unfortunately in the period after the nascent Jerusalem Church, the rise of institutionalized Christendom and the supremacy of the dominant Roman Catholic Church after the time of Constantine, Alexandrian allegory re-established itself as a preferred interpretative method. Nonetheless, Reformation recovery in the 16th century C. E. led the Reformers to re-establish a grammatical-historical hermeneutic to restore the plain meaning of the scriptures, and to thereby attenuate the prevailing Roman Catholic allegorical approach. The Catholic method, under the guise of *Sensus Plenior*;[84] through interpretative pronouncements by the Church's *Magisterium*,[85] coupled with *ex cathedra*[86] proclamations by erstwhile and incumbent Popes, led to much debate. Except for some scriptures like Song of Songs, Revelation, and other prophetic and poetic passages, the Reformers rejected an allegorical hermeneutic. For instance, Origin extensively used an allegorical approach, which Calvin severely criticised for exactly the right reasons, namely, depriving the setting of Eden (for example) as a definite, physical, location on earth. Calvin (1554, p. 76) commented that, "We must entirely reject the allegories of Origin, and of others like him, which Satan, with the deepest subtlety, has endeavored to introduce into the Church, for the purpose of rendering the doctrine of Scripture ambiguous and destitute of all certainty and firmness".[87] Concurrence with Origin's allegorical penchant would result in the potentially heterodoxic proposal that Adam and Eve were merely representative figures of whatever took the exegetes fancy, devoid of a historical context. Calvin instead emphasised a literal reading in relation to the Book of Genesis, averring that "they speculate in vain, and to no purpose, by departing from the literal sense" (Calvin, *ibid*.).

2.3.3 The Palestinian Approach

In contradistinction to the Hellenistic allegorical approach of commentators such as Philo, was the literalist approach of the early mainstream Palestinian Rabbinical exegetes. The importance of establishing a predominantly literal reading of the Garden narrative, as supported by the early Rabbinical exegetes who were the traditional descendant scribes of the Patriarch Moses - the original redactor of the *Torah* - is that otherwise a historical understanding of the narrative cannot be sustained. The guidance of the ancient Rabbis in early Judaism, together with their exegetical successors, will be a deciding factor of how to read Genesis generally, particularly the Garden pericope. Paul, as a Rabbi, reveals his

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84 *Sensus Plenior* - the supposed 'deeper meaning' as propounded by the Pope in *ex cathedra* teachings.

85 *Magisterium* - the "teaching authority of the Pope and the Bishops teaching in union with him". Collectively referred to as the *magisterium* of the Roman Catholic Church (Atkin, 2019).

86 *Ex cathedra* – refers to the "binding and infallible papal teachings which are promulgated by the Pope when he officially teaches in his capacity of the universal shepherd of the Church on a matter of faith and morals and addresses it to the entire world" (Catholic Ency., *Ex cathedra*, 2022).

87 Calvin, 1554, Genesis, p. 76.

Palestinian background in Acts 22:3, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day". Paul's mentor, Rabbi Gamaliel,[88] a Tannaim[89] and a member of the governing Sanhedrin religious council (*cf.,* Schechter, 2021), was direct successor to the famed exegetical school of Rabbi Hillel. It was Hillel who formulated the seven epochal *middot*, the dominant Rabbinical rules of interpretation. Hillel (110 B.C.E. - 10 C.E.), was the pre-eminent scholar of his era, and significantly influenced subsequent eras, for his interpretive tools remained the primary source of Jewish exegetical practice until attenuated by the *pastiche* of Talmudic commentary in the Middle Ages, and the later advent of arcane Kabbalistic theories. The seven *middot* were followed in the 1st century C. E. by the "13 rules of Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, and the 32 rules of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yosef the Galilean" (c. 150 C. E.). The compilation of *middot* remained "normative for more than 1,000 years in Judaism" (Schechter, Gamaliel, 2021). The practice of Hillel's rules of interpretation, enumerated in the *middot,* were later employed by the Second Testament redactors, themselves all being Jewish, whose cultural and religious environment was early Palestinian Judaism.[90] The use thereof is particularly noticeable in the *Hauptbriefe* of St. Paul. This is unsurprising as for many centuries, the *Tanach*, particularly the *Torah*, was only read and analysed by Rabbinical scribes. Consequently, upon the advent of Christianity, long-established exegetical methods continued as hitherto in both faiths. In practical application, the Rabbinical scribes were the theological and exegetical predecessors of the Apostolic writers.[91]

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88 Alfred Edersheim surmises that the Jewish patriarch Gamaliel II, "may have sat with Saul of Tarsus at the feet of his grandfather" (1993, p. 15), being the great Rabbi Gamaliel.

89 Tannaim (10 – 220 C.E.) were an esteemed sect of teachers of the law. Only those prominent teachers who belonged to the "period beginning with the disciples of Shammai and Hillel and ending with the contemporaries of Judah ha-Nasi 1", (Becker, 2021), were considered Tannaim. All said, there were 5 generations of Tannaim. Each Tannaim's name and genealogy is recorded. Rabbi Gamaliel was among the earliest group so called.

90 *cf.,* Longenecker, R., Exegesis, 1999, p. 100 ff.

91 Richard Longenecker attests to the general usage of Rabbinical hermeneutics by the Apostolic redactors, especially Paul, by asserting that, "A recurring feature in Paul's biblical quotations, and one which points up his Pharisaic background and *midrashic* heritage, is his practice of 'pearl-stringing' - that is, of bringing to bear on one point of an argument passages from several parts of the Bible in support of the argument and to demonstrate the unity of scripture" (Exegesis, 1999, p. 99). Application by Paul of Longenecker's described exegesis is an example of combining various Hillel's *middot* to provide an insight into the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The hermeneutical concept of *midrash* is contained within *middot*, as alluded to by Longenecker.

Renowned Judaic scholar, Richard Longenecker, explains that, “Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: *peshat*,[92] *midrash*,[93] *pesher,*[94] and allegorical” (1999, p. 14). Despite some minor Hellenistic influence, the Rabbis of Palestine maintained a strict literal (*peshat*) reading of the books of the Bible, except for those writings like Song of Songs which can sustain an additional, further, poetic or allegorical reading. Longenecker continues, “It need not be argued at any length that Judaism often took the words of the Old Testament quite literally. Rabbinic literature contains a number of examples where the scriptures are understood in a straight-forward fashion, resulting in the plain, simple and natural meaning of the text” (1999, p. 15). This conclusion applies also to apocalyptic literature for whatever the mode of reception, the *peshat* (literal, plain) sense must first be established to delineate a context before further exegetical techniques may be utilized, as is evident from Hillel’s methods. The basis of Hillel’s Rabbinical *middot* was use of the *peshat* sense as a reading in the first instance. Consequently, only once the plain sense had been established then, in order to show a prophetically repeated pattern[95] (a *motif*), that is, the ‘deeper’ meaning in the texts under contemplation, could a *midrashic* approach be employed seeking further scriptural comport. A *middot* of Hillel emphasizing the *peshat* sense of a passage is the principle of “*Dabar halamed me’inyano*”, which is explained as a, “meaning established by its context” (Bowker, 1979, p. 315). Strict adherence to the original context of a passage ensured a valid grammatical-historical reading, as such method was later to become known by non-Jewish scholars. Pope Benedict XVI describes the complexity and shortcomings of the Western exegetical tradition when removed from a strict literal-historical view in the first instance, as a “veritable fence which blocks access to the Bible”. He provides the following example, “If Rudolf Bultmann used the philosophy of Martin Heidegger as a vehicle to represent the Biblical word, then that vehicle stands in accord with his reconstruction of the essence of Jesus’ message”. Benedict raises the query that, “in the end, are we listening to Jesus or to Heidegger with this approach?” (Benedict XVI, Interpretation, 2008). Ignoring the literal-historical sense, a originalist textualist posture, can lead to exactly such an aenigma

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92 *Peshat*: the literal, plain, straight forward sense; derived from Strong’s Hebrew #6584, *pashat*, meaning, “to strip off”, “make bare”.

93 *Midrash* – Strong’s Hebrew word #4097. In Strong’s Concordance, *midrash* means, “study, exposition, explore” (*Midrash*, Strong, #4097). The word is used twice in the First Testament: 2 Chronicles 13:22 and 2 Chr. 24:27.

94 *Pesher* – an Aramaic term meaning ‘solution’ or ‘interpretation’ (Longenecker, R, Exegesis, 1999, p. 24; Strong’s Hebrew #6592), peculiar to the Teacher of Righteousness of the Qumran community.

95 R. Longenecker refers to this concept as a Rabbinical “pattern of interpretation” (1999, p. 27).

hence the Rabbinical emphasis upon the *peshat* sense of the passage, first and foremost, to establish a rooted context.

Whilst a *peshat* reading of the events in the Garden explains the narrative in a plain sense, and which method has been endorsed by the subsequent Apostolic redactors and Jesus himself in Second Testament scriptures, it is unavoidable to explore additional early Palestinian Rabbinical hermeneutical devices in connection with historical narratives that contain a prophetic import. The aim will be to arrive at not only a deeper understanding of First Testament canonical events, but to ascertain whether or not redacted Second Testament occurrences can find any thematic correlation therewith, so many eons later. It is of pertinence to note that ancient Jewish exegesis is a system which "thinks more holistically, functionally, and practically than it does analytically" (Longenecker, R., Exegesis, 1999, p. xxv). The holistic method is well displayed in the *midrashic* hermeneutical strategy applicable to *haggadah*[96] (non-legal narratives[97]) which is particularly relevant to interpretation of prophetic scriptures. *Haggadah* passages should be contrasted[98] with those considered *halakah* (exclusively legal issues), which seek to interpret Biblical law, not prophetic narratives, in accordance with the *Torah* (Bruns, 1987, p. 628). Both these methods have given rise to significant *corpora* of interpretations. To elaborate further, and according to Bowker (1979, p. 48), *haggadah* means "what scripture tells in additional to its own meaning", that is, beyond its immediate context, a practice contraindicated in legal issues. In so doing, *haggadah* clarifies "the meaning of scripture and its application to the lives of others" (1979, p. 48), and so not strictly limited to the components of the original context, thence emphasizing the prophetic nature of the pericope. Subsequently, similar scenarios from disparate contexts are compared and contrasted, where appropriate, to elucidate and apply the meaning and lessons deduced from the original setting. Consequently, it will be particularly advantageous to examine if a *midrashic*

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96 Also referred to as *midrash haggadah* (*aggadata* or *haggada*, as alternate translations). The correct method of describing this hermeneutical strategy would be as follows: to undertake 'a *darash* (seeking out) of *midrashic haggadah* in Genesis 3 (as a sample text). In other words, to 'seek out a deeper meaning from a prophetic (non-legal) passage or study of the scriptures to show an ongoing pattern of interconnected events, thereby confirming the Divine's overall intentions through narratives pursuant to the original passage'. *Midrash Haggadah* was also extensively used to "derive sermonic implications from the Biblical text" (Telushkin, 1991). Edersheim refers to *haggadah* as "that which was said", i.e., "illustration, commentary, anecdote, clever or learned saying", to differentiate it from "Halakhah, traditional ordinance" (1993, p. 71).

97 David Halivni emphasizes that the use of *Haggadah* was "forbidden" in relation to exegesis of legal texts (1991, p. 3).

98 Alfred Edersheim says that "from the outset, Jewish theology divided into two branches: the *Halakhah* and the *Haggadah*. Unlike the *Halakhah*, *Haggadah* had no absolute authority, either as to doctrine, practice or exegesis, but all the greater would be its popular influence. Almost all the doctrinal teaching, however, of the synagogue is to be derived from the *Haggadah*, and this also is characteristic of Jewish tradition" (1993, pp. 8 – 9). E. P. Sanders concurs, affirming that, "rabbinic *midrash* was "primarily homiletic" and of "great religious value" (1977, p. 27).

haggadah[99] hermeneutical application to certain issues in the Garden narrative also find relevance in a fresh setting and, additionally, in a prophetic reiteration in later canonical scriptures, especially the eschaton. The advantage of such an inquiry is that credence would be added to the validity and inerrancy of the original Garden narrative as derived from an literal (*peshat*) reading. This practice would comply with Hillel's *middot*, specifically, *Dabar halamed me'inyano*" - a "meaning established by its context" (*supra*), thereby grounding further prophetic Garden *motif*s through the epochs of human history. The original pericope would be confirmed as an essential thematic part of the Creator's revelation to humankind, as contained within the complete ambit of prophetic canonical writings. To show a holistic and enduring *motif* pattern in canonical literature, emanating from the Edenic narrative, would further endorse both the historicity and perpetual relevance of the Garden passages. The reason being that Jewish exegesis of prophetic events is not simply a prediction and a single fulfilment - as understood by non-Rabbinical exegetes. Instead, it indicates an ongoing thematic pattern of prophetic events from inception, through sundry reiterations during the ages, with a final eschatological recapitulation and resolution.[100] The purpose of such technique would be to demonstrate the omniscient and dominant soteriological and eschatological purposes of the Divine, from creation to the eternal order. At the same time, the conundrum raised by the formidable intellectual, Pope Benedict XVI, is resolved through ancient Jewish Rabbinical hermeneutical strategy for he posits that, "If hermeneutics is ever to become convincing, the inner harmony between historical analysis and hermeneutical synthesis must first be found" (Interpretation, 2008).

2.3.4 Hillel's *Middot*

Hillel's seven *middot* commence with *Qal wahomer* – "what applies in a less important case will certainly apply in a more general case" (Bowker, 1979, p. 315), commonly known as "from light to heavy" (Strack, 1991, p. 21). This *middot* will be constructive when applied in a *midrashic* approach to *haggadah* Garden events. Employment thereof will show that what was relevant at the beginning ("light"), in Genesis, will be even more relevant ("heavier") in a later setting (the Second Testament context of the Apostolic redactors, for instance), and, finally, most relevant ("heavy") in the eschaton (*cf.,* Apostle John's Revelation). The period of the Apocalypse, giving advent to the eternal order, is when the resolution of the Creator's disrupted redemptive plan for humankind occurs in a sanctified restoration of the Edenic scenario. Many of the *motifs* from the Garden narrative will be found repeated as a pattern in

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99 Bloch refers to "*haggadic midrash*" *(cf.,* Sanders, E. P., 1977, p. 27).
100 *cf.,* Prasch, 1999, p. 40.

such an exploration, for patterns of past events are typological guides to interpreting future occurrence, with anticipation of an eschatological fulfillment (*cf.,* Cullmann, 1967, p. 86; *cf.,* 1 Cor. 10:11).

The remaining six *middot* – as summarized by Richard Longenecker (1999, pp. 20 -21) may be recounted briefly as follows:

- *Gezerah shawah* – "verbal analogy from one verse to another", thus establishing a parallel link between ostensibly diverse situations and texts;
- *Binyan ab mikathub 'ehad* – "building up a family from a single text: when the same phrase is also found in a number of passages". Bowker (1969, p. 315), explains that the, "consideration found in any one of them applies to all of them";
- *Binyan 'ab mishene kethubim* – "building up a family from two texts: when a principle is established by relating two texts together, the principle can then be applied to other passages";
- *Kelal upherat* – "the general and the particular: a general principle may be restricted by a particularization of it in another verse, or, conversely, a particular rule may be extended into a general principle";
- *Kayoze' bo bemaqom 'aher* – "as is found in another place: a difficulty in one text may be solved by comparing it with another that has points of general similarity";
- *Dabar halamed me-'inyano* – "a meaning established its context".

The use of Hillel's *middot* finds credence not only in early Rabbinical exegesis but also later when employed by St. Paul, for instance, in the subsequent Second Testament period. Longenecker (1999, p. 100), confirms that Hillel's *middot*, "appear to underlie the manner of Paul's Biblical exegesis at a number of places in his letters", thereby giving enduring authenticity to ancient Rabbinical interpretive techniques. The significance of an interconnectedness between ancient Jewish Rabbinical exegesis and application thereof by Second Testament Apostolic redactors is that, as brought to attention by Jacob Prasch (*cf.,* 2005, pp. 37 – 41), theological construals such as amillennialist or post-millennialist Dominionism and Restorationism (Reconstructionism) – which have given vent to contemporary errors like 'Kingdom Now' theology and its derivative, the 'Prosperity Gospel', can be successfully repudiated. These errors, which negate the Jewish concept of a multilateral, intertextual, pattern of prophecy and a continuing prophetic program of the Creator, from commencement in the Edenic Garden (Gen. 3:15) until the eternal order (Rev. 21-22), are predicated upon an idiosyncratic selection from five individual grammatical-historical principles, listed and elucidated as follows:

- Preterism – the events described were fulfilled “in the past” (Erikson, 1985, p. 1154ff.);
- Historicism – “the events described were in the future at time of the writer” (Erikson, 1985, p. 1154ff.), but history reveals whether or not they, or some or most of them, were fulfilled or occurring at the present time of the exegete;
- Idealism – all events are “not to be thought of in a time sequence”, but refer to timeless truths, “not to singular historical occurrences” (Erikson, 1985, p. 1154ff.);
- Futurism – “most of the events described are in the future”, to be fulfilled at the end of the age (Erikson, 1985, p. 1154ff.);
- Prasch adds the concept of Polemicism, which he describes as a view, “designed to encourage the persecuted Church at times of acute distress”, (2005, p. 38), much like the Book of Psalms. Hence, in a polemicist understanding, there is no necessity for present or future fulfilment of prophetic events as the original context reveals a timeless principle for encouragement of the Church, similar to Idealism.

These diverse views indicate an individualist, unilateral, approach to understanding prophetic events, whereas the Rabbinical holistic strategy incorporates all, or most, of them together in a multifaceted application of Hillel’s *middot*. Wherefore, in Jewish holistic thought, but using grammatical-historical terms, ‘preterism’ describes past events, but which events have a contemporary ‘historicist’ iteration and a ‘futurist’ application. The prophetic events reveal ‘timeless truths’ (idealism) which are designed to ‘encourage the persecuted Church’ (polemicism). Clearly, Hillel’s *middot* holistically incorporate the five grammatical-historical views of prophecy. Using the first *middot* as an example: preterism, historicism, and futurism are all explicated through *Qal wahomer* in that, “what applies in a less important case will certainly apply in a more general case”. Thus, a past event (preterist), in a “less important case”, will have some fulfillment and/or contemporary application (historicist) in a “more general case”, which includes a future (futurist) relevance. To continue, the events contain a ‘timeless truth’, for what was relevant at the beginning will certainly continue to be relevant at a later and a final stage (idealism); and, this ‘timeless truth’ (polemicism), would ‘encourage the persecuted Church’. The advantage of Hillel’s *middot* based *midrashic haggadah* hermeneutical approach, is that all fundamental grammatical-historical approaches, and more, are utilized together to compile a holistic view of prophetic events, and so gain a more comprehensive and intertextual understanding of the Creator’s overall redemptive program for his people.

2.3.5 Applied *Darash*

Judaic scholar, Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz (2008), clarifies that the "method of exposition of *midrash haggadah* scriptural verses", namely, the practical application of Hillel's *middot,* is generally referred to as "*derash*".[101] James Sanders extends the explanation of *derash* as a *midrashic* expository technique by stating that this approach is specifically used, "to 'search' ('*darash'*[102]) Scripture and tradition and means reading them and seeking light from them on new situations – precisely what the prophets, psalmists, and historians did, as well as their heirs who wrote early Jewish literature".[103] This understanding of *darash* is endorsed by the "world-renowned Jewish scholar" Prof. David Halivni,[104] when he confirms that, "Rabbinic *derash* is the applied meaning", whereas "scriptural *peshat* is the plain meaning" of the narrative.[105] Ergo, it is quite sound to search (*darash*) for verification of a *haggadah* passage and to gather further illumination in subsequent scripture through the ancient hermeneutical tool of *midrash*[106] and apply the revelation therein to a fresh situation. Nonetheless, only once the plain, contextual, reading of the narrative has first been established through the use of *peshat*, should further illumination be sought through the use of *darash.* This is alluded to by Halivni, when he states that "*darash* may be embraced without the necessary abandonment of scriptural *peshat* " (1991, p. viii).[107] Adherence to such method will ensure not only the contextualization of the passage, and so avoid straying into subjective interpretative conjectures, but will restrain any temptation to deduce doctrine detached from the original setting of the narrative, particularly for those who wish to allegorise or redefine the meaning and intent of scripture.[108]

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101 Alternate English translations of the Hebrew verb, דָּרַשׁ are '*derash'* or '*darash'*, depending on the translator. Both versions are used interchangeably herein. Edersheim refers to "the *derush*" (1993, p. 14).

102 'Strong's Exhaustive Concordance' defines the Hebrew verb #1875, *darash*, as "to seek"; to "investigate; to "search out a meaning"; to "inquire", and so on (*Darash*, #1875, Strong's 'Dictionary of Hebrew Words', p. 31). Strong lists numerous canonical applications of this word. See note #22 above, indicating the close interrelatedness between *midrash* and *darash*.

103 Sanders, J. A., 1993, p. xii.

104 Prof. David Novak confirms that Halivni is rated a "world-renowned Jewish scholar" (Halivni, 2022).

105 Halivni, D., 1991, p. xiii.

106 The Hebrew term *midrash* is used in 2 Chronicles 13:22 and 24:27.

107 David Halivni does acknowledge a tension between the *peshat* (plain) sense and the applied sense (*derash*), specifically between the "straightforward, austere, sense of a scriptural text and the more creative, seemingly artificial, interpretation that the rabbinic tradition has affixed to it". However, he posits that the two exegetical methods result in the goal of "holistic coherence" of scripture. (1991, pp. xiii – xiv). It needs also to be borne in mind that scripture does not only have an academic, theological, function aimed at a select few, but has a wide, applied, homiletical purpose.

108 Edersheim posits that whichever exegetical method was applied to understand the scriptures through *midrash*, the scholar first relied on a *peshat* meaning ("a simple criticism of the words"), before engaging "the *derush* - a search into the possible applications of the text" (1993, p. 14).

In comport with Russell's deduction, namely, that, "the pattern of the past is the pattern of the future".[109] The use of a *midrashic* hermeneutical strategy, corporately utilizing Hillel's *middot*, is designed to divulge the "pattern of the future" from past events. And so, exegesis through an applied *darash* of pertinent prophetic, *haggadah,* narratives reveal a *midrashic* ongoing pattern, a *motif*, of events derived from disparate but thematically interrelated texts. An example is the creation saga described in Genesis 1-3, and the relevance thereof to a "new situation" (*ibid*.), with ultimate relevance at "the end of all things" (1 Pet. 4:7). The "new situation", for Second Testament exegetes, would be certain contemporary events and revelations now requiring to be understood from a Christocentric point of view. As a result, narratives in St. John's gospel would be examined in light of the creation events in Genesis 1-2 in order to elucidate certain related pivotal events. In like manner, John's book of Revelation would be similarly examined and read together with both Genesis 1-2 and John's Gospel. A *darash* will reveal that certain passages in John's Gospel are a *midrash*, a repeated intertextual verification, of the Genesis creation pericopes depicting corporate, typological, enduring *motifs*, having a final fulfilment in the eschaton, as recorded in John's Apocalypse. Especially noteworthy is the interconnected, tripartite, *motif* of creation - new creation (a 'fresh' situation) - final creation, which first emerges in the Genesis book, validated further in John's Gospel and concluded in the Apocalypse. The net effect depicts and endorses the theocentric inextricability and interdependence of both canons, and all three canonical texts with each other. Only when considered together, can the three texts add to what St. Paul refers to as the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), and to what Halivni terms the "holistic coherence" of scripture.[110] Exclusively through a *darash* of apposite texts, using a *midrashic* hermeneutical methodology of *haggadic* passages, can the enduing importance and unity of otherwise seemingly disparate and diverse narratives be shown to have a common, recurrent, and persistent thematic scriptural pattern, a mutual *motif*, from the commencement of time (Genesis), until the end of time (Apocalypse).

There are many parallels in these passages, but, in order to avoid prolixity, only four[111] pericopes thematically linking Genesis, St. John's Gospel, and the Apocalypse are considered holistically, to exemplify a *darash* exposition of disparate texts:

- The theme of the presence of the Divine with his people: The Genesis account of the Divine walking in the Garden at Eden, in Genesis 3:8a, namely, "they heard the sound

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109 Russell, 1964, p. 231.
110 Halivni, 1991, p. xiii.
111 Demonstration of this exegetical and hermeneutical strategy is expanded upon in Chapters 6 and 8, and considered throughout the study.

of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day", is retold in John 1:14 as, "and the word became flesh and dwelt among us". It is in the "new heavens and the new earth", the period of the eternal order, that the presence of the Divine will forever be with his people, for, "the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it (the eschatological "holy city of Jerusalem" [Rev. 21;10]), and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads (Rev. 22:3-4);

- The theme of light: In Gen. 1:16 it is stated that, "God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars". St. John, too, writes that, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world" (Jn. 1:6-9). Moreover, in John 8:12, "Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world". In both accounts there are two lights: the greater light of the day (represented by the Living Word in the Gospel narrative), and the lesser light of the moon by night (John the Baptist, in John's account). It is in the eternal order that the repeated *motif* of light is concluded for, "the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it" (Rev. 21:23 – 24; *cf.,* Rev. 22:5);
- The theme of life-giving water: In Gen. 1:2, creation ensued when the Spirit of God moved over water, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" – water, necessary for all life on earth. Likewise, in John 4, through the move of God's Spirit, life-giving water, a new creation resulted, "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn. 4:14). Elucidated further in John 3:5, "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'". The theme of life-giving water is fulfilled in the eternal order, "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the city" (Rev. 22:1-2);
- The general theme of creation - fresh situation - final recreation: Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth". This verse is to be connected to a fresh situation in a Second testament context, "All things (*cf.,* Gal. 6:15) were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3); and to the final recreation in the eternal order, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,

for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more" (Rev. 21:1ff.), thus fulfilling the initial creation saga commenced in Genesis 1 – 2;

As a result, the Rabbinical *midrashic* hermeneutical pattern of repeated prophetic events (past, present and future), validates the tripartite *motif* of initial creation (Gen. 1 – 3), 'new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), and a final eschatological[112] creation (Rev. 21). In this way, credence is imparted to the postulate that it is in the eternal order when the Creator's plan for restoration of the interrupted Edenic soteriological scenario takes place in a holistic conclusion of earlier creation events, being the ultimate purpose of prophetic scriptures.

2.3.6 The Teacher of Righteousness

Within the setting of the Second Temple period, an exegetical search for meaning through application of *darash* was also used, in a narrow sense, by the Qumran community's Teacher of Righteousness. The basic difference between a Rabbinical exegesis, through application of a *darash* of *midrashic haggadah* texts, and a *pesher* interpretive method of the Dead Sea sect, was that the latter directly applied an apocalyptic appreciation of a historical prophetic text to their immediate situation, a dual import. On the other hand, Rabbinic interpretation understood past events as having application not only to their current situation but that a tripartite, eschatological, resolution was anticipated in the future. *Pesher* exegesis was unique to the Qumran community, who adopted a "perspective of imminent apocalyptic fulfilment".[113] Qumran scholar, Marvin Pate, summarized the distinguishing features of *pesher* exegesis as follows:

- The sect's view was that the, "biblical prophets ultimately referred not to their own time but to the latter days of history";
- The Qumran sectaries, "believed that they were living in the end times and that therefore biblical prophecy alluded to the Dead Sea Scrolls sect alone";
- The sectarian view that the necessary, "spiritual acumen for grasping the meaning of the text was God's gift to the Qumran members";
- The singular, "leading figure", at Qumran, the Teacher of Righteousness, was alone "granted divine wisdom to interpret properly" an original text, "by applying its end time fulfillment to his own ministry" (Pate, 2000, pp. 42-43).

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112 Theologian Brian Walsh aptly refers to eschatological reconciliation as "the reconsecration of all creation". He explains that, "all of creation is sacred, sin is the desecration of that good creation, and reconciliation is the reconsecration of desecrated space" (Sacred, 2022).

113 Longenecker, R., Exegesis, 1999, p. 25.

In the view of the Qumran sect, only the Teacher of Righteous, a Gnostic-type Elite[114] exegete, was divinely appointed to determine, through his *pesher* reading, the meaning and existential implication of scripture and applying it to the Community's prevailing situation. He was the sole source[115] of *gnosis* for the Community in interpreting the *raz* - the mystery of the text. The Teacher generally ignored the *peshat* sense and prophetically applied the text directly to a contemporary, generally existential, situation faced by the Covenanters.[116] The Covenanters perceived themselves as the true spiritual and exegetical representatives of the compromised Second Temple in Jerusalem, believing that "they were the restored Israel living in the last days" (Pate, 2000, p. 20). Hence, only they, through a *pesher* by the Teacher of Righteousness, could truly comprehend the ancient texts.

In the Covenantors' understanding, the text under consideration had a relatable application to their eschatological *Sitz im Leben,* irrespective of the original context of the prophetic work. All prophetic passages were understood as having final application in the Second Temple period of the Qumran community, and it was incumbent upon the Teacher of Righteousness, through his sole interpretive authority of *raz* - *pesher* [117] to reveal the truth of the passage. The scrolls of the Qumran sectaries, like documents of other Palestinian Rabbinical scholars, reveal that the "*pesher* method…testifies to a Jewish belief in the eternal message of the Bible and a need to find guidance for today in the divine message of yesterday" (Reif, 1998, p. 148). Reif's statement summates the core purpose for employing a *midrashic darash* hermeneutical exegesis, namely, to prove a continuous prophetic *motif* throughout the ages, with particular application in the contemporary setting of the exegete, but with a final, future, eschatological pertinence. For the Qumran Covenanters, however, they held themselves as currently living in the eschaton, searching the scriptures for guidance on their imminent destiny.

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114 The similarities between Nag Hammadi and Qumran literature are emphasized by one concept, that of dualism, according to Professor Craig Evens. Evens states that, "there are some general parallels between Nag Hammadi and Qumran for there is dualism at Qumran (such as light and darkness, truth and falsehood) and dualism is a major ingredient in Gnosticism" (Discussion, 1997, p. 146). However, Evans overlooks the Gnostic idea that *gnosis* is only obtainable through an initiated Elite. Both Qumran's Teacher of Righteous and Platonic (and neo-Platonic) Gnostic masters claimed to be the sole sources of *gnosis* for their respective community.

115 In this manner, the Teacher of Righteousness acted in the role of a Gnostic-type Elite, with exclusive, mystical, secret, knowledge imparted to him alone, which knowledge he then dispersed to his acolytes, the initiated sect members. This is not dissimilar to the Roman Catholic Popes' use of *Sensus Plenior.*

116 *cf.,* Longenecker, R., Exegesis, 1999, p. 24.

117 R. Longenecker attests that the correct designation of the sect's exegesis is the "*raz – pesher* revelational motif", that is, the interpretation of the mystery" (1999, p. 26), rather than simply, *pesher*.

2.3.7 Summation

A *midrashic* approach to predictive *haggadah* texts is best understood as being a Rabbinical hermeneutical technique employed in order to confirm the ongoing, repeated, relevance of a *motif* pattern, evident not only in the historic, prophetic, text before the exegetes, but in later scenarios, particularly in their existing setting, but with an eschatological[118] fulfilment. In such an endeavour, the application of a prophecy arising from an extrapolative text can be fulfilled, or applied *mutatis mutandis,*[119] in a number of ensuing scenarios, but will have ultimate completion at the end of time. This hermeneutical tool is reminiscent of F. F. Bruce's, "this is that" technique (1968, pp. 9, 51), where he brings to attention St. Peter's speech in Acts, "But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16), when referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which itself has relevance in the eschaton with the great harvest of souls (Rev. 7). Here is a further exemplar of a First Testament prophetic *motif* (Joel 2:28), having pertinence in a fresh (Second Testament) situation (Acts 2:16), with ultimate implementation eschatologically (Rev. 7:9 ff.).

The aforegoing examples all definitively demonstrate that early Palestinian Rabbinical exegesis *vis-a-vis* certain events in the prophetic and apocalyptic texts, not simply as a once-off fulfilled event but, rather, as a thematic pattern of *motifs* having multiple applications in relevant contexts which culminate in apocalyptic resolution.[120] As Russell (1964, p. 231), so aptly summated, the Rabbis firmly believed that, "the pattern of the future" is ascertained from past patterns, and this basic conception was adopted by both Palestinian Rabbinical scholars and Apostolic redactors utilizing Hillel's hermeneutical *middot*. James Sanders posits that the "early Christians did not search scripture primarily for support of what they already thought; they searched it to find out how to think about what had happened and was happening" (Sanders, J. A. 1993, p. xiii). To do so, they multilaterally employed Hillel's *middot* for elucidation of their situation and the future. Faced with many challenges, early disciples of the Messiah considered that they were perhaps personally experiencing the predicted turbulent 'end of times' (*cf*., Matt. 24), immediately before the second advent (*cf.,* 2 Thes. 1:5-10ff.; Matt. 24). In their view, engaging a *midrashic* hermeneutic through *darash* revealed, from a fresh

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118 The sect expected that the end would come through an "eschatological war" (Collins, End, 1997, p. 86).

119 *mutatis mutandis* – 'with the necessary (or respective) changes (or differences) having been noted or considered'.

120 *cf.,* Prasch, 1999*,* p. 20.

Christocentric perspective, what was happening and what was going to happen at the end of times[121] - in the future eschaton and the eternal order.

Sanders (1993, p. xvii) posits that a *midrashic* hermeneutic of *haggadic* canonical texts exposited through a *darash*, "applied intertextually and *midrashically* to all the Bible will someday bring us to see that the Bible, as canon and as parable, is ultimately not about Jews and non-Jews in any of its parts, but reflects normal, human protagonists and antagonists in many kinds of situations". To which can be added: to enable exegetes to comprehend the imperishable, eternal, interrelationship, and weight of intertextual Christocentric prophetic passages through an enduring situational *leitmotif,* holistically evident from both the canons. In this respect, it may well be queried as to why ancient Rabbinical exegesis is applied here rather than a suitable Western, modern, hermeneutic. The answer is simple: there is no methodology in the Western hermeneutical tradition that provides the holistic insights that ancient Jewish exegesis reveals. Pope Benedict XVI, in his essay on the 'Central Problem' facing Western interpretive methodology states that:

"The scholarly search to find a better synthesis between the historical and theological methods is ongoing. This can be seen from the fact that hardly anyone today would assert that a truly pervasive understanding of this whole problem has yet been found that takes into account both the undeniable insights uncovered by the historical method, while at the same time overcoming its limitations and disclosing them in a thoroughly relevant hermeneutic".[122]

With pertinence to prophetic narratives, there is no Western exegetical practice which employs a thematic, whole-Bible approach. That is, from inception of the scriptures to the finality of the eternal order encompassing historical, grammatical and theological methodologies, revealing insights in the manner of holistic Rabbinical exegetical, thematic, methodology. Pope Benedict appears unaware of ancient Jewish *midrashic darash* hermeneutical methodology, particularly with relevance to prophetic narratives. This is understandable for the fact remains that Western exegetical practice does not generally embrace the Jewish exegetical tradition and is therefore unaware of how to holistically apply First Testament prophetic narratives. To the contrary, the ancient Rabbinical exegetical tradition, originating within the Second Temple period of Palestine, was utilized by the Apostolic writers and continues to remains highly relevant in understanding prophetic content.

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121 *Cf.,* Collins, End, 1997, pp. 79-82.
122 Pope Benedict XVI, Interpretation, 2008.

2.4 Conclusion

Although the book of Genesis is a primarily a historical account of events, the effect of the transactions in the Garden scenes, for instance, is recounted prophetically in later situations, like those of the Second Testament texts, the so-called "new situation" (*ibid*.), in order to meet and comprehend newly arisen circumstances. So, when Adam and Eve hid from God after having rejected him (Gen. 3:8, "the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God"), the Living Word, the Creator God, in like manner but in a 'fresh usage', "came to his own, and his own people did not receive him", as the Apostle John points out (Jn. 1:11). John's passage indicates that such negative reception was not unexpected and actually had a historical precedence (*cf.,* Gen. 3:8). In the aforegoing example, the *motif* pattern of rejection finds restoration only in the eschaton itself (Rev. 21:3, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people"). The repetition of a designated thematic *motif* in assorted but otherwise unconnected texts, gives credence and a futuristic application to the initial scriptures whose legitimacy is consequently enhanced, and better comprehended. The above *darash* of a Genesis thematic *haggadah midrash* interlinked with St. John's Gospel and his Apocalypse (*ibid*.), is indicative of the effectiveness of such a hermeneutical process. In the result, the actuality, inerrancy, coherence, completeness, perfection, and historicity, of the Creator's redemptive program for the pinnacle of his creation, humankind, is underscored.

The ongoing struggle for orthodoxy, through endemic criticism and scepticism of the authenticity of Genesis, is countered by the verification of continual close thematic relationships, with subsequent canonical scriptures, through a Rabbinical[123] *midrashic darash* of repeated *motifs,* as exemplified above. Furthermore, the numerous Apostolic and Messianic endorsements add credence to the literal and historical nature of the first canonical book. The historicity of the existence of the Apostle John himself, as the author of five canonical books, cannot easily be decried nor can the historicity of the other Apostolic redactors and, particularly, of Jesus. By extension, the authenticity and inerrancy of remaining canonical scriptures is likewise accentuated. It should also be mentioned that the genealogies set out in 1 Chronicles 1, and in reverse order in Luke 3:23-36, commence with the line of Adam. If the historicity of Adam is summarily dismissed, so too must all the Biblical personages mentioned in the redacted genealogies, together with the Messiah himself who descends from Adam

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[123] Professor Peter Flint emphasizes that "Rabbinic Judaism has survived and other expressions of Judaism have fallen by the wayside" (1997, Discussion, p. 145). The continual influence of Rabbinical Talmudic Judaism into the present era verifies Flint's postulate. In like manner, the continual legitimacy of a Rabbinic *midrashic haggadah* hermeneutic is verified.

through the distaff line. Similarly, the historicity of the flood then has to be dismissed despite extra-Biblical accounts of the flood such as in the writings of Berossus, the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, the Targum Neofiti,[124] and in many others. It is therefore posited that in the corporate, innate, memory of diverse people groups is contained awareness of the deluge saga. John Day (2011, p. 211), reached the deduction that, ”It has long been recognised by modern scholars that there is a connection between the account of Noah’s flood in Genesis 6-8 and the Mesopotamian flood tradition”.

Finally, the irrefutable actualization in subsequent history of the prophetic *protoevangelium* redacted in Genesis 3:15, became manifest many thousands of years later in the verifiable, historic, and literal person of the Messiah of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, the Redeemer of humankind. In such conclusive manner is the literal and historical legitimacy of the Genesis saga demonstrated. Accordingly, in Chapter 3, the Edenic Garden events can rightfully be considered in their historic, literal, and prophetic context.

[124] Day, J., 2011, p. 213.

CHAPTER THREE: TRANSACTIONS IN THE GARDEN AT EDEN[125]

> *"It all starts with Faith yet ends in Politics" – 'Tout commence en mystique et finit en politique'* (Charles Péguy, Notre Jeunesse, 1910).

3.1 Introduction

In the paradisiacal and primordial environment of the *axis mundi* established by the Creator for communion with his creation and for the pleasure and enjoyment of his two created human beings, the first man and woman, the Creator sited a variety of creatures. Most notably was the serpent – a *Doppelgänger*, mimesis, agent, or *nom de guerre* of the fallen Archangel Lucifer,[126] the indefatigable antagonist of the Divine (*cf.,* Gen. 3).

At some unknown stage previously, the Archangel Lucifer - who became known also as Satan or the Devil – had been ejected from heaven and exiled to the earth together with his epigones.[127] Lucifer's rebellion against the Divine was based on a hubristic and *ressentiment* motive to exalt himself as the Most High Deity and to set up a kingdom structure under his own rule. This incident is alluded to in the prophetic books of Isaiah, 14:14, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself[128] like the Most High"; and in Ezekiel 28:15, "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness[129] was found in you"'.

While acknowledging the historicity of the King of Tyre in Isaiah 14, he is but a type of the anti-type, Satan. That Satan is the personage actually referred to in the pericope is generally accepted by most evangelical scholars such as Grudem (1994, p. 413); Erickson (1985, p. 586) and Ryrie (1999, p. 164). This posit finds additional support when Jesus undoubtedly refers to Isaiah 14:12 ("How you are fallen from heaven O Day Star, son of Dawn"), in the passage of Luke 10, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (v. 18). The same position applies to Ezekiel 28, where verse 13 specifically places Satan in the Garden at Eden itself, "You were in Eden, the garden of God". Moreover, there is a cogent historical *nexus* between Tyre[130] as mentioned in Ezekiel 28, and that of Babylon referred to in Isa. 14. This appears

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125 The ensuing study of disparate transactions recorded in early Genesis and thereafter, is not designed to be exhaustive nor all inclusive. Only selected aspects are explored, all of which are existential in their essence and which will have specific relevance to events later examined. The underlying, fundamental, principles of diverse transactions will be analysed, and thereafter contentions will be deduced in a synthesised conclusion.

126 Whatever the capacity of the serpent, Lucifer remains vicariously responsible for its actions.

127 *cf.,* Lk. 10:18; Rev. 12:9.

128 *'eddammeh'* – "I will make myself like.." (Strong's 1819, Hebrew).

129 '*awlāṯāh'* - "iniquity" (Strong's 5766 Hebrew).

130 Sometime under the dominion of Sidon, whose patron goddess was Ashtoreth; *cf.*, 1 Kings 11:5.

from the fact that the onetime ruler of Tyre was Ethbaal,[131] the heathen high priest of Ashtoreth, whose daughter Jezebel married King Ahab of Israel. The marriage aligned together the people of God with pagan Tyre, despite a Mosaic injunction against such alliances.[132] As a result, King Ahab was led astray by Jezebel and worshipped heathen gods,[133] including the female deity Ashtoreth, directly leading the nation of Israel into spiritual idolatry. Furthermore, Tyre became subject to Babylonian suzerainty,[134] and in so doing became further morally corrupted by Tyre's heathen practices.[135] Although Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, in the first instance refer to the historical persons of the King of Babylon and the Prince of Tyre respectively, the close historical interrelation between the two as purveyors of nefarious spiritual seduction underscores the reasoning that those two personages are typologically representative of the anti-type, Satan himself who is, in such manner, alluded to in both passages. This claim is sustained by the pericopes of Revelation 14:8-13; 17:5-19; 18:1-4 ff., where the spiritual Babylon, a paradigmatic moniker for all that is evil and, particularly, the demonic force that frequently led the people of God into spiritual adultery through idol worship and salacious action, is ultimately annihilated in eschatological events.

Lastly in this respect, Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, lends support to the aforegoing in his masterpiece, 'City of God', where he asserts that, "what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the person of the King of Babylon". Augustine goes on to say, "Ezekiel says, 'Thou has been in Eden'".[136] Appropriately, the personage of Satan can be identified as both the King of Babylon[137] and Prince of Tyre[138] in the pericopes under contemplation. Satan's *hybris,*[139] as stated in Ezekiel 28:17 ("Your heart was proud because of your beauty"), and in Ezekiel 28:2 ("Because your heart is proud[140] and you have said, 'I am a god" [*'êl*]), motivated his indefatigable attempt to take pre-eminence in the heavenly structures; to usurp the role of God and to set up his own *Lebensraum.*[141] Satan's pride resulted in his exile from heaven and being despatched to earth. The first post-exilic encounter with this unique personage is evident in

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131 c. 897 B.C.E.; *cf.,* 1 Kings 16:31
132 *cf.,* Deut. 7:3-6.
133 1 Kings 16:29-33.
134 *cf.,* Ezek. 28:19.
135 *cf.*, Douglas, 1962, p. 1228 ff.
136 1890, Book XI, Ch. 15, p. 308.
137 *cf.,* Isa. 14.
138 *cf.,* Ezek. 28.
139 The Greek word, *hybris*, was employed by Hellenist poets, Hesiod (7th c., B.C.E.) and Aeschylus (5th c., B.C.E.) to describe, "wrongful action against the divine order", thereby denoting "impiety" (Britannica, *Hybris*, 2022). It is this understanding of *hybris* (hubris) that is applied in this study.
140 Literally: "your heart is exalted"; *gabahh* (Strong's 1361, Hebrew).
141 *Lebensraum* – "Territory believed to be necessary for existence or self-sufficiency" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

the pericope of Genesis 3, where he is presented as a serpent in the Garden at Eden, the sanctuary on earth designed for the Creator's *sui generis* humans, Adam and Eve.

It is a matter of some polemic whether Satan himself was masquerading as the serpent or whether the serpent was an agent of Satan much as the Second Testament Judas was entered into by Satan, thereby becoming his instrument. Luke 22: 3, recounts that, "Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the number of the Twelve". Ephrem Syrus, in his 'Commentary on Genesis', submits that, "Satan spoke through it", that is, the serpent.[142] But in the '*Kitab Al-Magall'* it is explained thus, "Satan retained his envy of Adam and Eve because of the favour which the Lord had conferred on them. And he contrived to enter into the serpent".[143] Ephraim's version in 'The Cave of Treasures' Targum elucidates as follows, "And when Satan saw that Adam and Eve were happy and joyful in Paradise, that Rebel was smitten with jealousy, and he became filled with wrath. And he went and took up abode in the serpent".[144]

And so Satan, with *schadenfreude*[145] as a motive, was the pernicious instigator of the crime although the two human accomplices were, indubitably, individually responsible[146] for their own *actus reus.*[147] As the first-born human of the Creator, and in accordance with his ordained hierarchy, in the manner of corporate solidarity,[148] Adam remained ultimately responsible for the disaster.[149] He faced the existential choice of life or death and, in the words of the renowned Jewish sage, Rabbi Aquiba, "chose for himself the way of death",[150] with full federal consequences.[151] The *methodeiae* of the mendacious serpent, the *doppelgänger*[152] for Satan, has persisted through the ages in his diligent attempt to derail the Creator's *heilsgeschichte*.[153] Satan's agenda will only be concluded in the eschaton when, at last, his insidious, ubiquitous, and diabolical strategies are exposed and he is permanently terminated, "the devil who had

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142 Ephrem, Genesis, §2, para. 16.
143 Kitab Al-Magall, 94 b – 95 a, p. 7.
144 Ephraim, Cave, Fol. 3 b, Col. 1, The First 1,000 years.
145 *Schadenfreude* – "Pleasure derived from the misfortunes of others" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).
146 St. Paul explains that, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, each individual is personally responsible for his/her actions.
147 *Actus reus* – an unlawful act.
148 Chou, Solidarity, 2003, p. 3.
149 Paul confirms that Adam was held primarily responsible for the whole disaster, the consequence being that, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men" (Rom. 5:12).
150 Bowker, Targums, 1979, p. 130.
151 In this context, 'federal' has the same implication as that of 'corporate solidarity'.
152 *Doppelgänger* - a double, duplicate, twin or replica of someone (Merriam-Webster, 2022).
153 *Heilsgeschichte* – "history of salvation" (Merriam-Webster, 2022), i.e., the Creator's soteriological program.

deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

3.2 Imago Dei

That the Creator ascribed his image, the *imago Dei*, to the apex of his creation, first two humans, is set out in Genesis 1:27, "So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them". This disclosure is repeated in Genesis 5:1, "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God". In a postdiluvian context, after all the unrighteous had been destroyed, the Divine emphasised the continued sacred *imago Dei* of humankind to Noah and his sons, "God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:6). The *imago Dei* of all persons was confirmed in the Second Testament context by St. Paul, "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11:7). Evolutionists' contrary claims of human origins are defeated by the words of the Redeemer-Messiah who endorsed the fact that the First Couple were created in the exact manner recounted in Genesis, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4).

In Sanhedrin 38b of the Talmud, Rabbi Yohanan is quoted as saying, "The verse states, 'And God created man in His image'*"* (Genesis 1:27; *cf*., William Davidson Talmud). To develop this theme further, Sanhedrin 38b, also refers to a comment by the Amoraim Rav Nahman,[154] who, in usual Talmudic style, quotes Rav Idit replying to a heretic, "This term, 'the Lord,' in that verse is referring to the angel Metatron, whose name is like the name of his Master, as it is written: 'Behold I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Take heed of him and obey his voice; do not defy him; for he will not pardon your transgression, for My name is in him'" (*cf.,* Exodus 23:20 - 21). The import of this passage is that just as the name of God is "in him" – in an angelic being - how much more, *mutatis mutandis*, is the name of God in his earthly children, commencing with the First Couple. Whether or not the Metatron is the pre-incarnate Messiah is beyond the purview of this treatise. Yet, the issue of persons bearing the name of the Creator is only possible in the event of the Spirit of the Creator also being imputed, in the same manner as generating a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). In the Letter to the Church of Pergamum, the ascended and glorified Messiah, asserts that, "To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone" (Rev. 2:12). Likewise in the epistle to the Church at Philadelphia, "I will write on him the name of my God" (Rev. 3:12).

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[154] '*Amoraim'* refers to the scholars in the land of Israel and Babylonia who succeeded the earlier scholars, the *Tannaim* (c. 220 – 370 C.E.); (Amoraim, Judaica, 2008).

This concept is elucidated by the passage in John 1:12-13, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”. The Letters to the seven Churches of Revelation 2-3, are addressed to Christian believers, those Jews and Gentiles who have accepted the Redeemer-Messiah as their God. Christians could only be so-called if they had received an impartation, an anointing, of the divine Spirit of Christ following repentance from sinfulness. The significance of this is that the devastating effects of the transgression in the Garden by the federal First Couple, in essence Adam himself as the representative of the couple, had to be reversed in order for a recreation to ensue and to thereby restore humankind’s filial relationship with the Creator, in righteousness and holiness. In a prelapsarian context, the eternal Spirit of the Creator was ascribed to the First Couple giving them life, “the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath[155] of life” (Gen. 2:7). And in the postlapsarian situation, the Redeemer-Messiah who in his milieu, and in ordaining the “new creation” (1 Cor. 5:17), likewise, “breathed on them and said to them, ‘receive the Holy Spirit’” (Jn. 20:22). In both instances (*viz*., Gen. 2:7 LXX, and Jn. 20:22), the same verb[156] was used, emphasising both the creation and the recreation event, and so the thematic coherence of the divine plan of redemption.

The image of the Creator, assigned equally to all humankind, incorporates his divine attributes of holiness, love, eternity, glory, divinity, cognitive ability, law and justice. This was required due to the fact that God, “predestined his people[157] to be conformed to the image of his son” (Rom. 8:29). In order to effect conformation, he made them in his own image, breathing life through his Spirit, and with eternity in their hearts (Ec. 3:11). In Targum ‘Pseudo–Jonathan’, the comments on Adam receiving the Creator’s breath of life, are related as follows: “and the living breath was in the body of Adam for a spirit able to speak, for the enlightening of the eyes, and for the hearing of the ears” (§1, Ch. 2, L. 9-10). This image incorporates the likeness of God’s Spirit, and implies the trinitarian nature of God, for Gen. 1:26 records, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”. As no one can look upon God and live, “you cannot see

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155 ‘*Neshamah’,* the Divine Spirit of God (Strong’s 5397, Hebrew).

156 ‘*emphusaó’* – *ενεφύσησεν* (Strong’s 1720, Greek).

157 In a broad sense, all humankind, all people, constitute the family of God for they were created in the image of God. However, there is a significant difference between members of the broad family of God and members of the narrow household of God. In the new dispensation, membership in the household of God is available to all who respond in faith to the salvific call of the Redeemer-Messiah, that is, those who become “new creations” (Gal. 6:15). Aristotle defines ‘household’ as being “a family, understood as a community of daily life” (Cuddeback, 2018), which, in a theistic sense, well describes the situation of those adopted into the household of God. Stated alternatively, it describes members of the universal Church doing daily life as members of God’s divine household. It is in this narrow sense of the ‘household of God’ that terms used to describe, for instance, ‘followers’, ‘disciples’, ‘people’, of God and his Messiah, are applied.

my face, for man shall not see me and live" (Exo. 33:20), his form remains unknown and cannot be anthropomorphised. The importance of this is so that no human being can claim to be physically identifiable with God or have all the attributes of God. God is a spiritual being, and it follows that the image does not refer to what is physical. But what it does imply is that man was made with the attribute of an eternal spirit, as in Ecclesiastes 3:11, "he has put eternity into man's heart", and Genesis 2:7, "then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature". The literal reference is to the breath or life of God, and consequently man was to be a moral and rational creature. The claim of rationality is verified by Adam naming the animals and his able locution of poetic verse upon the arrival of Eve (Gen. 2:23). Adam displayed all necessary noetic qualities, being in the very nature of God, partaking of his spirit and thereby being inextricable and eternally connected to his creator. Hence, "in immateriality and immortality, the soul of man bears a resemblance to God" (Shaw, 1980, p. 64). And, even after the Fall, "man is and remains a creature of God", for God nevertheless, "acknowledges … our bodies and souls… as His work" (Concorde, 1580, §1; *cf.*, Deut. 32:18; Acts 17:28; Isa. 45:9-13). Not to be overlooked is the holiness of God, for his creation is called to be holy, the essence of the attributes of the Creator, "I am the LORD, who made you holy" (Lev. 22:32; NIV), and, additionally, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16; *cf.,* Lev. 11:44).

Intimately linked to the divine attributes imputed to the First Couple is the natural, moral and ethical law – the eternal law of the Creator,[158] for holiness cannot be assigned unconnected to divine law, nor law without truth, justice and mercy. At the time of their creation, the natural law (*ius naturale)* was, "graven on their hearts because the Lord had created them after his own image" (Concorde, 1580, §VI; *cf.,* Rom. 2:15). Similarly, "For even our first parents before the Fall did not live without Law, who had the Law of God written also into their hearts, because they were created in the image of God" (Concorde, *ibid*.). Although the first humans are to be understood as living under the promise of a future redeemer (Gen. 3:15), who would be a *toledot*[159] emanating from the woman Eve, the existence of a nascent moral law prior to the promulgation of the formal, redacted Mosaic law millennia later, would have existed. An unwritten code would have been imparted to the first man, Adam, when he was made in the intellectual, moral, ethical, holiness, and image of the Trinitarian Godhead, with all relevant dogma ascribed. Apostle Paul points out in Romans 2:15, that even those who are ignorant of the Divinity, "show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts". When the

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158 Such law is "inherent in God himself; it is not created or willed into being by God" (Novak, D., Law, 2021). It is thus an attribute of the Divine.

159 *Toledot* – a descendent.

Divine conveyed life to Adam he, "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7), thereby ensuring that his own image, in whom is contained all natural laws, was passed onto Adam, rendering him without excuse. The rationale for this claim is that for sin to exist there must likewise be in existence laws which define sin, which in itself implies a potential contravention of, a rebellion against, God's laws. Adam sinned as did all his successors, "but sin is not counted where there is no law", says Paul (Rom. 5:12-15). It is noteworthy that Paul is here referring to the written code, so a natural law must have been pre-existent,[160] and the First Couple would have been cognizant thereof. The reference to the law in John 1:17 and Galatians 3:17 ff., does not detract from the pre-existence of the moral law. The act of a juridical decision by the Creator *apropos* sin is exactly the same whether the Mosaic law was in existence or not. Paul explains in Romans 2:12, "For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law". Apart from the implied existence of a natural, moral, law at the time of Adam's creation, there existed the articulation by God of that law, limited in scope but juridical in intent, as conveyed to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'".

Ambrose of Milan (1989) succinctly points out that, "Law is twofold - natural and written. The natural law is in the heart, the written law on tables. All men are under the natural law". In that sense, Aristotle's position (and later, that of John Locke in 1689) of a 'blank slate', namely, *tabula rasa*[161] (Driscoll, 1987), is defeated by the innatism[162] of humankind imbued through the attribution of moral consciousness by the Divine (*cf.,* Gen. 2:7). In a similar way, Calvin refers to *Divinitatis Sensum* - a sense of the deity that all humans have - and this sense necessarily incorporates a moral awareness. In his comments on the passage of John 1:5, Calvin affirms, "man's soul is so illuminated by the brightness of God's light as to never be without some slight flame or at least a spark of it" (Institutes, 2.2.19; *cf.,* McNeill, 1960, p. 43). Natural law has its origin in the Creator's eternal moral codes (*cf.,* Rom. 2:15), and even secular philosophers like Aristotle affirm the existence of an eternal law, "Universal law is the law of Nature. For there

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160 In Romans 2:14-15, Paul confirms the pre-existence of the natural law and its applicability to all humankind, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law, they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them".

161 The "unformed, featureless mind" in the philosophy of John Locke (Britannica, 2020).

162 The notion of innatism is explained by theology professor Stephen Grabill through the following statement which confirms that, despite exile from the Garden, "the diminished natural human faculties still function sufficiently to reveal the general precepts of the natural moral law" (2006, p. 12).

really is, as everyone to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men, even on those who have no association or covenant with each other" (Rhetoric, Bk. 1. Ch. 13 [1373 b]).[163] Aristotle's approach, like the works of subsequent secular theorists such as Rousseau's 'The Social Contract, 1762,[164] eventually led to the "Natural law school of jurisprudence", which attempted to fabricate a legal system based upon the principles of a natural law, "even if there is no God". As Francis Shaeffer perceptively points out, there is a "serious problem in trying to construct a system of law upon nature *per se,* for nature is cruel as well as non-cruel".[165]

Thomas Aquinas, founder of the theistic natural law tradition, emphasises, "this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law" (Aquinas, S.T. I-II:90:1 ad 1). Simply put, without suitable legal constraints, without law and its adjunct of justice, flagrant antinomianism would ensue. The holiness of the Divine could never allow such a *lacuna* to exist. An observable, divinely imposed, eternal standard of ethical behaviour and associated justice, is necessary for the proper functioning of all societies, at both an individual and corporate level, restraining and defining licentiousness, injustice, and antinomianism.[166] The authority of the Divine in determining morality and justice remains irreducible whatever the circumstances and, particularly in the post-modern setting, incapable of being deconstructed despite attempts by sundry philosophers and radical identity activists.[167] Regardless of the claims of Open Theists - successors to the Process Theists (Viney, 2020), the moral laws of the Divinity are eternal in form and immutable in application, whether in the past, present, or future. It is contrary to the divine nature and omniscient attributes of God to not know the future in fullness and not to provide permanent and immutable guidance to cater therefor (*cf*., Rhoda, 2006, p. 432). The Creator therefore imposed *ab initio* his natural law, until the introduction of positive, redacted, codified laws became available to the small, elect, nation of Israel. Moral

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163 Philosopher, Christopher Dawson (1889-1970), follows the Aristotelean position by averring that, "the law of nature – the moral law revealed by the light of reason – was confirmed and developed by the spiritual law revealed by faith" (Religion, 1991, p. 176). In actuality, Dawson has the order of events reversed, for the Aristotelean view of moral law acquired through reason was derived from a preceding natural law ("spiritual law") imputed to humankind in the Edenic Garden. Secular proponents of natural law tend towards a naturalist position rather than a theistic one, but that discussion is beyond the scope hereof.

164 *cf.,* Rousseau, J-J, The Social Contract, 1762.

165 Schaeffer, F., Live, 1976, p. 159.

166 Aquinas clarifies that, "an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law" *(cf.,* Anderson, R. T., Natural Law, 2022).

167 In this manner, the post-modern milieux has witnessed the demise of scientific rational inquiry which asserts universal truths capable of being ascertained. Universal truths emanate from the creative dictates of the Divine, including his ethical and moral imperatives (*cf.,* Gen. 1-3). The post-modern environment, contrarily, promotes relativist truths, morality and knowledge, contextually and subjectively manufactured (Ulanowsky, 1998, p. 272).

truths, reflected in the imperishable natural law, are endorsed in the Second testament context where, for instance, St. John describes the advent of the Messiah as coming to earth, “Full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Grace is only relevant, and necessary, in cases of breach of God’s divine constraints. In this interconnected way, law (truth), justice, and grace (mercy) remain eternally co-existent in the economy of the Creator.

Insofar as the obligations of Messianic Jewish believers to the redacted Mosaic law are concerned, it is justifiable to posit that as the Messiah fulfilled the law, the Mosaic law was consequently annulled (Fruchtenbaum, 1996, p. 650 ff.). A further germinal reason for an amendment to the theocratic constitution of Israel, namely the Mosaic code, was that a replacement of Priesthood occurred, for, as the writer of the Hebrews letter states, “when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well” (Heb. 7:12). Wherefore an amelioration, a correction, of the “weak and useless” law was necessary (Heb. 7:18). As a consequence, Messianic Jewish believers fall under a different law. So too in the case of Gentiles, who as believers in the Redeemer-Messiah, were never under the Mosaic law in any event, also fall under another law. This law, although distinguished in aspects is nonetheless based predominantly on the moral and ethical precepts of the unredacted natural law, and select moral elements of the Mosaic code. Luther is recorded as concluding that, “Moses agrees exactly with nature” – in reference to the intersection of natural law and Mosaic code. Luther continues, “What Moses commands is nothing new” and, furthermore, that “the ten commandments had spread over the whole world not only before Moses but even before Abraham and all the patriarchs. For even if Moses had never appeared, and Abraham had never been born, the ten commandments would have had to rule in all men from the very beginning as they indeed did and still do” (Charles, 2015). In short, in Messiah, neither Jews nor Gentiles are under the Mosaic written law which has been novated. That does not imply, however, that there is no law restricting them. Far from it, for they fall under the “Law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21); referred to in Rom. 8:2 as ”the law of the Spirit”. The “Law of Christ” (“a better covenant”; Heb. 7:22), is a law different in ceremonial directives from the Mosaic code, but containing similar moral imperatives enunciated therein although raising the standards thereof. It is beyond the ambit of this treatise to explore in detail the Law of Christ and its interconnectedness with the Mosaic law. Nonetheless, it remains to be said that moral laws as contained in Law of Christ - evident in ethical teachings recorded throughout the Second Testament - are indubitably derived from the eternal natural laws, pre-existing the time of the Garden scenario. These are the laws redacted in the Mosaic codes, and which divine laws, with sanctions, remain germane to all humankind.

The matter of law[168] is of utmost importance in understanding the Gospel as the two concepts of grace and law underpin all the great doctrines of the two Testaments. It is only the finished work of the promised Redeemer, the Messiah of Israel, in the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15, who alone could repair the corrupted nature of humankind stemming from transgression of the law. Consequently, it is the finished, propitiatory, work of the Messiah who reinstates the true *imago Dei,* and, simultaneously, satisfies the moral laws, holiness, and justice requirements of the Father. In light of the aforegoing, Adam and Eve, were without excuse. Of their own volition, having the necessary *mens rea,*[169] they determined to rebel against the injunctions of their Creator while ignoring the incorporeal moral law imperatives which directed their conduct, thereby becoming accountable for their *actus reus. Mutatis mutandis*, the same argument applies to all humankind, for all are descended from the First Couple to whom the Creator accredited his moral laws, and which gave rise to what become understood as extant and inalienable natural laws, later encapsulated in the Law of Messiah.

The element of free will attributed to the First Couple incorporated the power of contrary choice, but it was anticipated that their free will would direct them towards compliance with the natural, moral, law of the Creator. In this context, the Creator empowered them with a faculty that he himself did not possess for the Creator cannot choose to sin and cannot go against his holy nature. St. John points to this aspect, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5); and likewise in Habakkuk 1:13, “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong”. There was no irresistible compulsion for Adam and Eve to comply with the imperatives otherwise they would not have had the power of contrary choice inherent in the very nature of their given constitution. They would then have to be classified as ‘sane automatists’[170] (Kramers-Olen, 2019, p. 188), in the commission of their crime. Adam and Eve were not ‘unable to sin’ - what Augustine describes as ‘*non posse peccare’* – but were able to choose not to sin, an articulation of the freedom of contrary choice afforded to them. They were free to partake of the produce of the Garden and even of the Tree of Knowledge, yet subject to the firm admonition of their Creator which should have been enough of a deterrent. Without the freedom of contrary choice they would not have been accountable for their

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168 Professor Schindler recognizes that, “laws exist not just to deter crime, but to make real a form of existence and, in so doing, to manifest the ultimate purpose and meaning of life in the order of actuality. The legal political order sets the horizon of meaning and so communicates an interpretation of reality and the purpose of life, in addition to its regulation of behaviour. The practical and revelatory dimensions of law cannot be separated (Liberty, 2022).

169 ‘*Mens rea’* – legal intention to commit a crime.

170 A legal defense in Criminal Law - defeating the requirement of intent (*mens rea)* due to an involuntary action. Law professor, Denis Cusack, describes the concept as “unconscious involuntary behaviour” (Sane, 2002).

transgression for they could not have had the necessary *mens rea*, the intention driving their *actus reus,* but would have been under an automatist compulsion beyond their powers of control.

And so through the federal Adam, all ensuing humankind was reckoned as having transgressed, and so the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 was awaited. Only through the Divine Redeemer-Messiah could humankind recapture the fullness of the corrupted *imago Dei* and, "be renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:10). Similarly, only in Messiah, can humans be considered as spiritually anew, with the corrupted identity annulled, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). In Messiah, full restoration of *imago Dei* and full consciousness of the eternal natural law will take place, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts" (Jer. 31:33). It is hence inconceivable that the law written on the "hearts" of the newly created individual, would be different in any way to the moral laws of the Creator assigned to the First Couple in the Garden. There is but one Creator who has but one set of universal, eternal, and immutable moral laws which are juridically and supernaturally imputed to all humankind, initially at the time of the Garden events and refreshed in the consciousness of his subsequent "new creations".[171] Just as in terms of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31), the law was to be imprinted into the hearts of the individual, so too, and how much more, *mutatis mutandis*, would the law have been initially imprinted into the hearts of the First Couple. In Romans 2:14, in relation to the Gentiles, Paul confirms, "They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them". It is the guilty conscience of the First Couple that led them to evade the Creator. After the First Couple's transgression of the moral laws, imprinted on their hearts at the time of their formation, it was their guilty conscience that led them to evade the Creator. It should not be overlooked that associated with the transmission of the law to the First Couple was the impartation of justice, for the Creator unfailingly applies law coupled to the concept of justice and mercy, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Even the redacted Mosaic law contained strong elements of justice and mercy – hence the sacrificial system, the day of Atonement and the Passover. Application of laws, coupled with the attributes of justice and mercy are equally pivotal in ensuring harmony in human society.

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[171] Brian Walsh refers to this reconciliatory process as the "reconsecration of desecrated space" (Sacred, 2022).

Divine love can be described, within the limitations of the human lexicon, by the Greek word, *agape*,[172] and it is this category of love – supernatural, sacrificial, and unconditional love - that was imparted to the First Couple when the Creator breathed into them his divine image during the creative process. This concept is supported in John 3:16, "For God so loved (*agape*) the world". And so too, God loved Adam and Eve and imputed to them his Divine, *agape*, love. Consequently, the First Couple's relationship with their Creator was one based on *agape* love for it is *agape* love alone that enabled them to reveal their affection for God and for one another. The injunction against the eating of the forbidden fruit was promulgated solely in the event that the love of Adam and Eve towards their Creator was an insufficient deterrent in discouraging them from partaking of the fruit. Stated positively, their love for the Creator was designed to compel them towards compliance with his ways (*cf.*, 2 Cor. 5:14). Nonetheless, through the serpent's deceit and their own power of contrary choice, the First Couple's actions of self-assertion, instead of compliance, overcame the beauty of the Divine's unconditional love. Ephrem the Syrian comments that, "God withheld from him a single tree, hedging it around with death, so that even if Adam were to fail to keep the law out of love for the Lawgiver, at least the fear of death that surrounded the tree would make him afraid of overstepping the law" (Brock [trans.], 1990, p. 5). The foundation of *agape* love is the *sine qua non* for all human relationships with the Divine, and, by extension, of all compliant marital relationships, a vertical and horizontal concept (*cf.,* Karl Barth, 1961, p. 173ff). The law of the Messiah is likewise based on *agape* love, for his aim is to lead his people into holiness, for them to be sanctified by his love, made perfect and ready for his second advent. It is generally overlooked when considering the origins and seminal qualities of the natural law tradition that the primary law imbued to the First Couple, over and above all other laws as important as they are, is that later redacted in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and then in Matthew 22:37, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might". The second imperative pertains to the consideration of others, as in Luke 6:31 and Matthew 7:12 (*cf.,* Matt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18). The second law is commonly referred to as the 'Golden Rule'.[173] It is somewhat concerning that the natural law tradition generally can take as its focus the second most important law to the exclusion of the first. The reason for this is that in the case of secular philosophers they identify with the second rule but not the first, being the humanists that they are. While it is laudable to emphasize the 'Golden Rule', it is even more commendable, and mandatory, to prioritize the primary rubric of the Creator to which the second is subsidiary.

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172 *ἠγάπησεν*; agapaó, 'love' (Strong's 25, Greek).

173 The Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Gregg, S., Natural Law, 2021, p. 3). Based on Matthew 7:12, "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them".

Some professed Christian denominations prioritize the 'Golden Rule'. As an example, struggling to find common ground between two distinct schools of thought relating to sexuality, the July 2022 Lambeth Conference attendees at last found a mutual 'Communion', and that related to the 'Golden Rule'. The resolution passed was to the effect that, "the time has come to admit that 'works of mercy' provide the only framework for the current Anglican vocation".[174] The great and overriding obligation on the church, as the 'Bride of Christ', is to "love the Lord", and this is commonly overlooked in preference for an apparently more palatable, more humanist emphasis, that is, on a social gospel - a horizontal focus on humankind rather than a vertical focus on the Divine. While both are important, the first obligation is the more important. This mistake is exactly why the Messiah chastised the vibrant church at Ephesus, saying, "you have left your first love".[175] A similar situation occurred when the Messiah gently admonished Martha who focused on guests' physical needs rather than enjoying an intimate communion with the Messiah, like her sister Mary, for the short time he was able to be there, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part…"[176]

In conclusion, from time immemorial humankind has been without excuse and remains accountable to the Creator for their deeds, good or bad. As St. Paul elucidates, "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom.1:20-21). Adam's chief obligation in the Garden was to keep the law, "So Adam had nothing to do there except for the law which was laid down for him. Nor was any work entrusted to him apart from preserving the commandment he had been given" (Brock [trans.], 1990, St. Ephrem, p. 4). In this straightforward task, Adam acted with both contumacy and pusillanimity, failing dismally in his obligations. Secondly, he failed dismally in his matrimonial duties towards the well-being of his wife. It is for this typological reason, with Adam being the exemplar, that St. Paul deemed it necessary to caution the husbands in the Ephesian Church to "love (*agape*) your wives, as Christ loved (*agape*) the Church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25).

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174 Radner, E., Lambeth, 2022.
175 Rev. 2:4, NKJV.
176 Luke 10:41-42, NKJV.

3.3 The Matrimonial Regime

Upon creation of the first human, the male Adam, the Divine decreed that he should have a companion. This led to the formation of the first woman, Eve,[177] named as such by Adam and created from his rib (Gen. 2: 21-23). Eve was not derived from, related to, or descended from any other existing creature and was categorically unrelated thereto. The *sui generis* nature of the First Couple verified humankind's unique creationist and sanctified origins, for no other creature was made in the image of God nor had the divine breath of God imparted to them, nor, furthermore, had eternity inculcated into their hearts (*cf.,* Ecc. 3:11). These origins incontrovertibly demolish all pseudo-scientific and secular, materialist, evolutionary, claims to the contrary. The pericope of Genesis 2:21 ff., reveals the inauguration and basis of the first intimate human relationship, namely, a mutually beneficial, harmonious, monogamous, complementary, and enduring fellowship of "oneness in nature" (Fairbairn, 1996, p. 38), leading a life of *vita angelica.*[178] The two humans were a unique creation of opposite binary genders, male and female, so to enable them to propagate a race of human beings, forming an archetypical nuclear family and, subsequently, a society. Augustine prosaically asserts that the First Couple were of "two sexes manifestly different" (1890, Book XIV, Ch. 22, p. 401). The heterosexual couple were created to love their Creator, love one another permanently and monogamously, and to be intimate in a way that two members of the same gender cannot be. It is to be noted that upon declaring that it is "not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18), the Creator formed a woman, a person of the opposite gender, not a person of the same or a third or a epicene gender, to be the rightful companion for Adam. In this way, the much disparaged concept of complementarianism was created by the Divine. The pericope of Genesis 2:21-24 f., discloses the Creator's stipulated biological binary genders, male and female, so there can be no doubt as to the limitation of only two gender categories. It was the woman, the female gender, that was created to be in union with the man, to propagate the species and for the Creator's soteriological purposes. Without the male-female gender dichotomy there would be no Redeemer-Messiah issuing from the woman, as predicted in Genesis 3:15.

Nevertheless, in concurrent Western societies, persons with sex-gender dysphoria, autogynephilia, synthetic or self-claimed genders are accepted in the public arena as components of the normal order. The rights of the LGBT+ activists are legally equal to those of created binary genders and enforced accordingly - these issues are further considered in

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[177] '*isha',* woman - from *ish*, man.
[178] '*Vita angelica'* - an angelic life.

Chapter 6. In this frame, it is to be acknowledged that there is some contradiction concerning the issue of Adam's creation in the likeness of God, recounted in Genesis 5:1-2. The reason is that the Septuagint contains variants of this passage, in contradistinction to the Hebrew *Torah*. The English translation of the Septuagint ('LXX') reads, "I shall make man in image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26), leading onto Gen. 5:2, where it states, "male with female parts (or, 'male and female') he created *him*". To the contrary, the *Torah* states, "he created *them*" (Bereishit Megillah 9 a, Line 13; *cf.*, LXX, Note 3). This misinterpretation has been perpetuated in the Bereishit Rabbah, where it is recounted that Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Elazar opines, "In the hour when the Holy One created the first human, He created him (Bereishit Rabbah, para. 8). While there exist Talmudic speculations as to the exact process concerning Eve being formed from Adam (*cf.*, Bereishit Rabbah 8), there is a caution that needs to be raised by such speculations. The reason is that the issue of confused, comixed or *androginos* gender, for example*,* finds actualisation in the prevailing ideological redefinitions of gender. This penchant leads to a proclivity for belief in an *assemblage* of androgynous and feminine manifestations of neo-pagan gods, concomitant with the rejection of the Fatherhood identity of the Creator. Hence, the variant in LXX might be applied to support post-modern secular humanist or pagan assertions that the original state of man was that of a hermaphrodite, androgenous, or a transsexual gender class. The proponents of current drastic social engineering, relating to gender, would have no hesitation in employing the Septuagint misinterpretations in support of their agenda to confuse, admix, or destroy the demarcated confines of natural-born binary genders, as originally created.

The above passages reveal that the institution of marriage (as such relationship later became known) is a creation ordinance, part of God's protological design. Further, the passages indicate a pattern that will come to reflect the relationship of Jehovah to his chosen people of Israel and of the promised Redeemer-Messiah to his Bride, the Church. There is thus a transcendental implication to the concept of complementary, opposite, genders in ordained matrimony.[179] This is demonstrated by the spiritual, eschatological, marriage between the Bride (the Church), and the Bridegroom (the Messiah). The *motif* of marriage between two members of the opposite gender would be the template for commencement of the Creator's redemptive purposes, and which *motif* would have its fulfilment in the eschaton. The sacredness of the marriage *motif* can better be examined scripturally and prophetically through a *darash* (*cf.,* Ch.

[179] It follows that the sacredness of matrimony is defiled, profaned, whenever, "those individuals who are deemed to be profane enter into so-called sacred places, for they are then perceived as if they have engaged in an act of desecration" (Walsh, Sacred, 2022). Hence, same-sex marriage is the desecration of a sacred concept initiated by the Divine.

2.3.5) of the *Bereshit* from origins into a "new situation" (*infra; cf.,* Ch. 2.3.5), namely, the Second Testament context, and eschatologically, as follows:

- In the First Testament: Genesis 2:18 recounts, "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'". This verse to be coupled with Genesis 2:23-24, "Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh";
- In the Second Testament, there are strong allusions to the Church being the Bride of Christ; for example:
- John 3:28-29, "I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom";
- Matthew 9:15, "And Jesus said to them, 'Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast'";
- Ephesians 5:22-23, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its Saviour";
- 2 Corinthians 11:2, "For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ";
- In a tripartite finale: the Apostle John's Book of Revelation contains repeated eschatological references to the Church as the Bride of Christ:
- Revelation 21:2, (the new Jerusalem), "coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband";
- Revelation 21:9, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb";
- Revelation 19:7, "the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready".

It is evident, therefore, that the concept of marriage whereby the "two shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; *cf.,* Mark 10:8), is a preordained creation ordinance. The "one flesh" consequence cannot be replicated by a union of same-sex persons, irrespective of whether or not either attempts a gender metamorphosis in order to transition to an opposite gender identity. Biologically speaking, a person's birth gender cannot, in any event, be altered through surgery or chemical intervention as it is comprised of fixed biological chromosomes (DNA) that crucially determine gender (*cf.,* Roselli, 2018, p. 1). In the event, any marriage outside the

rubrics of the Divine's typological relationship, exemplified by Adam and Eve, should be denounced as a *mésalliance*, despite legal endorsement.

The First Testament scriptures endorse the concept that the faithful remnant of the nation of Israel is to counted as the 'wife' of Jehovah, "When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love ('*dod'*, Strong's 1730, 'love' or 'Beloved') and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord God, and you became mine" (Ezek. 16:8). The term here for 'beloved'[180] is used frequently in the highly romanticised allegory of the Songs of Solomon (*cf.,* Songs 1:13, 5:9). The term is indicative of an intimate divine love between Jehovah and his chosen people, much like the term *agape* in a Second testament context. In the same fashion, the Church in a Second Testament context was to be identified as the Bride of the Messiah. The hallmark of these two relationships was that they were both based on mutual, *agape*, love, implying monogamy, devotion, loyalty, and faithfulness for all eternity, thereby setting an enduring pattern for earthly marriage. *Sensu stricto*, this relationship with the Creator cannot be called a religion - being devoid of structured, formulaic or institutionalised, humanist, prescribed sacraments, custom or ritual required to satisfy the deity[181] [182]but, rather, a bilateral, interpersonal, romantic relationship of marriage founded on *agape* love and bound by a covenant (1 Jn. 4:7-10). There is nothing religious at all in the immanence[183] of the personal daily relationship between the Creator and the First Couple in the Garden; no rituals[184] they had to perform to please their God, but only one prohibition, namely, not to sin – not to partake of the forbidden fruit. Similarly, there was nothing religious about the consummation of Abraham's relationship with the Creator, apart from the invariable requirement of faith thereby attaining a state of righteousness (Gen. 15:5; James 2:23). Not to overlook Moses, a friend of God (Ex. 33:11), who enjoyed great personal intimacy with the

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180 Beloved – *dōwḏî* - *dod* (Strong's 1730, Hebrew).

181 The simple ordinances of Baptism and partaking in the 'Lord's Supper' do not constitute ritual and rites as understood and required in formal, institutionalised, religions. Ritual is generally associated with organizational Churches, an exclusive Priesthood, and superstition (*cf.,* Siedentop, 2014, p 351), bordering humanism if not magic and the occult.

182 The active, that is positive, requirements of formalised religion can be described as, "active rites of engagement with the sacred through sacrificial ritual, communal repast, and commemoration of the mythical acts by which the sacred gives birth to society" (Riley, Religion, 2019).

183 The doctrine of immanence is fundamental to Judeo-Christianity. Elwell states that, "Relationally, God is transcendent in Being, immanent universally in providential activity, and immanent with his people in redemptive activity" (1984, Theology, p. 458). Douglas (1962, p. 509), takes the concept further by clarifying that a title of God is 'Emmanuel' – "which means God with us" (*cf.,* Matt. 1:23; 28:20; *cf.,* Isa. 7:14), signifying not only a personal relationship but also the actual presence of Deity.

184 As Prof. Robert George explains, "performing the rituals of a religion does not make you a member of that faith" (Rituals, 2022), for it is faith not ritual that confers a relationship.

Creator and did not have to perform repeated ritualistic religious requirements to please him or to attain a status of righteousness, apart from that of a simple faith. For a First Testament example, the striking words of the Creator, through his prophet Isaiah, can be recounted, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isa. 43:1). The Apostle John is a suitable Second Testament exemplar for he enjoyed a close and personal bond with the Messiah. John 13:23 records, “One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side”. The Greek rendition[185] of “Jesus’ side” translates as, “in the bosom of Jesus”. The King James translation is similar, “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved”. A picture of loving intimacy quite unlike the prescribed principles of a formalized, sectarian, religion.

It is clear that religion *per se* cannot offer a supernatural, *agape* relationship with the Divine, for, as Karl Barth pointedly concludes, religion “is the attempted replacement of divine work by one of human manufacture” (Barth, 1961, p. 52).[186] The “divine work” referred to amounts to the consummation of an *agape* relationship with the Divine through his Redeemer-Messiah. The tripartite relational template in the Edenic Garden eternally exemplifies the Divine’s close, personal, fatherly fellowship with his children. This has been made even more lucid in the ritual-free, intimate, *agape,* and immanence based organic relationship of the Messiah with his Church, which in turn, like Adam and Eve, is urged not to sin (1 Jn. 3:8-10).

In order for the people of God to be able to love their Creator, it was incumbent upon the Creator to first supernaturally enable them to do so for the high requisite of *agape* love cannot be of “human manufacture” (Barth, *supra*). God did this by imparting *agape* love into the heart of his Bride, as is set out in Romans 5:5, “God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us”. It is only when read with Romans 5:5, that the pericope in 1 John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us”, makes complete sense as it is the impartation of *agape* love by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) that enables God’s Church to love him in return (1 Jn. 4:19). The requirement of reciprocal love can only be through the means of the same *agapē,* supernatural love - uncontaminated by a love of “human manufacture” (Barth, *supra*) such as, *éros, philía, philautia,* and *storgē.* The pericope of 1 John 4:8, “God is love”, explains that God is the creator and perfector of true love. He requires his people to love

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185 *kolpō* – ‘bosom’ (Strong’s 2859, Greek).

186 Blake Smith suggests that, “for most of the history of Christianity, the radical message of the gospel was suppressed by the Church” (René, 2022). The simplicity of an *agape* relationship with the Redeemer-Messiah is the heart of the gospel (*cf.,* Jn. 3:16), but was long since formalised by, *inter alia,* the ubiquitous Roman Catholic Church. The simplicity of the message was apparently not profound or esoteric enough for an institutionalised, elitist, hegemonic and oligarchic Church, with its dependence on tradition, alternative redeemers, and assorted deceased Saints for intervention.

him with the same category of divine love, which cannot transpire in a marriage that does not reflect his ordained design. His holiness would not allow it. As a consequence, no marriage or intimate relationship that is contrary to God's ordinance can reflect the essential element of *agape* love. As a result, such relationship cannot enjoy his imprimatur.

Every mention of 'love' in the following passage uses *agape*, as its root. It is stated in 1 John 4:7-8, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love". True love, *agape*, an issue of the heart, is inextricably connected to, and originates in, God alone for it is a key divine attribute. Hence, the divine injunction against divorce in Matt. 19:8, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so". Emphasis is provided in Malachi 2:16, "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence". Divorce is condemned by God due to the fact that the marital couple is divinely incorporated together as a single entity, "one flesh" (Matt. 19:6). "One flesh" is a typology of the intimate relationship God has with his people of Israel as well as that of the Redeemer-Messiah with his Church (*cf.*, Gen. 2:24, and Mark 10:8). For that reason, marriage has both a vertical and horizontal application. It is an intricate, tripartite, natural and supernatural transaction, referred to by King Solomon as a "threefold cord" which is "not quickly broken" (Ecc. 4:12). Marriage is consequently not dependent for its existence upon legal validation, although such is generally a societal requirement. In this way, concordance can be found with philosopher and Bioethicist Joseph Fletcher (1954, p. 139), when he declares that, "the fidelity of marriage is a personal bond between husband and wife, not primarily a legal contract".

The Creator's greatest command to his people is articulated in the *Shema*, the high declaration of Israel, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4-5), which command is endorsed by his Messiah as *de rigueur* for all humankind (Matt. 22:37). Messiah went on to say that, "the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'" (Matt. 22:39, *cf.*, Lev. 19:18). In both instances, the Messiah uses *agapeo,* sacrificial love. This is the depth of love required for loving God and for loving one's neighbour (Matt. 22:37-39). It hardly bears mention that the closest "*neighbour*" anyone could have is their spouse. Hebrew terminology for marriage means 'to make holy, to sanctify, to set apart' (*m'kudesh*). The Jewish wedding ceremony continues to reflect the concept of holiness in marriage for the parties are holy unto one another, set apart for each other. The term, 'to marry', reflects the holiness of the Creator and is first seen in Gen. 2:3 when the sabbath was sanctified, made holy, by the Creator. To develop this theme further, it is analogous to the position of the High Priest who, on *Yom Kippur,* was the sole

person authorised (sanctified) to enter the most secret place of the Temple, the Holy of Holies. Although knowledge of the procedure of events on that day is publicly available from a reading of the *Torah*, only the High Priest himself could subjectively know what it's like to actually enter into the most secret place.[187] Holy marriage in accordance with Jehovah's ordained ways is reflective of this situation because just as the High Priest alone is sanctified to enter the Most Holy Place, the Bridegroom alone is sanctified to 'enter' his Beloved and to consummate the marriage. This is typology for the marriage of the Bridegroom, the Redeemer-Messiah, with his Church, the Bride. A purported marriage, such as same-sex marriage - being outside of God's set precepts - is contrary to divine laws, and so illegitimate, irrespective of the secular legality thereof. The participants would defile[188] themselves, becoming spiritually unclean. In short, to marry means to set part, to sanctify, to make holy, and this is the underlying divine model for marriage for it involves a vow uttered by each of the participants in the presence of a Holy God.

In its essence, Christianity is not an organizational, formal, sectarian[189] religion validated by custom or ritual,[190] but, instead, a mutual love, *agape*, spiritual relationship,[191] a romance[192] supernaturally[193] founded (*cf.,* 1 Cor. 4:20, "For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but

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187 *cf.,* Prasch, J., 2005, pp. 42.

188 טָמֵא - *tame* – unclean (Strong's 2931, Hebrew).

189 The proliferation of denominations and manifold iterations of Christianity, can be described as a form of 'religious tribalism', with allegiance to the structure and religious hierarchy rather than the Creator himself.

190 "Performing certain rituals", according to a Journal article in the November 2021 issue of 'Evolution and Human Behaviour', "may provide a reliable signal of loyalty to the religious group and commitment to the community's beliefs, norms and values" (Xygalatas *et al*, 2021, p. 524). The significance of this proposition is that religion, through ritual, has its own attractions for reasons other than personal spirituality, thereby negating the necessity of the intimacy and commitment required in engaging in an *agape* relationship with the Divine. The primary author, Prof. Dimitris Xygalatas, explains further that ritual "by definition lacks direct utility yet we know that all rituals serve important functions for human beings. Rituals help people find meaning, dispel their anxieties and find connection" (Dolan, 2022). The human need to seek transcendence, meaning and identity through futile own endeavours has always existed, as evident in the Edenic Garden scenarios of Genesis 3.

191 An article in the 'International Journal for the Psychology of Religion', concludes that an understanding of the concept of the nature of God is vital, as this "issue may lie at the heart of the debate surrounding definitions of religion and spirituality" (Emmons and Crumpler, 1999, p. 17). The authors' conclusion is valid for, as an example, the mundane practice of religion *per se* cannot impart an iota of sanctification - a spiritual process of being made holy in the sight of the Deity, as this is a work of the Holy Spirit (*cf.,* Acts 1:5; 1:8; Eph. 1:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:5), to be co-operated with (*cf.,* 2 Tim 2; 1 Pet. 1:15).

192 The Archbishop of Philadelphia, Charles Chaput, avers that "Scripture is a romance. It is the story of God's love for humanity" (2012).

193 The supernatural implication of an *agape* relationship with the Divine is contradistinguished from "an organizational, formal, religion" (*supra*) by the simple issue of spiritual power. This factor is emphasized throughout the Pauline epistles and summed up in 2 Tim. 3:5, when Paul refers to those imposters who, "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power". The presence

in power), and sustained by the object of the Bride's love and worship, namely, the Bridegroom. An Institutionalised Church projects the antithesis[194] of a romantic relationship with the Divine. This distinctive element is what truly separates Christianity (as the supernaturally sustained love relationship has become known),[195] from any other creed. It is not a humanist performance-based ritual, but a divinely originated bond based principally on organic, filial love and worship,[196] such being the hallmark of trinitarian ontology (Leithart, 2021, p. 2). Earthly concept of marriage should accordingly be reflective of the pure, intimate, and sincere relationship indicated between the Creator and the First Couple and, in exactly the same manner, by the Messiah and his relationship with the Church. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11, warned the Church about losing the purity and simplicity of its intimate relationship between the Creator and his Bride, just as Eve was deceived and lost her "sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). In the rich and ancient Syrian Christian tradition of Jacob of Serug, the Church is romantically described as "The Bride of Light," betrothed to Christ her heavenly Bridegroom (Harvey, 2009, pp. 198–199), thereby emphasising the purity of a monogamous and perpetual matrimonial relationship based on reciprocal *agape* love.

Satan's pernicious agenda in the Garden was not only to cause a rebellion *per se,* but was particularly aimed at destroying the divinely created multilateral intimate and harmonious relationship that was enjoyed by the parties. In this manner, Satan would bring about the destruction of the Creator's pinnacle of creation, the first human beings, would thus destroy

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of Holy Spirit power is the essential difference between a personal relationship with the Divine and that of an institutionalised relationship (*cf.,* 1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 10:4; 2 Tim. 1;7).

194 Smith reasons that "ever since the late Roman Empire, ecclesiastical leaders worked with politicians to prop up social hierarchies and justify inequality". Since the time of Constantine, therefore, "Christianity was presented as another version of pagan religions, in which priests accepted payment from congregations in return for rituals of blessings and sacrifice" (René, 2022). That situation is the very antithesis of a romantic, personal, relationship with the Divine.

195 In discussing the interrelationship between religion and spiritually, Prof. Kenneth Pargament perceives that religion, in both its individual and institutional iterations, is becoming a "narrowband institutional construct that restricts and inhibits human potential" (1999, p. 3). However, the contention herein is that it is institutionalised Christian religion itself that has since inception "inhibited human potential", that is, the spiritually inspired romantic relationship between the Creator and his people. Pargament concludes that, "spirituality on the other hand, is becoming differentiated from religion as an individual expression that speaks to the greatest of human capacities". In brief, Pargament's perception, albeit from a modern humanist view, contains an element of truth for spirituality certainly should be differentiated from religion, and always has been in strict theological terms. However, only an *agape* relationship, which distinguishes Christianity from other faiths, between the Deity and his people can truly be considered a spiritual relationship as it is the supernatural impartation (Rom. 5:5; *cf.,* 1 Jn. 4:19) of the Holy Spirit that empowers and enables such a relationship. Pargament's view to the effect that it is 'human potential or capacity' that allows "pathways to the sacred" is thereby defeated (1999, p. 3).

196 Dwight Longenecker states that the root of the crisis in Christianity is "that the worship of the Almighty - the one who is the source of Beauty, Truth and Goodness – has been reduced to banality, subjective opinions and a compromised morality" (Unity, 2022). When romance with the Divine is reduced to forms of clichéd ritual, then intimacy of love and worship is lost.

the nuclear family[197] and the intended establishment of a society emanating from such family unit. Subsequently, ensuing personal identity,[198] ontological security, interpersonal relationships and the concept of sacrificial love and harmonious societal order would also be corrupted. The First Couple, particularly Adam, was charged with the task of being the *promakhos*, the first line of defence, the first into battle, against malevolency. The two were endowed with all divine attributes required to lead holy lives but due to their power of contrary choice, they acted in a perfidious manner in rejecting the unfailing love of, and eternal fellowship with, their Creator. Their decision was based on a misguided belief in their own solipsistic and Gnostic-like[199] esoteric, 'deeper' knowledge, coupled with a humanist aim of claiming creative sovereignty in formulating their own fatal potion of meaning and identity outside the precincts of the Divine. The corrosive effects of the Fall have been devastating for humankind and their society ever since.

3.4 Adam

In accordance with God's creation hierarchy, the archetypal *sui generis* man, Adam,[200] was to be the firstborn human and so endowed with the privileges and responsibilities of his position. Upon the creation of the woman, Eve, Adam ceased to be alone but had a companion for whose well-being he was charged.

The redacted Mosaic law firmly established the concept of *prīmogenitus* – the acknowledgment by the father of the inheritance rights of his first born son. Deuteronomy directs as follows, "he shall acknowledge the firstborn … by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the first fruits of his strength. The right (*mishpat*) of the firstborn (*bekorah*) is his" (21:17). A practical example of this concept is found in 2 Chronicals 21:3 concerning the sons of King Jehoshaphat, "Their father gave them great gifts of silver, gold, and valuable possessions, together with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn". A loose analogy to the position of Adam in his relationship with

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197 The providential program of the Divine will prevail. G K Chesterton sums this situation up as follows: "The triangle of truisms, of father, mother, and child cannot be destroyed; it can only destroy those civilizations which disregard it" (Divorce, 1920, p. 63).

198 Personal identity is primarily founded on *imago Dei*, basically an internal conviction. However, external factors like formal religion, nationality, ethnic and family membership, can also impart a form of personal identity but these factors are tenuous, sectarian or tribalist, relativistic and contextual, and adversely affected by a lack of sacred order, moral absolutism, and acknowledgment of transcendence.

199 'Gnostic' (Strong's 1108; Greek: *Gnósis*) – meaning, 'knowledge', 'wisdom' or 'insight' - a characteristic of early Gnostics who claimed idiosyncratic, 'secret', knowledge available only to the initiated (Moore, E., Gnosticism, 2022).

200 According to St. Paul, "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth…" (Acts 17:26).

Eve and their ensuing progeny, would be that of the Roman *paterfamilias*, a term surfacing from the statement, *"Pater autem familias appellatur, qui in domo dominium habet"* - translated as, "the one who has dominium over the house shall be called the *paterfamilias"*" (Justinian's Digest, 50:16, 195, 2; *cf.,* Munro, 1904). This concept, originating in the Civil law of the Roman Emperor Justinian (c. 529 C.E.), has been incorporated into the laws of most Western legal jurisdictions in one way or another. Civil law,[201] and its adjunct of common law,[202] are the most widespread international legal systems[203] with the former based mainly on the Roman *Corpus Juris Civilis*. The close intersectionality of natural law, common law[204] and Civil law is to be noted, for according to the political philosophy of Hobbs, "The law of nature and the Civil law contain each other and are of equal extent" (Kobayashi, 1994, p. 199). In such manner, Adam can be deemed the *princeps familiae* – "the first in the hierarchy" (Zammit, 2002, p. 1) - a position endowed with concomitant rights and responsibilities. In a biblical context, the role of the patriarch can be witnessed in the cases of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who were the patriarchs of their respective families and who were recognised as, "both the legal and spiritual head of the family" (Pfeiffer, 1961, p. 15). As a consequence, "wives and children were dependent upon the patriarch" and "were subject to the patriarch, who represented the sole authority, under God*"* (1961, p. 15). The Creator allocated a *paterfamilias* role to Abraham for the purposes of not only protecting his family but primarily for guiding them in the ways of God, that being the main purpose of the role. In Genesis 18:19, the Divine confirms that, "I have chosen him (Abraham), that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice". In short, Adam failed to judiciously exercise his appointed patriarchal role and the result was a catastrophe for the First Couple and all ensuing humankind.

Being the firstborn human, Adam had inherited from God everything necessary for a healthy, harmonious, prosaic, eternal, and righteous life in the presence of the Divine. He was appointed overseer of all creatures and of his environment. When Eve was formed, she was given to him (*cf.,* Gen. 2:22), in order to be his helper and companion, for him to love and

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201 The Civil law system is "based on Roman Law and codification" (Potter, 2019, p. 4), a hallmark of continental Europe's legal systems. Many Roman law principles were adopted into Canon law (Siedentop, 2014, p. 378).

202 English common law is, "primarily developed by Judges on the basis of precedent" (Potter, 2019, p. 4).

203 Potter observes that English common law has "served as a model for legal systems all over the globe" (2019, p. 2). He adds that "any common law system, such as that of the United States, is a child of the English common law" (2019, p. 4). In like manner, legal systems of the various commonwealth countries are primarily based on the English common law.

204 In 1470, legal commentator, Serjeant Catesby, somewhat overenthusiastically declared that the "common law had been in existence since the creation of the world" (Potter, 2019, p. 2), referring to the interconnectedness between natural law and the English common law.

protect.[205] Adam enjoyed, as did Eve, all the essential elements necessary for an eternal ontological security of being. As head, Adam had the position of guardianship, a *paterfamilias* role. Clarity of a husband's role in the economy of the Creator is found in Ephesians 5:25, "Coupled with the inheritance rights were responsibilities…..Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her". That is to say, sacrificial love, *agape*, to always act in the best interests of both her and the relationship. Karl Barth (1961, p. 173ff.), describes the practical application of *agape* love as follows, "Christian love turns to the other purely for the sake of the other. It does not desire it for itself".

Adam's main obligation in the Garden was to adhere to the commands of the Creator and act as a responsible husband to Eve. The Syrian commentator Ephrem concludes, "So Adam had nothing to do there except for the law which was laid down for him. Nor was any work entrusted to him apart from preserving the commandment he had been given" (Brock [trans.], 1990, St. Ephrem, p. 4). In these tasks, he failed dismally for affiliated with the firstborn's rights of inheritance were certain responsibilities. Specifically, a consideration of the Genesis 3:6 pericope ("she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate"), begs the question as to Adam's proximity at the very time Eve entered into discourse with the Serpent resulting in her eating the forbidden fruit. The Hebrew is somewhat equivocal as to actual proximity, "With her" (*immah*) or, as Gen. 25:11 reads, "near or beside" (*im).* However, there can be only three alternative possibilities. Firstly, either Adam was close to Eve so as to be alongside her but, in a supine act, failing to be an interlocutor in the conversation. Secondly, Adam was near her - as in the proximity, but within hearing distance, and again failing to be an interlocutor in the conversation. Thirdly, Adam was somewhere else in the Garden, where he could not overhear or participate in the conversation. Nonetheless, shortly after Eve's interaction with the serpent Adam came alongside her, and being informed as to what transpired, freely partook of the fruit at her offering. Whatever the case, it is a tautology that Adam, in an apparent insouciant manner, failed spectacularly in his allocated role as head of the relationship. His obligations were to love, protect, provide, and lead his wife through example, yet he permitted a situation to occur whereby both of them faced disaster and ejectment from the Garden. It is to be noted that the directive of Gen. 2:15 was for Adam to "keep, watch and preserve" (*shamar*; שָׁמַר) the Garden, and it can be argued that such mandate included preserving his wife from harm, which he failed to do. The possibility that Adam was somewhere nearby and not right next to Eve does not create a special

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[205] Contemporary feminists regard "protective paternalism" (that is, the male role of protector or guardian) in religious groups as an iteration of "benevolent sexism" – discrimination or prejudice against women (Hernandez, 2021, p. 30).

circumstance whereby he is absolved of his responsibilities. The overriding principle remains that in all circumstances the *paterfamilias*[206] has a created mandate to protect those for whom he has oversight, however manifesting. The responsibility for the transgression remained with Adam although he, "was not deceived, but the woman was deceived" (1 Tim. 2:14). When Adam should have intervened, he failed to do so. As Ambrose (1989) fittingly points out, "In some causes, silence is dangerous". When the Creator chastened Adam, the first issue raised in condemnation was Adam's failure to lead and protect his wife. Instead, Adam listened to her regale the lies of the serpent, without comment, and then ate the fruit offered, without question (Gen. 3:17). Here, Adam had a choice not to participate in the evil act but by accepting and eating the offered fruit, the malevolent spirit of the serpent entered him as it had done to Eve. This situation was replicated in the Second Testament context when Judas Iscariot had a choice to not accept the bread which the Messiah offered him, for the bread would identify the potentially seditious person in their midst. It was only when Judas took the offered bread, accepting culpability for his intended betrayal, that Satan entered him (*cf.,* Jn. 13:26-27). The second noteworthy issue is that Adam impliedly blamed his Creator for giving him a wife who fed him the fruit, instead of acknowledging his own oversight shortcomings, which included his pride, his *mea culpa,*[207] and his complicity in seeking independence and self-realization (*cf.,* Gen. 3:12). Thirdly, Adam, acting in a flagrantly prevaricatory and subreptive mode, purposefully attributed his own culpability to his wife. In present times, Adam's behaviour would be described as an instance of Freudian psychological projection (Hagan, 2021), whereby he attributed his own behavioural shortcoming as defects in his wife's motives and actions.[208] Adam's protestations were tautological, for he acted reprehensibly whatever diversionary claim he proposed.

A further criticism was that Adam, in an act of contumacy, ignored a direct injunction of the Creator against eating the fruit. Not least was the fact that Adam (and Eve) saw fit to believe the creature instead of the Creator thus establishing the basis for naturalist, pagan, creation worship which in itself impliedly rejects the Fatherhood of God, and thus the *imago Dei* of both Adam himself and his wife. Adam exemplified a catastrophic failure of headship, of a failure to protect the more susceptible gender under his care. Not only was Adam's omission a complete lapse of his created headship role but as he was the federal head, in the manner of corporate

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206 The concept of the Roman era *paterfamilias* as 'head of the home' is endorsed by Herbert Marcuse in his discussion of Freud's philosophy, when he posits that "the father, as *paterfamilias*, still performs (in modern society) the basic regimentation of the instincts which prepares the child for the surplus-repression on the part of society during his adult life" (Eros, 1966, p. 89).

207 *Mea culpa* – literally, 'my fault'.

208 Professor Randall Smith describes the disorder as one by which "the interpreter projects on others the thoughts and attitudes he wishes to deny in himself" (2021).

solidarity, of all ensuing human beings. Therefore, his failure had a corrupting effect on all future marriages and relationships (Rom. 5:12). Adam's federal position also set the pattern of palpably ignoring teleological positions for the existence of a Creator, despite his personal knowledge and experience thereof. The *lacunae* ensuing from Adam's pusillanimous failure to exercise his *paterfamilias* role, has resulted, in extant society, in the rise of feminist claims to the lead role in intimate relationships. Wherever the headship role of the man has been usurped, or practically abandoned, then enmity, conflict, and disaster generally follow. It is for this reason that the serpent approached Eve first, while she was alone, for he sensed a vacuum of headship rendering Eve vulnerable to his destructive deception. The *modus operandi* of the serpent in approaching the woman first has continued ever since, for, as St. Peter made clear, they are spiritually "the weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7). An example of women asserting headship is evident in the relationship of Abraham with Sarah where Abraham paid heed to his wife's advice not to wait upon God any longer for an heir, despite the Creator's promise to provide one (Gen. 15:4). Instead, Sarah directed Abraham to procreate with his servant, Hagar, and "Abram listened to the voice of Sarai" (Gen. 16:2). The resultant offspring from this extra-marital action was divinely prophesied to be "a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against ('*al'*) all his kinsmen" (Gen. 16:12). Enmity has ever since existed between the descendants of Ishmael and those of the true heir of the promises, Isaac (*cf.,* Gen. 25:18). Ishmael and his descendants, "dwell over[209] against all his kinsmen" (Gen. 16:12). Discord between Sarah and Hagar also manifest itself once Hagar knew she was pregnant with Abraham's offspring, for Hagar, "when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress" (Gen. 16:4). The household was in disarray, and the interpersonal friction resulted in Hagar being ejected from the home, cast into the desert. Abraham had given authority over Hagar to his wife Sarah instead of exercising his role of headship over the common home (*cf.,* Gen. 16:6). Sarah then took it upon herself to have both Hagar and her child, Ishmael, ejected from the household. A further example of conflict, when the man abrogates his created role of headship, is found in 1 Kings 16:31-33 where King Ahab allows his wife, Jezebel, to lead him and the nation of Israel, for which he was responsible, into idol worship and to acquiesce in the killing of the Prophets of the Lord (*cf.,* 1 Kings 18:4,13). The end result was a dramatic and tragic death for both of them.

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[209] *"al",* עַל - 'above or over' (Strong's 5921, Hebrew).

It is reprehensible, therefore, that both Adam and Eve were guilty of inverting the created theorem of complementarianism[210] as ordained by the Divine. Firstly, by Adam by capitulating to his wife, and, secondly, by Eve usurping Adam's lead role in the relationship. The implications of Adam's abrogation of his oversight role as a husband, and his pusillanimity as a man, is seen throughout history in the preponderance of marital conflict between husband and wife, as predicted in the curse upon Eve in Genesis 3:16. In present times, statistics indicate that some 50% of marriages in Western societies end in failure (De Paulo, 2017; APS, 2021). Marital conflict, a product of the curses upon Eve stemming from her transgression in the Garden, in particular the power struggle for leadership between men and women, is a major cause of the social and relational turmoil in Western societies.

Satan's ambition, and his vehemence towards God and the first human beings, is revealed through his malignant strategy when his *alter ego* the serpent, misrepresented to the First Couple that the Creator did not want them to eat of the Tree of Knowledge because they would then be like God himself (*cf.,* Gen. 3:5; Isa. 13:13-14), an iteration of *apotheosis.* Here, the serpent was in effect projecting Satan's ambition to rule as God himself onto Adam and Eve, enticing them with that same desire, and simultaneously blaming God for withholding that office from them just as God had withheld it from Satan (*cf.,* Gen. 3:5; Isa. 13:13-15). The serpent's strategy was to profess omniscience through an arcane spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and insight - in the exact manner of heretics who, *avant la lettre,* become known as Gnostic Elites. The serpent claimed knowledge that purportedly only he possessed, not Adam or Eve nor the Creator himself, and that they should therefore condescend to his superior, albeit solipsistic, insight. In this context, the serpent can be understood as the original and archetypical Gnostic Elite, the instigator of esoteric principles which, anachronistically, were readily adopted and emulated by his initiates, the First Couple. Accepting the serpent's secret revelation of truth would enable Adam and Eve to be 'like God' (*eritus sicut Deus*), having full knowledge of all things, coupled with creative fecundity and autonomy. By exercising their conferred power of contrary choice, the First Couple acceded to the temptation. In so destroying Adam and Eve's privileged position with the Creator, Satan revealed both his envy and vehemence for they were the pinnacle of creation - a position which Satan himself had enjoyed before his expulsion (*cf.,* Ezek. 12 -14).

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[210] Complementarianism is unsurprisingly considered as sexist (prejudiced) against women by feminists (Hernandez, 2021, p. 30).

Satan's diabolical strategy successfully disrupted the Creator's soteriological and eschatological plan for humankind and their society.[211] Notwithstanding, the plan eventually becomes fully remedied in the eternal order (Rev. 22), as prophesied in the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15.

3.5 Eve

In the sapiential view of Rabbi Carlebach, the reason Eve partook of the fruit was because she, "knew that she is really like God because to give birth to a baby is the most godlike thing in the world. Eve knew that inside she is something very special but didn't know how to do it" (Carlebach, 2012, p. 58). The issue of Eve's potential self-realization and creative powers find mention in the Bereshit Rabbah where Rabbi Rashi says, "God ate of this Tree and then created the world, and therefore he orders you not to eat from it, so that you cannot create other worlds" (Rashi, Ber. R. 9:4). This opinion accords with the serpent's deceiving words to Eve that she was denied the fruit of the Tree by the Creator in order to prevent her from becoming like him in that, "you will be like God,[212] knowing good and evil"[213] (Gen. 3:5). This allegation was a blatant misrepresentation as the Creator intended the First Couple to know that evil existed but not to have personal experience of it; they were to know the existence of evil cognitively, not experientially. The existence of knowledge of evil was referred to in the Creator's description of the solitary Tree bearing such nomenclature. Nevertheless, Eve desired to gain knowledge that she was not meant to know. Clement's 'Book of the Rolls', records as follows, "then she called Adam and he hastened to her, and she gave him of the fruit, telling him that if he ate of it he would become a god" (Gibson [ed.], 1901, 94b). Eve's desire, and that of her man, was to become creative and independent, free from paternal and fraternal oversight, and in this sense they desired a form of self-divinity. Concerning Adam himself, he is, "one who aspires to divinity" (Wilson, 1988, p. 53 [3]), and the same sentiment can equally, if not more so, be attributed to Eve. Eric Fromm posits that God was aware his only real rival could be man who, if he ate from both the named Trees, would become as God and so novate the absolute power that God had over him. It is for this reason the First Couple were ejected from the Garden. Fromm writes, "this absolute power of God over man is

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211 The veracity of this statement is given credence through the patent spiritual assault upon family members, and the nuclear family as a whole, through Identity ideologies like same-sex marriage, eugenical abortion, the denigration of fatherhood, the exaltation of the individual self, and the like. All iterations of society are under threat. Philosophy professor John Cuddeback, emphasizes that, "the family, the Church and civil society are true societies. They have a real metaphysical standing because they are intrinsic to the human condition" (Household, 2018). It is this "human condition" that is under existential challenge by heretical ideologies dictating the narrative in extant society.

212 Latin: eritus sicut deus.

213 The existence of the Tree of knowledge creates the opportunity for profanation of a sacred place, hence the prohibition.

counterbalanced by the idea that man is God's potential rival" (Fromm, Gods, 1966, Ch. 2, p. 23). It has to be clarified that Fromm generally adopted a 'mystical non-theistic' approach to scripture, but, in a sense, Fromm had a point for humanism was to emerge as the principal ideology, a secular religion, replacing the pre-eminence of the Divinity in the affairs of humankind. Fromm concludes that man's "first act of disobedience is the beginning of human history, because it is the beginning of human freedom" (Fromm, *ibid*.), that is, the beginning of secular humanism.

Eve ignored the Divine's warning which undoubtedly would have been to the effect, as recounted in a context relating to Cain later in the saga, that, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it" (Gen. 4:7). Not only did Eve ignore such implied warning, or endeavour to defeat the malign assault, but Adam, too, behaved in like manner. Interestingly, Oesterley posits the contention that, in the rather obstruse pericope of Genesis 4:7, the original Hebrew word for 'crouching' (*rōḇêṣ;* Strong's 7257), actually refers to a demonic personage named "*Rabitzu*" (also known as '*Robetz'*)", whose name translates as "the lurker or coucher". The passage can therefore read, "And if you do not do well, *Robetz* is crouching at the door" (1966, p. 116-117). Cain, instead of 'ruling' over the demonic force, capitulated and ignored the caution of the Divine, as did Eve, his mother, in an implied earlier context, both with tragic consequences. A question to be raised is whether or not Cain (as the progenitor of many descendants) was aware of the necessity for animal sacrifice as an acceptable offering, vividly demonstrated in Genesis 3:21. There is a two-fold solution to this question, the first being that his parents would no doubt have regaled their experience in the Garden and the atoning requirements of the Divine to their children and descendants, as any parents would have done. Secondly, perhaps this was an instance of what was later described by 20th century psychoanalyst Carl Jung when, in discussing his theory of 'collective unconsciousness,' he concluded that, "this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal…it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a supra-personal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung, 1959, pp. 3-4). Wherefore, it is fair to concluded that in accordance with his parent's instructions, together with, perhaps, the collective consciousness of humankind and awareness of his *imago Dei* and the integral tenets of the natural law, Cain would have been aware of what was required of him (*cf.,* Rom. 1:20).

A priori to Eve capitulating to the Serpent's *dolus specialis*[214] while dismissing the Creator's injunction, was a predetermined but no doubt subconscious weakening of her will to remain steadfast to her Creator. Augustine clarifies this argument as follows, "Our first parents fell into open disobedience because already they were secretly corrupted by an evil will". He goes on to say that the origin of an "evil will" is actually flagrant pride for, "pride is the beginning of sin". This would explain Eve's puzzling malleability. The end result constitutes Eve's "undue exaltation" of self, which underpinned her failure to reciprocally love the Creator, but instead focusing on her 'love of self' (Augustine, 1890, Book XIV, Ch. 13, p. 393). Augustine described pride as "man turned inward towards himself" (*homo incurvatus in se*), an apt description of the First Couple's actions (*cf.,* Rom. 7:15ff).

Consequent to Eve's rebellion, she was subject to curses uttered by the Creator, to wit, "Your desire[215] will be for your husband, but he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). Eve was now to be subject to her husband who would "rule over" her. The relationship between Adam and Eve was different before the Fall, as prior to Eve's transgression they enjoyed a state of harmony with spiritual and relational equality, both equally bearing and enjoying their *imago Dei,* with Adam exercising a loving, benign, sacrificial, and prototypical headship where necessary. In that sense, Eve was subordinate to her husband *ab initio* but was not to be 'ruled over' by her husband as such action was unnecessary. But since the rebellion, Eve would be "ruled" over by her husband. The hitherto benevolent, selfless, and harmonious partnership in the presence of the Divine was now a recipe for conflict as Eve defensively and strongly reacts to what she considered overbearing patriarchy. The conflicting forces of male chauvinism, headship and control now clash with Eve's desire for female liberation, headship, and her search for independence. It is evident that the seeds of future marital conflict arose from the curse, and Feminists have been trying to reverse the effects ever since through reactionary social movements motivated by their desire to assert control over their own lives and bodies to the exclusion of all other considerations. Developing from the ensuing chauvinist rule, divorce becomes prevalent and a feature of all subsequent societies. Divorce was not in the Creator's original plan for the two parties to the marriage had, "become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Divorce became a contentious issue in society for, according to the Messiah, it was not an intended feature of matrimony, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). "Hardness" of the man's heart was to become the new norm, so much so that St. Paul admonished the Ephesian Church, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her"

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214 *dolus specialis* – a particular deceit.
215 *teshuqah* - a 'longing' (Strong's 8669, Hebrew).

(Eph. 5:25). Similarly, wives had become defiant towards their subservient role (as predicated in Gen. 3:16) for according to Paul, they should submit to their husbands (*cf.,* Eph. 5:22) and respect them (*cf.,* Eph. 5:33).

Ephrem the Syrian (c. 309-373), is a highly respected extra-canonical commentator, to wit, "The exegetical adroitness of Ephrem…has not been overlooked by scholars, either ancient or modern" (Wicks, 2008, p. 45). Ephrem interestingly proposes that Eve believed the serpent's deceit which was to the effect that, upon eating the fruit, she would become like a god and would then have license over Adam, or at least be an god equal to his anticipated divinity. Referring to Genesis 3:16, Ephrem interprets as follows, "'and you shall turn to your husband' – to be counselled, and not to counsel – 'and he shall have authority over you' – since you imagined that by eating the fruit you would from then onward have authority over him" (Brock [trans.], 1990, p. 15). Ephrem's view seems correct as Eve no doubt believed that, as she had led the way for both of them to become gods, *eritus sicut deus*, she would now automatically become the leader in the relationship and have dominion over Adam. In such positions are birthed the seeds of contemporary reactionary feminism. God pointed out to Adam that, in fact, he had allowed his wife to lead the way by heeding to her, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife" (Gen. 3:17) - a serious failure of headship. The lapse of headship is alluded to in a Second Testament context when St. Paul discloses that the man was created to care for the woman who was dependant on him, "Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" (1 Cor. 11:9). An adjunct to this hierarchal role is that the wife should, "respect her husband" (Eph. 5:33). Contrarily, Eve showed grave disrespect towards Adam and his oversight role, instead dominating the relationship rather than submitting to a subordinate position. Eve was the one who took charge in determining her best interests and the best interests of the marital regime.

The rejection by the First Couple of the Creator's blueprint for humanity was as a consequence of a diabolical plot to usurp the Creator's role, and to morally compromise the first two human beings formed in his image. Resultant upon the First Couple's rebellion, their hitherto harmonious matrimonial structure became corrupted. The act of rebellion, and the retaliatory curses of the Creator, has resulted in an enduring catastrophe for man's interpersonal relations and, particularly, for his symbiotic relationship with the Divine. By a refutation of their *imago Dei* and their divinely created matrimonial relationship and all that it entails, the First Couple and, by imputation, all succeeding generations, lost to some significant degree awareness of the sacredness of their personal identity. Concomitantly displaced was the essence of, and basis for, marriage and other interpersonal relationships. The anticipated status of self-divinity, did not objectively materialise for Adam and Eve, and stripped of their

reflected glory, they were left naked and exposed. They entered into a state of *lacunae*, a vacuous situation devoid of theistic meaning and self-identity, thereby rejecting theism itself. Instead, they adopted a faith[216] in naturalism,[217] that is, an environment free of the Divine's supernatural rubrics, where they could now enjoy their new freedom. Consequent upon their lapse and their ejection from the paradisiacal Garden, humankind's eternal struggle for transcendent meaning and identity outside the paradigms of the Creator was inaugurated. Adam and Eve's antinomianism gave origin to heterodoxic secular humanism. Proponents of the latter concept thereafter increasingly confronted theistic worldviews in an critical struggle against the deconstruction of accepted Judeo-Christian norms and values of society. They sought, rather, the imposition of a secular humanist and neo-pagan utopia free of Divine oversight.

Prior to her transgression, Eve exemplified the goodness of a woman made in the image of God, spiritually equal to her husband and blessed with the capacity for procreation. She was to be instrumental in the establishment of the nuclear family, and so society. Her gender highlighted the necessity of the created binary genders. Sexuality was established before the Fall and was to be utilised within the confines of divine prescription. Eve's position deteriorated dramatically after the Fall when the curses for her misdeed destined her to a subordinate marital position, which was never her status *ab initio*. She lost her marital harmony, could expect pain in childbirth and a greatly reduced relational status. And, perhaps, the most important factor was that since the manifestation of the supine duplicity of her heart in the bucolic surrounds of the Garden, humankind would be imputed with the same shortcomings, until the receipt of a renewed spirit resulting in a "new creation" (Gal. 6:15) through the Messiah. Instead of retaining a pure heart, Eve demonstrated the new reality that, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). The first indication of this failure is articulated through Eve (and Adam) in the Garden tragedy. But far from being universally condemnatory of Eve, ancient Christian Syriac hymns, for instance, mostly indicate a compassionate view reflecting that Eve was rightfully ashamed of her conduct and exhibited penitence, "her head is bowed down with grief. She is silent. Clothed in garments of shame, she is exiled from her home. Not evil, she had been merely a young girl in Eden, inexperienced and simple – no match for Satan's wiles" (Harvey, 2015, p. 23). In a similar vein, it was the love and compassion of the Creator that led him to provide suitable *accoutrement* for both Adam and Eve. By so doing, the Creator established the required ritual

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216 Professor Phillip E. Johnson avers that, "a commitment to naturalism is based upon faith rather than proof" (Naturalism, 1990).

217 Johnson elucidates further that, "Theism asserts that God rules everything; naturalism asserts that nature proceeds on its own without supernatural influence" (Creator, 1993).

for atonement of sin, and an escape route from consequences of future sins, all based on the hope[218] of redemption initially prophesied in the *protoevangelium* of Gen. 3:15.

Eve was to become the archetype of women's struggle for emancipation. However, her proclamation of autonomy, self-determination, sited morality and control, freedom to enact her gender and sexuality and taking charge of her own destiny, were all iterations of hubristic narcissism and self-veneration. Eve's desire for creative license and autotheism (Gen. 3:5), has enduring terminal significance in coeval society through fervent feminist demands for, *inter alia,* sole existential authority over their unborn children, rationalised as women's health and civil rights. The abortion lobby is founded upon such rationale, furthered by an agent-centred, relativist, justification. And so the question arises as to exactly when the natural law, with its rights and obligations, becomes applicable. James Wilson, a founding father of the US Constitution, avers that natural rights begin, "as soon as we begin to be", that is, when the "infant is first able to stir in the womb".[219] It is from this early gestational point that personhood commences - as does its adjunctive, the natural law right to life, which right is fiercely repudiated by abortion proponents.

Co-existent with Eve's desire for autonomy comes alienation from her Creator and conflict in the marital regime with accompanying fear, *angst* and *Geworfenheit*.[220] Eve is then subject to a never ending search for meaning (in a broad sense) and self-identity (in a personal sense), all of which manifests itself in spiritual, moral, and ethical conundrums. Due to Eve's preference for her love of self, she ceased to be 'resident' in Augustine's "heavenly city of love of God" (Augustine, 1890, Book XIV, Ch. 28, p. 407), but was now among those who, "although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom. 1:21). Eve was a victim of malevolent deception - in fact a fraud[221] - together with her own naiveté, lack of marital protection and *hybris* coupled with a power of contrary choice.

Emanating from the serpent's deception, the essence of Adam and Eve's sin of rebellion against their Creator was their pride in desiring to become like God, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:22 NIV). Just as Satan's own *hybris*

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218 *Elpis* - meaning 'confidence' [Strong's 1680, Hebrew).

219 Wilson, J., Natural Rights, 1790. Wilson's view finds support in canonical scripture: Genesis 2:7.

220 *Geworfenheit* – Heidegger's 'Thrownness' – meaning, 'being thrown into (a new, inauthentic) existence"'(*cf.,* Withy, Thrownness, 2021). Closely related to Dasein, which is "being conscious of the meaning of one's own existence" (Munday, Glossary, 2018).

221 Fraud can be variably described as, "intentional deception practiced in order to induce another to surrender a right'; a deception for unlawful gain; a piece of trickery" (American Heritage Dictionary, 5th edition, 2011).

corrupted him, so, under the tuition of Satan's *alter ego,* the same failing corrupted the First Couple, evident through their rejection of the Creator God in whose image they were formed. Rather, Adam and Eve desired, as *homo superbus*,[222] to become their own gods, to determine the path of their own lives emancipated from any oversight whatsoever. Jonathan Edwards states that Adam, as the first man, "set up himself, and the objects of his private affections and appetites, as supreme; and so they took the place of God" (1766, Sin, p. 392).[223] And so, each individual could be his own god, his own imperial-self,[224] making contextual moral and ethical decisions free from the absolutism, restraint, and oversight of their Father's conventions. Friedrich Hayek scorns the idea that morality can originate with humankind saying that it is nothing but a "rationalist delusion that man, by exercising his intelligence, invented morals that gave him the power to achieve more than he could ever foresee".[225]

What the First Couple sought amounted to an impossibility for they desired, what Legal scholar A. A. Leff describes as embracing humankind generally, to be "wholly free, not only to choose for ourselves what we ought to do, but to decide for ourselves, individually and as a species, what we ought to be…..that is, to discover the right and the good and to create it" (Leff, 1978, p. 1229). Leff's postulate aptly describes the First Couple's agenda for they sought to sublate the sovereignty and Fatherhood of the Creator, to negate their own *imago Dei,* and to create a coherent philosophical, secular humanist structure external to the eternal, natural, and moral laws originating in the Divine. At best an instance of affected heuristic strategy on the part of the First Couple but, in actuality, amounting to an iconoclastic action and destruction of their ontological status, leaving them in a state of existential *angst*.

At the risk of committing eisegesis, and perhaps of being recondite, it could well be considered that the First Couple, facing the consequence of their *hybris* driven rebellion, came to the

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222 *Homo superbus* – the term means a person of pride - a prideful person "who seeks to do his own thing, without any self-restraint or society-imposed moral constraints" (Pearce, Daze, 2022). Pearce adds that the narcissistic *homo superbus* becomes "trapped within the confines of his own self-constructed 'self', a prisoner of his own pride and prejudice" (Daze, 2022). An apt description of the consequence of *hybris* as exhibited by Adam and Eve and their ideological descendants, continuing into the post-modern age.

223 C. S. Lewis describes the consequence as follows: "the Christians are right: it is pride which has been the chief source of misery in every nation and family since the world began" (Mere Christianity, 1952, p. 68).

224 Professor Carl Trueman refers to the term, "expressive individual" (Strange, 2022, p. 22). Philosopher, Charles Taylor, understands 'expressive individualism' as the "normative notion of selfhood in the West". Taylor connects this concept to "the culture of 'authenticity'" which he describes as, a culture where "each one of us has his own way of realizing our humanity and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority" (Secular, 2007, p. 475).

225 Hayek, F., Fatal Conceit, 1988, p. 137.

dichotomous and primarily metaphysical conclusion that their prelapsarian natural environment was dominated by an evil force. This force took the form of the serpent which caused their downfall. Therefore their situation could not be the perfect world created by the Deity, and so had to be rejected. The real, perfect world, on the other hand, could only then be an incorporeal world to be discovered outside the Garden boundaries. It was incumbent upon them alone to discover, and manufacture, their own parallel reality devoid of imposed norms, based on a misguided romantic fallacy of their own creative powers. This proposition is very much in line with what much later became known as Plato's dualism,[226] which itself became a fundamental Gnostic construal. Along these lines, perhaps the First Couple longed for what Carl Jung posited, namely, that "secret life which holds sway in the unconscious" (Jung, 1999, p. 23). But more than that, they sought a creative life as autonomous 'gods', promised by the malignant serpent. Their self-emancipation as sovereign beings was based on a flagrant distortion of divine truth and has resulted in humankind ever since acting in a Gnostic-like, solipsistic, manner creating their own destiny and dualistic paradigms to found a reality. The serpent, in the manner of arcane initiates claiming a moral hierarchy, propounded an omniscient and esoteric knowledge,[227] contrary to what the Creator had revealed to the First Couple. What appealed to them was the attraction of independence, apparent freedom and unfettered creative power free of pragmatic norms. They exhibited the fundamental elements of occult spirituality which does not accept objective truth, reason, and definitive moral rubrics but, on the contrary, wishes to subversively reshape parameters into subjective fabrications. In this manner, the First Couple anticipated achieving a transcendence of their own penchant. This contention is supported by the fact that the First Couple had now acquired knowledge of evil, the main proof of which is, indubitably, the concept and praxis of agent-centred humanism. In the supernatural, spiritual, realm the major indicator of antinomianism is seeking an independence from, and an endeavour to supplant, the Divine's strictures, as is evident from Lucifer's machinations (Is. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-18). Humanism is the primary

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226 Everything that God created was "very good" (*cf.,* Gen. 1:31), and sacred. Dualist theory is a heretical attempt to introduce the profane into the sacred space, an act which commenced in the bucolic Garden and continued throughout history, enduring into the contemporary post-truth era through narcissistic Identity ideology and sundry iterations of paganism.

227 The serpent, disparaging the Creator's prohibition, averred that the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil' was beneficial for the First Couple to partake of. In so doing, the Serpent acted in accordance with classic Gnostic hypotheses which, according to Princeton theology professor, Gerald Borchert, is the posit that such Tree "becomes a vehicle of knowledge". On the other hand, the Tree of Life becomes a "vehicle of bondage" and is therefore to be rejected. The knowledge that Elites thus discover from forbidden fruit is that the "jealous Creator-Demiurge is not in fact the ultimate God but really an enemy of God" (*cf.,* chapter 5.2 herein). Consequently, man comes to know more than the Creator" – that is, a 'deeper', esoteric, truth (Elwell, 1984, p. 446). It is this sort of convoluted misuse of holy writ that Gnostic heretics concocted to bypass Divine injunctions against antinomian behaviour and accountability.

antagonist of theism and from which is derived the notion of secularism – understood to be independence from, and the non-necessity of God. Peter Berger defines secularism[228] as, "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols" (Berger, 1969, p. 107). Concerning Adam and Eve, their rejection of the divine paradigms of the Creator from their lives, and their future, constitutes the original secular humanist declaration of independence. Subsequently, adoption of secular humanist and arcane constructs led the First Couple to the false premise that, through their own cognitive faculties and idealist preferences, they could create an ontological position and epistemology independent from the one provided for in the Divine's protology.

Adam and Eve had, and subsequent human society has, in their postlapsarian state, as the leading target the attempted sublation of the immutable doctrinal precepts of the Divine. Consequently, Judeo-Christian ethical norms and values, which grounded later Western civilization, are likewise sublated in favour of contrived humanist purposes. This malignant and indefatigable strategy, in its multifarious articulations, cannot be considered as simply an *ephemera for it* has persisted through the millennia, continuing into modernity through an infiltration, in variegated iterations, into society and currently manifests itself in the prevailing social instability through sundry secular Identity ideologies.

Philosopher Eric Schwitzgebel (2013, p. ix), recounts the view of both Descartes and Hume to the effect that, irrespective of incorrect assumptions made about the exterior world, the same errors cannot possibly be made in relation to one's own consciousness. Schwitzgebel himself has a contrary view to that of Descartes and Hume for, in 2009, he averred that, "introspection of current conscious experience is generally the last refuge of the sceptic against uncertainty… and is highly unreliable*"* (Introspection, 2009, Ch. 7, pp. 1-2). Schwitzgebel's latter postulate is valid, for an individual's introspection indubitably results in regular invalid judgements. As Schwitzgebel elaborates further, "we make gross enduring mistakes about even the most basic features of our currently on-going conscious experience, even in favourable circumstances of careful reflection, with distressing regularity" (Introspection, 2009, Ch. 7, pp. 3-4). Adam and Eve made their own "gross enduring mistakes", within the construals of their mind, *vis-a-vis* the economy of the Divine, and for their eternal future by relying on their Gnostic-type, esoteric, metaphysical, and solipsistic structures.

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[228] Simply put, secular humanism is profanation of the sacred order.

3.6 The Fig Tree

The Creator's sanction against partaking of forbidden fruit was the First Couple's primary test of loyalty, obedience, and love. There existed significant imperatives such as that of procreation (*cf.,* Gen. 1:27-8), observation of the Sabbath (*cf.,* Gen. 2:2-3), tending to the Garden (*cf.,* Gen. 2:15) and specifications of workings of a marriage (*cf.,* Gen. 2:24). Nevertheless, those were positive imperatives, not prohibitive such as the restraint from eating illicit fruit, for that one item was to be an obvious temptation (*cf.,* Gen. 3:6).

Experiencing shame for the first time through their loss of innocence, and acutely aware of their exposed physical state, the First Couple realised that their antinomianism caused not only a physical but also a spiritual alienation. The ineluctability of death entered their consciousness. They became detached from the ontological well-being that had its source in God alone. Moreover, they experienced estrangement from one another as a married couple, with Adam blaming his wife and she blaming the serpent for the transgression, whereas prior thereto they had co-existed in a utopic state of harmony and peace. It was the Father's oversight, constraints, love and provision, with their derived *imago Dei* that imparted to them a sense of well-being. Instead of a serene, stress-free existence as enjoyed in their prelapsarian state, they were now filled with dread. Meaninglessness, loneliness, and alienation[229] awaited them outside the Garden, outside the *axis mundi*, in an unknown *terrestrium.* Dependency upon their Father and his provision was severed, leaving them to face an unknown future in their own strength. They were deprived of the moral limitations, and eternal tripartite relationship, which ultimately gave meaning to their existence. An inevitable consequence of *angst* ensued for, "alienation affects every aspect of existence: God, work, family life and society" (Vangemeren, 1993, p. 87). A state of cosmic meaninglessness, the absurd, confronted them as they lost their righteous standing with the Father and the reflection of his glorious presence. Sudden awareness of personal nakedness illustrates that condition. In an attempt to hide their exposure, and recover a lost sense of righteousness, they covered themselves with fig leaves (*cf.,* Gen. 3:7).

The apocryphal 'Book of the Rolls' (c. 800 C. E.), attributed to Clement, and also known as the *Kitab al-Majal* (95b), discovered at the remote St. Catherine Convent at the base of Mt. Sinai, records the Rabbinic tradition that when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit they,

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[229] In this particular context, the term 'alienation', designates that "not merely has a separation of some sort occurred but, moreover, that something's wrong with the separation, which therefore should be overcome if it can be, and is to be lamented if it cannot" (Schacht, 2001, p. 49). This understanding of the concept has been adopted by 20th century existentialist theorists such as Camus, Nietzsche, and Sartre.

“were bereft of their glory, and their splendour was taken from them and they were stripped of the light with which they had been clothed. When they looked at themselves, they were naked of the grace which they had worn, and their shame was manifest to them” (Gibson [trans.], 1901, 94b). Similarly, Ephrem the Syrian in his ‘Commentary on Genesis’ asserts as follows, “It was because of the glory in which they were wrapped that they were not ashamed. Once this had been taken away from them, after the transgression of the commandment, they were ashamed because they had been stripped of it” (Brock [trans.], 1990, §2, para. 14). This extract supports Ephrem’s earlier view that upon the formation of Adam, the Creator “wrapped him in glory” (Brock [trans.], 1990, Genesis, §2, para. 4). Similarly, ‘The Cave of Treasures’ manuscript comments that, “God formed Adam with his holy hands, in his own image and likeness, and when the Angels saw Adam’s glorious appearance they were greatly moved by the beauty thereof. For they saw the image of his face burning with glorious splendour like the orb of the sun” (Ephraim, c. 373 C. E., Fol. 5 a, col. 2). In like vein, but at the risk of subordinating the Canonical text to extra-biblical literature, the pseudoepigraphical work, ‘The Books of Adam and Eve’, records as follows, “And indeed, when Adam looked at his flesh, that was altered, he wept bitterly, he and Eve, over what they had done” (Platt, 1926, Ch. IV:2). The ‘Targum Palestine’ similarly records Adam as being deprived of glory upon his exit, “He cast out Adam and made the Shekina of His glory to dwell at the front of the east of the garden of Eden above the two Kerubaia” (Targum Palestine, p. 7).

The submission that a significant degree of divine glory was ascribed to Adam and Eve in their prelapsarian state surely holds merit for just as the Creator would have been clothed in glorious light, so too would the First Couple made in his image and living in his Holy presence. There is much canonical weight for the position that the Divine and those who surround him, whether angels or mortals, reflect his glory (*cf.,* Isa. 6:1-5; Ezek. 1:4-28; Dan. 7:9-10; 10:5-6; 12:3; Ps. 37:6; Luke 24:4; Rev. 1:14-16; 15:8). Furthermore, in 1 Cor. 11:7, Paul records that man, “is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man”. The image of God in man must of necessity have inculcated a reflected glory, for “there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another” (1 Cor. 15:40). To be in the presence of the Creator, as Adam was, is indubitably to reflect his divine glory. This claim is supported by the passage of Exodus 34:29-30, which narrates that, “When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, … Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him”. Moreover, at the annunciation to the shepherds it is redacted that, “an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear” (Luke 2:9).

Being domiciled in the continual presence of the Holy Deity, the First Couple would have physically reflected his glory. This *motif* is revealed in many scriptures (*ibid*.). Upon their transgression, mortality entered their lives and they were immediately deprived of their glorious divine 'clothing' and so, with horror, realised their nakedness. They were prohibited from residing in the presence of a glorious God and fell into a state of *angst*, being alienated from the source of their identity and so losing the *raison d' être* of their meaning in life. No longer reflecting the divine glory of the image of God is what caused them to fear the Creator's presence for they became acutely aware of their unworthiness and vulnerability. They no longer had the glorified bodies (*cf.,* Gen. 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:40) of hitherto, no longer had "garments of salvation" (Isa. 61:10), but, instead, corrupted bodies suitable only for living in a world outside of the divine presence, outside of the paradisiacal Garden. St. Paul confirms the nakedness of humankind when separated from the presence and righteousness of the Divine, "For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked*"* (2 Cor. 5:2-3). No longer endowed with 'heavenly bodies' (*cf.,* 1 Cor. 15:40), the First Couple had a form of 'earthly bodies' lacking the same intensity of reflected glory, previously displayed. Their nakedness thenceforth became palpably apparent.

Willem Vangemeren (1985, p. 64) avers that the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil' and the 'Tree of Life' were both[230] "eschatological symbols of hope". The same assertion can be made for the 'fig Tree' from which the First Couple endeavoured to cloth themselves. Eschatologically speaking, "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2; *cf.,* Ezek. 47:12), and Adam and Eve's actions were, consequently, a prophetic revelation of coming events. Yet their accoutrements were only "aprons"[231] - hardly appropriate clothing in any situation. The First Couple's futile effort to cover themselves can be seen as typology for attempted self-righteousness through a humanist self-realization process. This struggle has been imitated through the ages by miscellaneous sects, faiths, agnostics and atheists. Efforts at self-righteousness can never be effective for such attempts transgress the precepts of the Creator which dictate that atonement is only achievable through a mandated blood sacrifice, "With the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it" (Ex. 30:10; *cf.,* Heb. 9:22). This divine principle is exemplified when the Creator himself provided the First Couple, as an indication of *ordo salutis,*[232] with animal skins (*cf.,* Gen. 3:21) to replace the rejected fig leaves. In the Jewish Midrash commentary on the 'Targum Onkelos',

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230 Vangemeren explains that "God required faith and obedience from Adam and Eve. He required that they trust their Creator to endow them with life and knowledge *in his time*" (1995, p. 64).

231 '*chagowr* '- also interpreted as a "belt" or "girdle" (Strong's 2290, Hebrew) or "Loin coverings" (NAS).

232 The order of salvation.

Pirke De Rabbi Eliezer refers to the skins as, “coats of glory” (Pirke De Rabbi Eliezer, 1907; Gen. 3:21), so no doubt so they would still reflect an *imago Dei* but of a different kind and with a attenuated level of glory, for, “the glory of the earthly is of another (kind)” (1 Cor. 15:40). That fig leaves cannot satisfy the divine law requirement for atonement of sins is endorsed in Gen. 4:3-5, when Cain offers his grain sacrifice to Jehovah and which offering is summarily rejected.

It remains to be explored whether or not the Tree of Life was actually a fig tree. In John 1:48, a conversation referencing a fig tree takes place, “Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you’”. Here, the Messiah is saying more than he simply saw Nathanael under a tree for he was really saying, in standard Jewish midrashic fashion, that he saw him in the Garden of Eden before he was born. In other words, as a matter of supralapsarianism, Nathanael was destined before birth to follow the Messiah, just as Jeremiah was consecrated to Kingdom work, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (Jer. 1:5). Nathanael understood exactly what the Messiah revealed to him and immediately made the tremendous acknowledgement, “you are the Son of God” (John 1:49). Such exclamation is the first occasion in the Gospels that Jesus was attributed with this divine status by a Disciple. For Jews, like Nathanael, to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah was one thing, but to describe him as the Son of God, the Deity, was quite a different revelation. The revelation that the Messiah, as the Son of God, had come to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on earth was the primary purpose of his advent. Further support for the view that both the prevenient Edenic Tree of Life and the eschatological Tree of Life (the latter being the anti-type of the former type) is a fig tree is found in the prophetic writings of Zechariah. Zechariah mentioned the fig tree in his description of the coming eschatological period of messianic rule, “In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbour to come under his vine and under his fig tree” (Zec. 3:10). Micah did the same, “but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree” (Mic. 4:4). Contrarily, in the ‘Talmudic Sanhedrin’ on the *Bereishit*, Rabbi Nehemya concludes that the Tree, “was the Tree of Knowledge, because it was with the matter with which they sinned that they were rehabilitated, as it is stated: ‘And they sewed together fig leaves, and made for themselves loincloths’” (Sanhedrin, 70 b). Although the Canon does not make specific the identity of the Tree, it appears that the Tree in question is one or other of the two named trees, with the Tree of Life being the strongest contender. This averment finds validity through a pertinent *darash* with the tree *motif* of John 1:48. The passages in Micah 4:4 and Zechariah 3:10 both connect the literary and eschatological *motifs* of the Tree of Life to the Fig Leaf issue in Genesis, supported by further scriptures such as related in Ezek. 47:12, Prov. 3:18 and 11:30 (“Tree of Life”). Not to be overlooked is the

Messiah's reference to the fig tree as a key indicator of the coming time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7; NKJV), for he instructed his Disciples to "Look at the fig tree" (Luke 21:29), a directive with strong eschatological connotation and which inextricably connects the fig tree to the eternal order Tree of Life in Rev. 22:2. As a result, it is credible that the Tree of Life is represented by the fig tree, as this would explain why Adam and Eve attempted to cover themselves using the leaves of a fig tree in their futile attempt to reinstate their righteous status and to so avoid the sentence of eternal death, as earlier pronounced. There also exist submissions to the effect that there was only a single tree in the centre of the Garden with the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life one and the same. Such tree was the Tree of Life (Winter, 2002, p. 138) which makes the above position further plausible. The importance of the Tree issue should not be underemphasised for, as Bonhoeffer submits, "It becomes plain that the whole story has really been about this Tree" (Bonhoeffer, 1937, p. 89), which Tree points the path to eternal life in the coming Messiah (*cf.,* Jn. 6:51ff.), the giver of life. In further substantiation, the First Couple accessed leaves of a Tree that, in the milieu of the eternal state, would provide the required 'healing' (*cf.,* Ezek. 47:12; Rev. 22:2), the healing being of salvific import, which in this context can only be identified as leaves of the fig tree. In sum, as the Tree of Life was obviously not the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the only logical deduction is that the fig leaves used by the First Couple were from the Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2). The First Couple's futile endeavour to secure transcendence whilst in a fallen state has been the strategy of postlapsarian humankind ever since, and further indicates an attempted humanist reinstatement of righteousness and personal identity. Yet, humankind has generally ignored the 'Tree of Life' – that is, the Creator himself, further identified as the Redeemer-Messiah of Israel, continuing to favour the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, in the licentious form of the First Couple. Consequent upon Adam's federalist solidarity, humankind's inclinations remain focused on the Tree of forbidden fruit, and will continue to do until the blessed eternal order.

Upon their transgression, the First Couple became acutely aware of their exposed bodies, particularly their lower parts, for the coverings they made were only "aprons" - "loin coverings" (NAS).[233] Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve's gender difference was not an issue, nor was the fact that their nakedness was evident to each other and God. Their awareness altered upon the loss of reflected divine glory, and their interest then switched entirely to covering their lower regions. This *centre d'intérêt* by the First Couple is a perhaps a harbinger of humankind's subsequent pre-occupation with a sexuality free of the strictures of divinely ordered marriage

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[233] In isiZulu this is referred to as an "*ibheshu"* – a simple covering of the private parts sometime used by young boys in rural areas.

(Gen. 2:24). Wilson (1988, p. 55 [4]), views fig leaves as, "a dress connected with sexual orgies". Such obsession becomes quite evident as the First Couple is thrust into a secular world *sans* the patent presence and abiding oversight of their divine Father. Augustine perceives that, "Consequently all nations being propagated from that one stock have so strong an instinct to cover the shameful parts" (Book, XIV, Ch. 17, p. 398). He goes on to say in Chapter 18 (p. 398), that, "lust requires for its consummation darkness and secrecy; and this not only when unlawful intercourse is desired but even such fornication as the earthly city has legalized". Augustine reflects the culture of that time (c. 410 C. E.), but in the existing milieux, *autres temps autres mœurs,*[234] the display of sexual organs and immorality is no longer shameful,[235] no longer private.[236] In a post-Christian and post-truth environment, the blatant display of immorality[237] reflects the pinnacle of secular attainment, demonstrating personal autonomy and unfettered freedom from prevailing Judeo-Christian values and norms. Contemporary Western society exhibits a plastic modernity, through a re-set of society's conventional moral and ethical requirements, heralded in by a sexual transformation.[238] The uninhibited residents of the 'earthly city of love of self' (Augustine, 1890, Book XIV, Ch. 28, p. 407), are those without shame, "whose consciences are seared" (1 Tim. 4:2) and "who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth" (1 Tim. 6:5), who distort for their own depravity and pleasure those good things created by God (*cf.,* 1 Tim. 4:4). The *Zeitgeist*[239] of sexual licentiousness becomes vividly apparent in the extant *Sitz im Leben* of the Western world for,

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234 '*autres temps autres mœurs'* – translation: 'other times, other customs'.

235 W. J. Bennett's study, 'The Death of Outrage: Bill Clinton and the Assault on American Ideals', pursuant to President Clinton's extra-marital affair with Monica Lewinski, is a case in point (1999, p. 3ff.). The title is self-explanatory.

236 In February 2022, a prominent supplier of shoes and women's sports bra's, Adidas, publicly advertised their products showing "twenty-five pairs of naked women's breasts". The company responded to complaints that, "it is important to normalize the human body and help inspire future generations to feel confident and unashamed". Carl Trueman comments that, "Adidas is playing to the intuitions of a culture that has lost all notion of modesty". He adds, "modesty is now seen as shameful, unnatural and a stigma". He concludes that the purported striving for "authenticity" is a factor (Shame, 2022). Truman touches on the 'heart' of the matter, for the search for personal authenticity indicates a search for identity and meaning in an environment repressing an *imago Dei* in favour of an *imago hominis* but results, instead, in a *homo superbus* – a man of pride.

237 There is no finer example of this than the annual June festival celebrating the 'Pride Month' of Alphabet group activists, with public displays of immorality before many thousands of people. Initially occurring in the US, other countries now follow suit (*cf.,* De Young, K., Pride, 2022). At about the same time, the UK, for example celebrated their version of "Pride' with a parade consisting of "more than a million people" through the streets of London (Reuters, Pride, 2022).

238 Cultural theorist, Mary Eberstadt claims that the post-modern sexual revolution, "has done the most to shape the post-Christian world" (Secularism, 2018). She acknowledges that such sexuality is the, "single most deadly enemy in our time" (Intolerance, 2015). Unfettered sexual practice is the ultimate expression of self-worship and a personal autonomy free of the Divine's absolutist moral framework. It is an expression of secular humanism, and *imago hominis,* and continues to devastate individual morality through the advancement of Identity ideologies so adversely affecting extant western culture.

239 *Zeitgeist* – 'spirit of the age'.

from Genesis to Revelation and through all ages, sexual sin, as idolatry of the self, enforces its claim as a chief manifestation of the fallen human condition. Nevertheless, human sexuality within its original construction of marriage is a concept created by God and not to be condemned, unlike some ancient views. For instance, the author of the anonymous Syrian work, 'The Book of Steps' (c. 400 C. E.), records that only in a postlapsarian context was sexuality a feature of Adam and Eve's relationship as, "Once they had sinned, sin existed in their heart directing them to desire intercourse" (Minov, 2014, p. 229). The implication is that sexuality was not acceptable in a pre-fallen state in which celibacy, in the manner of *imitatio angeli,*[240] was to be the norm. The author reveals his ascetical *Weltanschauung*,[241] common in an age of monasticism and asceticism, the age of the Desert Fathers[242] (Waddell, 1998, p. 3). During this period, denial of sexuality as a normal part of human nature was widespread, and was only to be actualized in marriage (*cf.,* Minov, 2014, p. 233). Suffice it to say at this stage that the current obsession with sexuality, in its numerous guises, arose to prominence in Western cultures during the mid-sixties of the last century, promoted by Kinsley and Freud, exacerbated by the advent of the birth control pill and unmitigated pornography. Sexual licentiousness continues to pollute those societies to an ever larger extent as the influence of cultural Christianity and the political philosophy of classic Liberal democracy, balanced with conservatism, evaporates exponentially. In the USA, for instance, members of formal religions are now in the minority for the first time in over 80 years (Gallup, 2021), in essence since the commencement of the sexual revolution in the decade of the 1960's. According to US Federal Judge M. Kacsmaryk, a direct consequence of attrition of religious affiliation membership is the significant rise of unrestrained sexuality outside marriage. Kacsmaryk attributes culpability to factors such as the "effective (legal) deregulation of sex" (Wood, 2021).

Consequent upon the Fall from grace, humankind's *imago Dei* becomes severely corrupted and great moral freedom ensues. In a sense, Adam and Eve, as federal representatives of coming generations, were both dead and yet alive - a sort of *Schrödinger's Katz*[243] situation. The First Couple were spiritually dead as a consequence of their misdeed, "you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17), and yet, paradoxically, they would live out their lengthy natural lives. Nonetheless they had hope as predicted in the *protoevangelium* of Gen. 3:15, and were shown how to temporarily cover their sinfulness by the sacrificial act attendant upon the provision of

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240 *imitatio angeli* – 'in imitation of angels', viz., an angelic life.

241 *Weltanschauung* – worldview.

242 A period of asceticism and monasticism, commencing late 200 C.E. and enduring for a number of years.

243 Schrödinger's Katz – a paradox whereby a cat is both dead yet alive: emanating from a physics (quantum mechanics) thought experiment (c. 1935), involving both Schrödinger and Albert Einstein (Friedman, Quantum, 2000).

skins from slaughtered animals (Gen. 3:21; *cf.,* Heb. 9:22). The eternal laws of the Creator remained applicable to the First Couple even after their exile from the Garden.

It remained incumbent upon the long-awaited Redeemer-Messiah of Israel to restore the full image of God in humankind, through his divine power. His regenerated, "new creations", would be enabled, through an impartation of his Holy Spirit (*cf.,* 1 Thes. 1:5), to escape the snare of Satan whose attractions are a catalyst for moral licentiousness. But those who choose to rather 'reside' in the 'city of love for God' (Augustine, *ibid*.) would then, "put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:10), and so be restored to an intimate relationship with the Divine, lost in the Garden calamity. Yet, in the case of the First Couple and of many of their descendants, including their first born son, they chose to rather 'reside' in the earthly city of love of self' (Augustine, *ibid.).* And, *en passant,*[244] unfortunately for the First Couple, in seeking their individual independence, their own identity and the establishment of their imperial-selves, they remained, as did all ensuing humankind, subject to the laws, purposes and providence of their Creator – not to overlook their fundamental ontological dependence upon him. The original decrees and the protology of the Divine cannot be defeated through human agency, remaining eternal and immutable for, "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind" (Num. 23:19). Antinomianism free of the Divine's moral standards, juridical laws, and justice simply cannot exist within his economy.

3.7 Aftermath

Jonathan Edwards (1766, pp. 407- 408), provides a *précis* of the catastrophic consequences of Adam's actions for humankind by summating that, "Adam and his posterity should be looked upon as one…so that if Adam sinned they must necessarily be made sinners by his disobedience and come into existence with the same depravity of disposition, and be looked upon and treated as though they were partakers with Adam in his act of sin". This is widely confirmed in scripture, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 19:9; *cf.,* Rom. 3;23; 1 Cor. 15:22).

The subject matter of corporate solidarity whereby the original sin of Adam and Eve is imputed to ensuing generations is a contentious one even for some scholars with a professed theistic view, albeit with a progressive bent.[245] Nevertheless, a rejection of the concept of the fallen

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244 '*en passant'* - 'by the way'.

245 'Progressive' ('liberal') theology is described by Prof. R. Reno as, "a modern attempt to soften the authority of God in order to give elbowroom to human judgement, choice and decision" (Gnostic, 2021).

nature of humankind, since the ignominious ejection of the First Couple from the Garden, cannot be sustained when evidence of the fatal corollaries of the First Couple's rebellion, and self-emancipation from Jehovah's ordained purposes, is revealed. Evidence of the patent degraded nature - in the form of regnant immorality - of all ensuing humankind is endemic in society. The Garden was an idealistic, harmonious setting, a paradisiacal utopia the replication of which, in both individual and corporate senses, has been attempted by humankind ever since but remains a chimera, despite, for instance, Plato's heuristic but fanciful proposal in 'The Republic'. No attempt at social engineering or through experimental political schemes have been able to realize or imitate the utopian *milieu* of the Garden to any degree. Many proposals have been made in this context, notably in recent years by Hans Kung with his interreligious and international 'Global Ethic' (Kung, 1998). Kung was responsible for drafting the 'Declaration Towards a Global Ethic' for the 'Parliament of the World's Religions' in 1993, with update 2020. Considered *A posteriori, a*nd despite periods of relative peace in certain communities for limited periods, all humanist concocted endeavours for harmony and stability have ever since the Fall resulted in a *dystopia*. It is only in the eternal order that a utopia, a sacred and transcendental environment, will once again be realized in the genre of the Edenic Garden.

The first example of a corporate, collective, endeavour for creation of an utopia was the construction of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. The tower indicated an *assemblage* whereby a city was to be established so that humans could, "make a name for ourselves" (Gen. 11:4). This attempt ended in abject failure, a hallmark of all future pursuits for self-aggrandization. As an illustration of a modern failed utopia, the United States of America - the bastion of democratic liberalism and the leader of the free world in major respects - anticipated that upon the collapse of its foremost antagonist, the communist regime in the USSR some 30 years ago in 1991, the world would be receptive to the spread of Western democratic, liberal, and capitalist polity. Contrarily, countries such as China, Russia, and Middle East Islamic petroleum powerhouse countries, resisted this attempt at a world democratic and capitalist utopia. In coeval times, America known colloquially as the 'land of the free and home of the brave' (excerpt from America's National Anthem: The Star Spangled Banner), has become anything but the 'land of the free' with the rise of socialist and cultural Marxist movements stifling any dissent to their authoritarian secular Identity ideologies.

On an individual and interpersonal level, the relationship between the two brothers (Gen. 4), both born to Adam and Eve after their expulsion from the Garden, and their first progeny born in accordance with Jehovah's ordinance for them to "*multiply*" (Gen. 1:22), ended ingloriously with the murder of the younger (Abel) by the older brother, Cain. Such action occurred despite

the conversations about the danger of 'lurking' sin that Cain had exchanged with God (Gen. 4:6 ff.). Cain's *actus reus* was further reprehensible due to the fact that he would have been fully aware of the moral code assigned to him through not only God (Gen. 4:7), but also by his parents who, no doubt, would have recounted to their children the particulars of their transgression. Cain, with malice aforethought, patently had the *mens rea* to execute a diabolical act in full view of his Creator, reminiscent of the criminal actions of his parents. Moreover, Cain was additionally without excuse for he would have been aware of the requirement of a blood sacrifice when making temporary atonements for sins. Faith, too, in the promised Redeemer (Gen 3:15) was required, but Cain chose to adhere to neither of these divine and immutable imperatives and, like his parents, decided to determine his own means of emancipation and self-fulfilment. The point advanced that Cain ignored the obligatory requirement of faith in the coming Redeemer (Gen. 3:15), is evident from Genesis 15:6 where it is stated that Abraham believed Jehovah's promises and this faith was credited to him as righteousness. This did not happen in the case of Cain, as his actions evidenced. Cain's corroded nature, a consequence of his parents' rebellion, had manifest itself in a heinous crime within a single generation after their exile. Additionally, Cain's descendants were also of a secular disposition with Jubal making musical instruments, but not for the purpose of worshipping the Divine. Similarly, Tubal-Cain also made instruments including those for war – resulting in Lamech's boastful 'Song of the Sword' (*cf.,* Gen. 4:23-24). And so, Lamech became a murderer and the first polygamist, contrary to the divinely ordained matrimonial institution of one man and one wife (*cf.,* Gen. 4:16-24). Once freed from the moral rectitude of the Divine through the antinomianism of his parents, Cain and his descendants, alienated from the Creator by their own choice and experiencing *Geworfenheit,* likewise resorted to antinomic behaviour in a heuristic search for certainty and identity.

The *motif* of interpersonal friction, the absence of a *Fratelli Tutti,*[246] was to become repeated throughout ensuing generations and reflects the mortal and soteriological struggle between those in the line of Adam – the line of the 'city of man' - versus those of the 'city of God' (*cf.*, Augustine, 1890). The age-old struggle continues relentlessly until the fulfilment of God's redemptive agenda in the eschaton. In the same vein, inter-nation and trans-nation animosity and societal conflict based on the spiritual struggle between prevailing theistic precepts and advancing secular humanist ideologies, coupled with pluralistic, neo-pagan syncretic spirituality, will continue unabated until the final restoration of all things in the eternal state (*cf.,* Rev. 19-21).

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246 '*Fratelli Tutti'* – 'brotherhood' of humankind.

3.8 Fatherhood of God

The cardinal doctrine of Judeo-Christianity is the Fatherhood of God concept - a personal Creator and Saviour from which all other dogma connected to human meaning ensues. For instance, personal identity evolved from the *imago Dei* doctrine. Likewise, that of the universal brotherhood of humankind, living a life of *coram Deo*[247] - a life under the omniscient auspices of a loving and interactive God. The very concept defeats pantheism; the universalism of progressive theists; and the deist claims of other religions and, instead, endorses the exclusivity of the Judeo-Christian Deity (Ex. 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before me"; Jn 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me").

First Testament scriptures have few direct references to the Fatherhood function of God *per se* but do refer to God as the father of Israel, for example, in Deut. 32:6 and Isa. 63:16; 64:18. There are some fifteen occasions where God is referred to as the father of certain individuals such as in 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13, and Ps. 68:5. The image of God as Father is also evident in Deut. 1:31; Ps. 103:13, and Hos. 11:1-4.

In the Second Testament context, the term of choice for God that Jesus used was 'Father,' in diverse forms. This occurs some 165 times in the Gospels. In the Pauline epistles, God is described over 40 times as 'Father'. Paul emphasizes the Fatherhood of God to the Greek pagans, stating that all of humankind is "God's offspring" (Acts 17:29). Despite the fact that the Fatherhood of God concept is well entrenched in both canons, the idea of God as a father is under severe criticism in the fluid modernity of present society. In Paul's view, according to Elwell, "Fatherhood was based not so much on God's role in creation but rather on the redemption and reconciliation he has made available in Jesus Christ" (Elwell, 1996, p. 247; *cf.* Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31). This view is credible as the description of God as a personal father is in its essence a metaphor for the paternal function and role that God plays in the affairs of humankind. God is a spirit (*cf.,* Jn. 4:24), not a man (*cf.,* Num. 23:19), nor can he be constructed, depicted in images or imagined (*cf.*, Acts 17:29), and does not have a gender like humans. God also acts in a manner generally associated with the role of a mother, showing love, care, and concern for his children (*cf.,* Luke 13:34; Isa. 49:14-16). Roles such as those usual of a human father or mother does not make God a man or a woman as he is beyond classification in human terms relating to binary gender. These descriptions of God are simply metaphors for God's varied roles in diverse matters concerning his children and his Kingdom.

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[247] '*Coram Deo'* – literally*,* 'before the face of God; in the presence of God'; *Cf*., Psalm 56:13, "that I may walk before God".

Adhering to the plain and literal sense of scripture, the Church has for many centuries addressed God as Father. In a priestly prayer, Jesus taught his followers to pray in a manner subsequently recited by many millions through the ages, “Father, hallowed be your name” (Luke 11:2). The image of God as Father is entrenched in orthodox Judeo-Christian doctrine and finds strong support throughout both canons.

Notwithstanding the established Christian understanding of God as Father, this doctrine is subject to challenge, not only by secular humanist thinkers and feminist ideologues but within professed Christian institutions. The purpose of rejecting the image of God as Father is so those of the ‘kingdom of man’ can assert the sovereign-self in place of God as Father, in the manner of the First Couple. Chad Pecknold (2021) recounts that, according to Thomas Aquinas, “God is the primary analogate”. The meaning of the Aquinian statement is that human fathers “are only fathers by way of their analogy to God”. Pecknold adds that, therefore, “we are not saying that God is like a human father, but rather that human fathers are like God”.[248] Pecknold’s conclusion assists in explaining why activist feminists of modernity are focused on abolishing the fatherhood role, an assault made through accusations of systemic male dominance, overbearing patriarchy, and masculine toxicity. Their purpose is to rid society of the patriarchal concept and to substitute instead the feminist role, as exemplified by Eve’s dominant role over Adam, thereby also purging the Creator’s fatherhood identity from society.

This situation is particularly evident in the agenda of zealous feminists such as Mary Daly (1973, p. 13), a pivotal figure in the so-called ‘second wave’ feminist movement. Daly commenced her formative and immensely influential study, ‘Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Woman’s Liberation’, with the first Chapter titled, ‘After the Death of God the Father’, which speaks for itself. She propounds a ‘fresh’ post-Christian, ontological, revelation. Specifically, in a Reintroduction to the original work, some 13 years later, Daly (1973, pp. xviii-xi) proposes a description of God the Father not as a Supreme Being but, rather, as a spiritual “*Be-ing”* - a verb not a noun, a phenomenological and somewhat ontologically nebulous structure, a work in progress, and subject to variable, relativistic inclinations. Here, Daly echoes the basic tenets of ancient Hellenist philosophy, coupled to Plato and Plotinus’ Gnostic[249] epistemology whereby a dichotomy exists between a true immutable ‘Being’ and an everchanging ‘Becoming’ – the latter being her concept of the Divine – the true Being, the

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248 Pecknold, C., Father, 2021.

249 Although having much earlier roots - a heresy tracing back to the Edenic Garden - the multifaceted philosophy of Gnosticism, insofar as it affected the nascent Church, can be said to have “the height of its influence from about 135 to 160 C. E., although it continued to be a force long after the latter date. It threatened to overwhelm the historic Christian faith” (Walker, 1959, p. 51).

authentic, humanistic, self-realizing 'noun-goddess.' Daly goes further, proposing that use of the term "goddess" instead of God the Father can "amount to a 'change' as minimal as a transsexual operation on the patriarchal god" (1973, pp. xviii-xl).

So here, in an obviously irrational case of psychological cognitive dissonance,[250] is patent feminist support for an androgynous or neutered god, one more to their liking. This amounts to a replacement for the patriarchal Judeo-Christian Divine with a god whose ambiguous sexuality can be emulated in humanity by those persons with transsexual, non-binary gender proclivity. Daly creates a direct confrontation with the orthodox Judeo-Christian paradigms of the created binary genders, which is her implied intention. Characteristic of supposedly theistic feminist scholars is the mythologizing of feminine biblical personalities thereby asserting their universal relevance in accordance with feminist theology. The purpose is to eliminate the Fatherhood identity of the Creator by affirming, instead, the divine femininity of a Biblical figure who can be mythologised into a representative configuration, as is shown in the Roman Catholic spiritualisation of Mary.[251] In feminist thought, "The Mother of the Messiah…does not relate to a specific person…", but to "a feminine archetype" (Kaniel, 2014, p. 2). Others, like Rebecca Peters (2008, p. 157), without underlying theological support, simply compose a grammatical gender conversion of the concept of 'God' to one of 'Goddess' – and so reflect her 'Christian' feminist persuasion. Her work is titled, "Embracing God as Goddess".

Denying the patriarchy of God, as Daly proposes, creates an oversight vacuum and abolition of the *coram Deo* principle thereby allowing for worship of a feminine, gender neutral, or androgynous neo-pagan deity of choice. This harkens back to the events that evolved in the antecedent Garden when the First Couple rejected the paternal sovereignty of the Divine, and thus their created *imago Dei,* asserting rather their independence from him and their power of freedom of contrary choice. Even in an ostensible Christian context, for example that of Catholicism, transcendence is sought in alternative avenues. Catholic theology asserts, for instance, that there is no salvation outside the Church (*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus),* so the adjective 'ostensible' is an apt caution. Only in recent times (Francis, Prayer 27, 24 March, 2021), has the Roman Catholic Church clarified, through the *ex-cathedra* announcement by Pope Francis. that the mother of Jesus, Mary, is not to be understood as co-redeemer with

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250 Prof. Harmon-Jones, in the 'Encyclopaedia of Human Behaviour', defines Cognitive Dissonance as "When an individual holds two or more elements of knowledge that are relevant to each other but inconsistent with one another, a state of discomfort or dissonance is created". Therefore, he adds, "they may engage in 'psychological work' to reduce the inconsistency" (2012, pp. 543-549).

251 Roman Catholic Marian dogma is founded on four postulates: the Divine Motherhood of Mary; her Perpetual Virginity; her Immaculate Conception and, finally, Mary's Assumption (Fagnant-MacArthur, 2008).

Christ but is to be valued for her mother role. The Pope's statement was somewhat incongruous coming just two months after he publicly prayed from the Vatican for intervention by the 'Immaculate Mary,' in the Washington D.C. riots (Mares, Jan. 10, 2021). For centuries, the status of Mary was considered divine and without sin - the concept of immaculate conception - in fact a goddess and co-redeemer of humankind, whereas the scriptures refute such status as is evident from Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1:47ff. A central figure in foundational Catholic theology, Saint Augustine (c. 354-430 C.E.), declared that, "Mary conceived as a virgin, gave birth as a virgin, carried him as a virgin, pregnant as a virgin, a perpetual virgin" (Sermon 186 [1]). In mainstream Catholicism ever since, Mary has been the central focus of veneration, not her son the Redeemer-Messiah. In a similar vein, the earliest Syrian Christian commentators considered the Holy Spirt a feminine entity - up to about the completion of the 5th century C. E., when this view dissipated (*cf.,* Landau, 2008, p. 15).

The search for individual meaning, that of an identity bereft of the patriarchal Fatherhood of God and his created *imago Dei* of humankind, converges into a perilous struggle for the theistic heritage of Western civilization. The search for meaning in a secular context and its resultant consequence in the struggle for orthodoxy, is a hallmark of the social and religious *Sturm und Drang* of the late 20th and early 21st century, the period of the so-called 'New Age' within the 'Age of Aquarius'. The abandonment by Adam and Eve of their *raison d'être* has resulted in human beings ever since commencing afresh their ontological search for a replacement self-identity. In effect, the First Couple echo the words of 19th century philosopher and social antagonist Friedrich Nietzsche, when he fulminates (albeit through the mouthpiece of his allegedly insane protagonist) that, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him" (Science, 2001, para. 125, p. 120). Nietzsche's dialectic goes on, taking the assertion of the sovereign-self and denial of the Fatherhood of the Creator even further with his comment that. "Man created God" (Science, 2001, Poem 38, p. 18). Naturally there is a context to these remarks but nevertheless they are far from being mere 'proof-texts' of the arguments raised. In actuality, the remarks identify the essence of Nietzsche's philosophy which is the claim that there are no absolute truths, no facts, only interpretations.[252] Nietzsche's claims amount to a subjective, noetic, contextual construal, somewhat dithyrambic and quixotic in summarily denying the enduring existence of the Divine. His claims are detached from reality and scientifically validated truths in favour of a solipsistic bent, free of permanence and rationalism. All his assertions evolve from the following motive, "We deny God; in denying God we deny responsibility in God" (Idols, 1998, p. 75 [Ch. 6; §8]). Nietzsche's embrace of antinomianism

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[252] *cf.,* Power, 1901, p. 267.

is clear, and the auto-constructed individual is paramount, leaving him free to create his own reality and to insert into his *Gestalt* a humanist replacement of the Creator, one of his own structure, the '*Übermensch'* – the superman, the overman - an amoral individual (Zarathustra, 2010, p. 53), who can formulate non-theistic emotivist morality to suit. This is an indication of the irrational atheistic persuasions, the prevalent use of *non sequitur* discursive arguments, and the probable signs of slow progressive schizophrenia of one the foremost thinkers of modernity. It bears mention that probably as a consequence of his obsession with decrying the existence of God and the complexity attendant thereto, Nietzsche became clinically insane for the final few years of his life (Science, 2001, p. xxv), his illness being diagnosed by psychoanalyst Carl Jung as a case of 'ego inflation' (Huskinson, 2004, p. 2). The arrogance of his claims to divinity, of substituting himself (in his *alter ego* of the *Übermensch*) as the sovereign-self - an autotheistic fabrication - doubtless overcame his mental stability and emotional faculties.[253] Finally, the germinal question asked by Nietzsche, and which question permeates all of his work, is the following, "Is that what you *want?"* – his emphasis (Science, 2001, p. 248). Here, the final interrogatory uttered by Nietzsche at the close of arguably his finest work, 'The Gay Science,' summates the pinnacle of his secular humanistic, agent-centred ethical paradigm and his ontological inquiry, which reaches no coherent denouement, has no sacred frame and no epistemic justification. It is abundantly manifest that throughout his work, Nietzsche has one meta-motive, in the manner of Maslow (Agrawal, 1977, p. 2), namely, that of *ressentiment* – hostility and cynicism towards the object of his *bête noire*, God, with his divine, definable, coherent and moral essentials. The term *ressentiment* is articulated in this context as a visceral display of hostility that "pervades the core of the personality", being "beyond the control of the ego" and creating a "generalised field of suppressed wrath" (Masterson, 1979, p 157). The emotion of *animus* is endemic in the philosophy of Nietzsche and is *"*central for an understanding of his thought" (Abbey, 1999, p. 47). *Ressentiment* occurs through Nietzsche's realization of disempowerment in the face of the veracity of the pragmatic, invariable, precepts of the Divine, leading to impairment of his moral judgement (Scheler, 1999, pp. 10-11). It has been suggested that Nietzsche finds self-empowerment in his intellectual struggle for meaning and identity apart from the precepts of his Creator (Hunt, 2013, p. 119). This deduction would not be surprising especially given the vanity, the hubris,

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253 Psychoanalytic attachment theory (Gullestad, 2001, pp. 3-16), which posits that "emotional availability" (2001, p. 3), leading to an emotional attachment, as between a care-giver and recipient, is a major factor in psychological health (Henderson and Kent, 2021). Specifically, Nietzsche's *ressentiment* towards, or at very least his ambivalent relationship with, the Divine whose authority and existence he attempted to deny, led him to a situation which researchers would describe as one of "anxiety or a lack of certainty about one's relationship with the Divine (which) represents a threat to psychological well-being" (Henderson and Kent, 2021).

underlying his genius (Abbey, 1999, p. 47). In this manner, Nietzsche identifies himself as possessing the same insidious and enduring secular humanist demonstration of the autonomous, creative-self attitude first encountered in the Edenic Garden.

As for Nietzsche so can *ressentiment* be found as the underlying motive of Adam and Eve, and of humanity ever since the Fall – paradoxically giving rise to a situation, again not unlike that of *Schrödinger's Katz,* for while endeavouring to sublate the existence of God they impliedly acknowledge his existence. For these antagonists, God is dead yet alive enough, influential, and real enough to be vehemently denied. Nietzsche's philosophical *Gestalt* does not provide realistic answers to the meta-narratives of life, especially of a life ostensibly outside the precepts of the Divine and, moreover, does not offer any delineated moral and ethical praxis. Nietzsche's position of deconstruction is, in its essence, an *argumentum ad hominem,*[254] a specious and irrational argument directed at the character, motive, and Fatherhood of the Divine himself; a claim devoid of substantive and merit-based claims. In like manner, so too are the arguments presented in the Garden scenario to Eve by Satan's mimesis, which deceptive contentions were endorsed by Adam and Eve. as is evident through their compliant actions.

In Paul Ricoeur's view, the writings of Nietzsche (including Marx and Freud) should be read with a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' for the trio *"*dominate the school of suspicion", their contentions to be considered "truth as lying*"* (Ricoeur, 2008, p. 32 ff.). It might be added that surely the same stricture applies to the works of Mary Daly (2008, p. 35), particularly in relation to human sexuality and patriarchal right. Understandably there is an underlying pericope to Ricoeur's allegations, but it is evident, in essence, that all three protagonists of the 'school of suspicion', *"*present the most radically contrary stance to the phenomenology of the sacred". It is invariably the motive of secular philosophers to repudiate the existence of the Divine, his sacred Fatherhood status, his transcendent moral essentials and his spiritual influence. Repudiation occurs through sophisticated philosophical hypotheses all engineered to promote relativist, humanist, epistemological persuasions. This action is particularly noticeable in the nihilistic arguments of Nietzsche, Freud, and many of their ilk, and the atheistic and absurdist opinions of existentialist philosophers such as Sartre, De Beauvoir, Camus, and Kafka. These philosophers all assert the predominance of the autonomous-self, particularly in the areas of

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254 Harvard psychology professor Steven Pinker points out that if one "extols reason then what matters is the integrity of the thoughts, not the personality of the thinkers" (Enlightenment, 2019). In the case of Nietzsche, he professed reason in justification of his hypothesis of an alternative path to transcendence but, nevertheless, could not produce a rational dismissal of the claims of Judeo-Christianity, particularly in the area of a coherent morality. Instead, Nietzsche engaged in an *ad hominem* assault on the Deity.

sited ethical behaviour and meaning, while decrying the acute *angst* common to humankind once free of the Divine. None of these great thinkers have proposed a credible, normative, systematic and substantive ethical construal or a cogent transcendent framework that can be applied to society as a whole, and which would credibly replace extent Judeo-Christian tenets founding western culture. In their philosophy, each individual creates their own meaning and morality - a Gnostic concept. Many of the ideas and ideals promoted by such secular thinkers have polymorphed into disparate ideologies which underly much of the contemporary social disturbance, recognising only horizontal, not vertical, identity *assemblages* through ideologies such as Critical Race and other Identity Theories justifying, for example, sex-gender self-identification and moral reconstructionism.

Upon the nullification of the Fatherhood of God concept, a patent *lacuna* results in which ideologues have to re-establish some form of identity, morality, and meaning. Apart from their claims to an imperial-self, the immediate default position is to assert a substitute god – the Hellenist icon, Dionysius, in the case of Freud, Jung, and Marx, to which group can be added Nietzsche (Ricoeur, 2008, p. 35) - in order to support their neo-Gnostic, dualistic, theories within a parallel reality. Their humanist position is coupled with a pagan god of their own choosing, one more to their liking and one more amenable to their proclivity for self-determination. Identitarianists likewise disclaim the validity of the concept of antinomianism, for their sovereign-self is declared free of absolutist Judeo-Christian values, *mores* and boundaries. This position gives rise to a form of subjective, 'situation ethics' (Fletcher, 1966, p. 26), constituting a sited, emotivist, morality. With such unrestrained freedom, and the impetus of imputed moral lawlessness, the continual emergence of the occult among secular humanity is a foregone eventuality.

It is therefore certain that, in the manner of Rabbinical *darash,* just as fallacious *ad hominem* arguments were presented to the First Couple by the serpent for the purpose of defeating the Divine's plan for a theistic based society, so too the same strategy has been employed through the ages culminating in the recent social disorder.[255] The cultural chaos is based on sophistic arguments, through a motley array of heretical compositions, in order to remove the Divine from his patriarchal oversight position over the human condition. The book of Revelation reveals that after the millennium, the freed Satan again deceives humankind, no doubt using the same deceptive *ad hominem* arguments, and again causing a rebellion against the Divine

[255] In June 2022, social commentator Joel Kotkin, wrote that, "America's great cities are gripped by decline and disorder. Voters have had enough of progressive leaders who are presiding over spiralling violence and crime" (Disorder, 2022).

but this time resulting in his final destruction together with that of his cohorts (*cf.,* Rev. 20:7-10). The ancient *midrashic* interpretative method again finds justification in this example whereby the rebellion in the Garden continually finds fresh, albeit cyclical, application through the ages, including in the post-structuralist milieux, and culmination in the events recounted in St. John's Apocalypse. Finally, it is fitting to be reminded of the sapiential words of Paul when he poses compelling rhetorical questions, "Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20; NIV). So, too, the prescient words of King David, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. 14:1). The concluding words of St. Paul and King David aptly apply to the prominent and highly influential pre-modern, modern, and post-modern philosophers.

3.9 Conclusion

The First Couple, pursuant to their profanation of the sacred Garden, emerged therefrom with resultant loss of identity in the form of a corrupted and diminished *imago Dei*. They were faced, as *Interlopers,* with a world devoid of meaning, free of moral and ethical restrictions and their ontological station destroyed. With a rejection of the Divine and their assertion of independence comes a search for a new ontology, for new meaning, a search for new self-identity in a foreign postlapsarian world. Such freedom dispenses with absolutism and any *Sittlichkeit*,[256] with the eternal existence and consequence of the natural law conveniently overlooked. As De Tocqueville concluded in his weighty opus, 'Democracy in America', "Liberty cannot be established without morality; nor morality without faith" (1835, Vol. 1, Intro.). It might be added that the idea of professed freedom cannot be realized outside a theistic *Weltanschauung,* for the existence of the natural law with its intrinsic morality remains eternal and therefore sanctions persist for breach thereof. In a juxtaposition to this reasoning, the First Couple desired liberty without limitations, without prescribed morality, without ontological dependence, with a value-neutral morality and with their faith in the Divine renounced. Charles Taylor describes such novel situation as a *poiesis*[257] - a "new self-consciousness about the depiction of reality and the sense of breaking new ground" (Taylor, C., Sources, 1989, p. 202). The First Couple's treason arose from the desire "to be like God" (Gen. 3:5), *eritus sicut Deus*, which amounted to a love of their own sovereign-selves, not for God. Augustine pithily states that such seekers of independence, "love self, even to the contempt of God". As he explains

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256 '*Sittlichkeit* '– morality or, an ethical life.

257 *Poiesis* – an activity in which a person brings something into being that did not exist before. *Poiesis* well applies to the Identity Ideologues with their composite sex-gender creations.

further, those of the 'earthly city of love of self', "seek glory from men…and lift up their head in its own glory" (1890, City of God, Book xiv, Ch. 28, p. 407; *cf.,* Ps. 3;3; Ps. 18:1).

The concept of virtue, which is a particular characteristic of what is known as a 'civilized' person,[258] originates solely within the precepts and attributes of the Creator. In contradistinction, the concept of evil in all its manifestations originates solely within the character of the disgraced Archangel, Lucifer. These two personalities, the primary motivators behind all human qualities and actions, remain indefatigable opponents through all ages locked in lethal combat through their followers until Lucifer's utter destruction in the eschaton. Subsequently, the First Couple's rejection of the Creator's beneficent precepts and protection in favour of the sinister created Angel, has resulted in mortal consequences for all ensuing human societies.[259] Furthermore, upon such rejection is the manifestation in contemporary Anglo-American society of the denial of central canonical doctrines like creation *ex-nihilo* through divine *fiat,* in favour of a devised evolutionary determinism and naturalism; likewise of the divine *imago Dei* of humankind; the disparaging of the Fatherhood concept of God; the rejection of a delineation of binary, heterosexual, genders as represented by the First Couple; disregard for the created institution of monogamous marriage between two members of opposite binary genders; and a repudiation of the moral and natural laws that ineradicably permeate the core of the human *psyche.* These consequences are evident through the great *Sturm und Drang* currently taking place in an internal conflict of civilizations. The contest is occurring in the arena of Identity politics,[260] through aberrant race, sex and gender construals - the latter particularly in the category of autogynephilia. The promotors of transgenderism, autogynephilia, have succeeded in establishing both a legal and public validation thereof, despite entrenched and customary gender conventions to the contrary. The ideas giving advent to autogynephilia and similar gender dysphoria, have polymorphed into an influential political Identity ideology which has as its aim the deconstruction[261] of binary gender as originally established in the Judeo-Christian canon of the *Bereishit*. The process of an obscure idea becoming entrenched as an ideology in mainstream society was anticipated by influential philosopher Erich Fromm (1962, p. 134) who perceived that certain ideas and ideals would

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258 *cf.,* Pearce, J., Civilization, 2014.

259 *cf.,* Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 15:22

260 Identity politics is "less a single theory than a large genus within which nearly all modern theories of victimhood are species, because all of them invoke the relationship between transgressor and victimhood" (Mitchell, J., Identity, 2019).

261 originating from Heidegger's '*Destruktion'* and Nietzsche's 'demolition' (Wood & Bernasconi, 1988, pp. 1-3). The concept of deconstruction is widely applied in the area of Identity ideology for the ultimate purpose of culturally and contextually refabricating original, transcendent, meaning through an eisegetical methodology. Deconstructionism is indicative of a post-structuralist, post-Christian, period.

ultimately complete, “their transformation into ideologies”. Fromm ” (1961, p. 124ff.), adds that, “An ideology is at the same time a deceptive substitute for an idea and its preservation”. This statement is particularly pertinent as it is made in the context of corporate licentiousness. He continues, “The ideology serves to rationalize and to justify all irrationality and immorality that exist within a society” (1961, p. 124ff.). Fromm’s perspicuity is warranted for it is evident that in the societies under discussion, an ‘irrational and immoral’ idea/ideal, has translated into an ideology of moral anarchism endorsed legally, and to some significant degree morally, in the public square. It will be extremely difficult, to say the least, to purge such entrenched ideology through a future legal and societal reassertion of Judeo-Christian based precepts. Be that as it may, assurance comes from the determined words of the Messiah, “I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

The emergence of idiosyncratic LGBTQ+ (‘Alphabet’) activists as a whole, surfacing from the margins of society into the conventional, is the core of the conflagration over Identity. A minority group of activists has significant and excessive influence in the political arena, well out of proportion to the number of their acolytes and can be viewed as having a degree of legal, but illegitimate, hegemonic control. The societal validation of the Alphabet tribe’s agenda has led to legalised homonormative behaviour contrary to long established, fundamental *mores*. Their influence has simultaneously resulted in restrictions of constitutionally endorsed individual freedoms for all citizens*,* such as freedom of religion and expression. Emanating from extreme Identity ideologies, additional concerns confronting society relate to issues such as legal euthanasia of the infirm and disabled; the developing call for legally-endorsed assisted suicide; the pernicious, sanctioned, eugenical strategy to eliminate both perfect and imperfect unwanted humans in their pre-born state, and the prevalent, pernicious, trade in their body parts; the genocide of disparate social, religious, and racial groups with the forced sterilization of millions in totalitarian contexts and so on, all of which bode ominously for the ontological status of future generations. The conventional democratic rights, obligations and freedoms enshrined in the Judeo-Christian based democratic Western Constitutions cannot continue to be assured. Instead, these values and rights must be considered fluid, subject to the indefatigable political influence of secular and humanist lobby groups, individual philosophers, major corporations and other influencers of society. This is especially the case in the USA, for already the militant leftists with their destructive anti-theistic ideologies, “now control every significant cultural institution” and, furthermore, generally “control the culture” (Trueman, Dogma, 2021, pp. 1-2).

The phenomenological origins of the current *Kulturkampf* can be traced back to certain enduring *motifs* developed from Edenic Garden events, including the emergence of modern

secularism and the advent of the occult. The articulation of secularism and neo-paganism[262] is demonstrated by a secular humanist and neo-pagan, spiritual *Zeitgeist*, in lethal conflict with the established Judeo-Christian moral order upon which Western society is constituted.[263] The internal confrontation of ideas within post-modern civilization, amounting to a diachronically cultural metamorphosis, is exemplified in the microcosmic struggle between Identity politics (which by extension incorporates diversity ideology), coupled with moral anarchism, in contest with cultural Christian values and *mores* within the extant democratic liberalist[264] political dispensation.

The result is that secular humanist seekers after meaning are destined, like Cain, to be 'restless wanderers on the earth',[265] facing an unknown future in fear, alienation, *Geworfenheit,* and *angst,* with the ambiguity that comes with their fictional philosophical assembly. In sum, humankind finds itself captive to its reprobative condition, well described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his 1762 tome, 'The Social Contract', where he crystalizes the human dilemma, "Man was born free and he is everywhere in chains".[266] It is this quintessential predicament that iconic English poets like Keats, Shelley, and Lord Byron of the romanticist period (c. 1800 - 1850 C. E.) were likewise struggling to resolve. Their emotive works displayed abiding themes of "restlessness and brooding … the pursuit of ideal love, and the untamed spirit ever in search of freedom".[267] Hope remains, nonetheless, in the Creator's soteriological intent, for, as in the *motif* of 'the Prodigal Son',[268] his "restless", "untamed" children will ultimately become restored to him in righteousness. Upon such an event they will thereby regain the fullness of their corroded *imago Dei* personal identity, and hence meaning, defeating their *angst* and 'fear of death to which they had long been captive'.[269] In the interim, practical atheism and the occult advance to replace the loving but rejected theocracy of the Garden setting.

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262 Joshua Mitchell concludes that, "the West is on the brink of falling backward into paganism" (Brow, 2022).

263 Western civilization is regarded as having being founded, "from the earliest centuries", on Christian precepts (the "major contributor"), while intersecting with a "cultural synthesis of Jerusalem and Athens". This tripartite synthesis has resulted in the "traditional values" of the West (Leithart, Athens, 1993).

264 The term 'liberal', "originally meant "a partisan of freedom against despotism". The greatest characteristic of liberal politics is the "equal freedom of all citizens… and includes legal guarantees for private property and for the freedoms of speech, press, and religion", and, furthermore, the right 'of citizens to be ruled by their own citizens' (Burns, Liberty, 2019).

265 *cf.,* Gen. 4:12.

266 Rousseau, J-J., The Social Contract, 1968, Book 1, p. 49.

267 'Shelley' (poetryfoundation.org).

268 Luke 15:11-17.

269 *cf.,* Heb. 2:15.

CHAPTER FOUR: RISE OF THE OCCULT[270]

"Man was born free yet he is everywhere in chains" (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762).

4.1 Introduction

In the Preface to G. S. Faber's three volume work on the seeds of paganism and idol worship, 'The Origin of Pagan Idolatry', the author concludes that because "all nations must have in the infancy of the world have been assembled together in a single region and in a single community", all therefore had a common theology which would have been exported all through the known world. As a consequence, the events leading to a manifestation of a pagan[271] faith system that occurred in Mesopotamia on the plains of Chaldea (Babylonia) between the two rivers of Tigris and Euphrates, "have stamped a character upon the whole mass of mankind that remains vividly impressed even to modern times" (Preface, 1816).

Mesopotamia can be considered as the "world's first true civilization" and as such was the "father of all cultures in the west" (Anderson, 2021). Accordingly, the influence of Nimrod's Babylon cannot be underestimated for, apart from its historical significance as the capital of a neo-Babylonian empire of world power, it gave birth to a malevolent contra-Yahwist and occultist threat to the post-diluvian fulfilment of the Creator's kingdom purposes. The Divine's salvific purposes are in accordance with his apocalyptic and eschatological plan for human redemption, which plan was disrupted in the Garden by the same demonic influence inherited by Nimrod. For example, the literal and historic, "drunken king of Babylon in Jeremiah 25 (that) becomes Babylon as a incorporeal cup in Jeremiah 51:7, ends up as the andromorphic woman, Babylon, with a cup in Revelation 17*"* (Sals, 2014, p. 296). In terms of Biblical theology, and in accordance with established Rabbinical *midrashic* hermeneutical methodology (*infra*), the literal and historical Babylon has ultimately polymorphed into a metaphysical and metaphorical eschatological expression of the historic Babylon. Hence, Babylon can be considered "the world's navel, whose buildings connect heaven and earth" (George, 1997, p. 125), thereby identifying itself as the great spiritual antagonist of the Divine, commencing from an unknown period prior to the Garden saga (*cf.,* Isa. 14; Ezek. 28; Luke 10:18; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:4), and continuing relentlessly until eschatological denouement and the inauguration of the eternal state.

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[270] Occult – can be described as, "matters involving the action or influence of supernatural or supernormal powers or some secret knowledge of them". Additionally, "abstruse or mysterious matters not easily apprehended or understood" ("Occult" in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022).

[271] Pagan – named after the Greek god of sex and violence: Pan, or Priapus (*cf.,* Delsol, End, 2021).

4.2 Nimrod

In the postdiluvian context, it becomes apparent that within the third generation from Noah, his descendants had abandoned worship of the monotheistic Creator, and instead transitioned into the veneration of a myriad of pagan gods. It commenced with the saga of Nimrod whose *métier* was that of a mighty warrior-hunter, but one contrary[272] to the Lord. It is recounted in the book of Genesis that:

"Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is, the great city" (Gen. 10:8-12).

Targum Pseudo Jonathan adds that Nimrod, "was a mighty rebel before the Lord; therefore it is said, from the day that the world was created there has not been as Nimrod, mighty in hunting and a rebel before the Lord" (Gen. 10:9). Pseudo-Philo (Antiquities, Ch. 5:1), records that Ham's descendants made Nimrod their ruler, "Then came the sons of Cham and made Nembroth a prince over themselves". Further, Rabbi Eliezer (Chapters, Ch. 24, p. 174), quotes Rabbi Aquiba who elaborates on this point, "They cast off the Kingdom of Heaven from themselves and appointed Nimrod over themselves". According to Philo (On the Giants, 15.65), Nimrod was the first person to desert the Creator but he also took up arms against his friends. Philo goes on to say that "Moses calls the seat of Nimrod's kingdom, Babylon" which means "'change'; a thing nearly akin to desertion" (15:66). This is the environment of Shinar where Noah's extended family had settled and then abandoned monotheistic Yahweh worship. Josephus (Antiquities 1.4.2 [113 f.]), too, mentions the rebel Nimrod who intended to build a tower higher than any future waters could reach and so avenge the diluvian destruction of his forefathers. He engaged in, "turning men from the fear of God… to bring them into a constant dependence upon his power". His ultimate aim in developing Babylon, commencing with the Tower, was to establish a hegemony, "a rival world power to God's" (Quey, 2016, pp. iv). It can well be claimed that, "Babylon is that typological example of power directly opposed to God, with its titanic arrogance, that must finally come to judgement, so that the reign of God can be established" (Wildberger, 1997, p. 327). Nimrod's actions constituted self-veneration, leading to a self-deification apotheosis, a *homo superbus* – a person of pride - in the manner of his forebearers, Adam and Eve and their malevolent nemesis, Lucifer.

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[272] '*panim'*, showing his 'face'; defiant (Strong's 6440, Hebrew).

The Tower artifice was to be fabricated with bricks, “They baked bricks and burnt them as a builder would do” (Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer, p. 176). Furthermore, Pseudo-Philo states that, “Let us take bricks and write each of us his own names on the bricks and burn them with fire…so that they will be thoroughly baked” (Antiquities, Ch. 6:2). The import of this episode is that there is some authority for acknowledging that worshipping a brick is a recognised form of idolatry, as is evident from the aforegoing. Similarly, the Babylonian Talmud states, “Rabbi Judah, said in the name of Samuel, ‘If an Israelite sets up a brick to worship… and an idolater came and worshipped it, it is prohibited’” (Abodah Zarah, 46a). Likewise in this context, there is a fanciful speculation in the Sanhedrin that the Messiah worshipped a brick, ”He went and stood a brick upright to serve as an idol and bowed to it” (Sanhedrin, 107 b, L. 14). The point of the above quotations is that worship of a brick, of any inanimate objects, demonstrates a form of animism which commenced in the very early days of civilisation’s postdiluvian history. Although the first known mention of Nineveh’s actions in a secular source is located in the Code of Hammurabi (c. 2,000 B. C. E.), such activity has antecedents well before such time (Hammurabi, 1915). At a nascent stage of history, c., 5,000 - 2,500 B. C. E, idol worship arose on the plains of Shinar and escalated widely through the conquering exploits of Nimrod and his sycophants, continuing the fallout from Edenic antinomianism.

In relation to Nimrod and his cohorts’ attempts to fabricate a secular utopia, the following observations, surfacing from Genesis 11, can be made:

- Nimrod’s *assemblage* is the first postdiluvian gathering after all unrighteous persons had been eliminated (Gen. 7:1). Yet, the imputed sinful inclinations of humankind had not been eradicated and remained not only in the survivors’ *psychè,* but also within all of their descendants;
- The attempt to reach, and intrude into, the abode of the Deity, “let us build for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens” (Gen. 11:4), and the promotion of the imperial-self,[273] “let us make a name for ourselves” (Gen. 11:4), emanates from the autotheistic agenda of the First Couple;
- The demonstration of *hybris* - the insidious attitude of conceit, narcissism, and egotism - lead the postlapsarian and post-diluvian rebels to declare self-sufficiency (Gen. 11:3: “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly”), and independence from their Creator (Gen. 11:4: ”let us make a name for ourselves”);

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[273] The term, ‘Imperial-Self’ is adopted from Quentin Anderson’s 1971 text, ‘The Imperial-Self: An Essay in American Literary and Cultural History’ (Imperial, 1971, p. 18ff).

- The rebels attempted to create an utopian and harmonious social structure, a new human civilization, reminiscent of the aboriginal Garden from where their forebearers had been expelled due to their *hybris,* free from any Divine and moral oversight, in an articulation of secular humanism;
- The overriding agenda of the Tower construct is that of individuals corporately creating a substitute deity (Ryken, 1998, p. 67), thereby setting up an idolatrous, self-glorifying, community. In an act of divine intervention, God frustrated the endeavour of independence from his divine administration (Gen. 11:7-9) by introducing a polyglot of languages, for a humanist engineered utopia was not part of his protological design.

The apocryphal work, 'The Cave of Treasures' (attributed to Ephrem Syrus), confirms that Nimrod was among the very first of descendants of Noah to worship fire and idols*,* "Nimrod went up from the east, and began to practise the art of divining and very many men marvelled at him" (Budge, 1907, Fol. 24b, col. 2). It would not be surprising if this should be the case for in Genesis 10:10-11, Nimrod was responsible for establishing Nineveh, described in Nahum 3:1 as a centre of bloodshed, "Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder". Nineveh was also a centre for idol worship, "all because of the wanton lust of a prostitute, alluring, the mistress of sorceries, who enslaved nations by her prostitution and peoples by her witchcraft" (Nahum 3:4). Ephrem Syrus elaborates thus, "And this Îdhâshîr, the Magian, was the first to begin to study the Signs of the Zodiac, and (omens concerning) luck and fate, and happenings and motions of the eyes and eyelids, as well as all the other arts of the learning of the Chaldees". Ephrem continues:

> *"Now, all this learning is the error of devils, and those who practise it shall receive, together with the devils, the doom of the Judgment. And because this art of divination, which was employed by Nimrod, was taught to him by Yôntôn, none of the orthodox doctors have suppressed it; nay, they have even practised it. Now the Persians call it "Gelyânâ" (i.e., "Revelation") and the Romans "Estrômîôn" (i.e., "Astronomy"). But that (knowledge) which the Magians have, namely, Astrology, is sorcery and the teaching of devils"* (Budge, Fol. 25a, col. 1,1907).

The advent of postdiluvian occultist, pagan, practice, therefore, can be attributed to Nimrod.

The name 'Nimrod' derives from 'Marad' – the "name of a Babylonian king or prince - and Numarad equates to 'Man of Marad'*"* which in turn means, "he rebelled" (Strong's #5248, note: 2). A pertinent article by Kraeling (1922, pp. 214-220), claims that Nimrod was a *patesis* (King-Priest) and that he has been identified as the warrior king (lord) of Marad, hence, "the king of

Marad could therefore be called En-Marad or Nin-Marad, 'lord of Marad'" (1922, p. 214). Kraeling adds that:

"It had long been known that a god, Lugal-Ban-Da, was prominently worshipped at Marad", and this name is but "an epithet of Lugal-Marad-Da, a god worshipped at that place" (1922, p. 214). That the king (lord) of Marad, was firmly identified with Nimrod, "was known far and wide…originally a real hero of flesh and blood, he became a god…and the memory of his greatness being idolised by the people at Marad….The role he played as a god clearly indicates that he is regarded as a manifestation of the Babylonian war god Urta" (1922, p. 216).

This contention is supported by Pinches (1906, p. 13), when he describes the main Babylonian deities and includes among them, "Lugal-Amarda, the king of Marad". Pinches summates that the chief masculine deities were, "all identified with each other". The upshot of this statement is that Nimrod would have been considered the chief deity of the time, achieving a form of apotheosis. This supposition finds support in the First Testament canon where it is recorded that, "he (Sennacherib King of Assyria) was worshiping in the house of Nisroch (Nimrod) his god" (2 Kings 19:37; *cf*. Isa. 37). Although the account of Sennacherib was dated circa 681 B. C. E., the deification of Nimrod is ancient history for the First Testament *Torah,* with reference to the events in Gen. 10 -11, "claims to have knowledge of Nimrod's kingdom as two millennia lie between the days of the king of Marad and the biblical narrator" (Kraeling, 1922, p. 218).

And so, not only was Nimrod a mighty hunter contrary to the Lord and in blatant transgression of the Divine's immutable natural and moral laws inculcated in his somewhat corrupted *imago Dei*, but he actualized as a heathen priest-king (*patesis*), who was later worshipped as a manifestation of a Babylonian god (*supra*). According to studies by Faber (1816, Book 1, Ch. 1, p. 23):

"In the religious system of the old mythologists, demons were the same as hero-gods, and these hero-gods were acknowledged to be the souls of eminent benefactors to mankind who, after they had quitted this mortal sphere of existence, were worshipped as deities by a too grateful posterity".

Faber's conclusion finds support in the writings of Tertullian (1977, Ch. 6, p. 267) who clarifies:

"But in the question of idolatry, it makes no difference to us under what name and title they are exhibited, as long as the matter concerns the same spirits that we renounce. Whether they exhibit these games in honour of their dead or in honour of their gods, they render the very same honour to their dead as to their gods. On either side you have one and the same

situation: it is one and the same idolatry on their part, and one and the same renunciation of idolatry on our part".

Clement of Alexandria (1960, p. 59), in his address to the Greeks, scathingly informed them of the human origin of their pagan gods:

"A countless host, all mortal and perishable men, who have been called by similar names to the deities we have just mentioned. And what if I were to tell you of the many gods named Asclepius or of every Hermes…that occurs in your mythology? Shall I not seem to be needlessly drowning your ears by the number of their names? But the lands they dwelt in, the arts they practised, the records of their lives, and their very tombs, prove conclusively that they were mere men".

Clement (1960, pp. 111-112) goes on to exemplify,

"But now we have a tomb of a boy who was loved, a temple and a city of Antinous; and it seems to me that tombs are the objects of reverence just the same way temples are… as it were, temples of dead men, just as temples are tombs of the gods".

In such manner, ancestor worship and its derivative of necromancy, commenced and have remained extant in variegated forms ever since. To demonstrate: since the formation of the institutionalised Church nearly two millennia past, the Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy faiths, amongst others formal religions, have practised veneration of the 'Saints', notable deceased personages of the Church.

Nimrod was a vehement adversary of Yahweh worship. Bowker (1969, p. 180) writes that, "Nimrod came to be regarded as the great antagonist of Abraham, and the conflict between them summarised the antithesis between polytheistic idolatry and the worship of the one true God of Israel'. The 'Cave of Treasures' similarly informs that, "In the days of Serug, the worship of idols entered the world" (Budge, pp. 138f.). Serug was an ancestor of Abraham who was in conflict with idolatry (*cf.,* Jos. 24:2). In like manner, the 'Book of Jubilees' discloses that, "Abram arose by night, and burned the house of the idols, and he burned all that was in the house and no man knew it" (Ch. 12:12-13). This event purportedly transpired on the plains of Shinar, in the land of the Chaldeans, and the idols emanated from the occult practice commenced by Nimrod. The hero-god Nimrod, was the first to venerate nature worship like divine fire; to worship the "starry hosts" (*cf.,* 2 Kings 17:16); to engage in "dividing the heavens" (*cf.,* Isa. 47:13); and to practise idol worship resulting in himself later being deified, as were many subsequent notable personalities. In fact, the Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, mentions a myriad of gods and goddesses relevant to the time in Babylon, ca. 2,000. B. C. E.

(Hammurabi, Code, 1915). These gods would have been heroic individuals that subsequently became gods, myths, and legends in the early civilizations of the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. In the age of modernity, some of these gods and goddesses have been spiritually resurrected in a reconstituted practice of paganism. The transition into hero-gods harkens back to the situation when certain beings emerged from intercourse between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of man", referred to in the controversial verses of Genesis 6:1- 4, and which resulted in "the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown", who later became myths, legends, and no doubt, gods, in the antediluvian era. In the result, the nascent polytheistic religions of the inhabitants of both Babylonia and Assyria began at, "the dawn of history until the Christian era". The period covered may be "roughly estimated at about 5,000 years" (Pinches, 1906, p. 3).

A cogent question is how the practice of idol worship appeared in Palestine contrary to the Divine injunctions against such practice. But, as Kraeling (1922, p. 218) posits, "what is more natural than the news of the mighty king of Marad, the patron for every bandit and herdsman, should have passed into Arabia and through Arabia to southern Palestine?". Babylon, and its major cities like Marad, were established by Nimrod, and hence idol worship later spread from Chaldea to places like Ashur in Assyria, the "land of Nimrod" (*cf.,* Micah 4:4-6). It should be noted that in ancient times Babylon and Assyria, geographically and historically, formed one country with a related language. Certain authorities acknowledge this, "speaking of the whole, under the general name of Assyria, though Babylon would have been a more accurate designation" (Britannica, 1875, Vol. 3). It is therefore fitting that in the canons, Babylon is named as the original location and fount of idol worship and sexual immorality, being the archetypal secular city established contrary to the institutes of the Divine, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality" (Rev. 14:8; *cf.*, Rev. 18).

Both Assyria and Babylonia themselves were mere provinces of Persia, especially so after Cyrus the Great conquered Babylonia in 539 B.C.E. (*cf.,* Livius, 2021), and occult practice proliferated widely through the influence of a dominant Persian empire. In an account of Alexander the Great's campaigns, Boyce (1991, p. 3) reveals that Alexander recorded the following description of a battle, "the Persian army marching out to the battle of Issus, with sacred fire carried by Magi in the van". A similarly reference is to "Magi preceding the Chaldean priests in the great procession which came out to surrender Babylon to the Macedonian". The Magi were the priests of Zoroastrianism. These accounts are "in accord with known Zoroastrian beliefs and practices or with deducible historical reality" as there was "a strong Zoroastrian presence in 4th century (B.C.E.) Babylon" (Boyce, 1991, p. 3). There also exists

submissions in the ancient Syrian document, 'The Revelation of the Magi,' that the Magi of Matthew 22 were in fact Zoroastrian priests acting in accordance with a prophecy (*cf.,* Laudau, 2008, p. 12). And yet still further contentions by scholars that the twelve Magi, who are actually individually identified in 'The Revelation of the Magi,' were in fact names of Babylonian Kings and gods (*cf.,* Witakowski, 2008, p. 811). Whatever the case, the consensus is that the Magi originated in the convergent realms of Babylon, Assyria, and Persia where pagan personages dominated. This attests to the ancient origins of these pagan religions.

Apparently the Persian, Zoroaster (also known as Zarathustra), "used astrological symbols as vehicles for his truth" for, in his time, "Astrology was taught as a religion" (Leo, 1909, p. 3). In fact, Astrology was understood at some stage to be a "great world religion" (Leo, 1909, p. 6). Oesterley suggests that Zarathustra dates back in history as far as 1,000 B. C. E. and this date evidences the early beginnings of such heathen religion. Zarathustra himself set high standards of moral living in a proposed utopia, and "declared his task to be the setting up of a kingdom of god on earth" (Oesterley, 1966, pp. 312-313). Here again is a chimera, a fanciful attempt to create a humanist, immanentized, eschatological utopia in the fashion of Nimrod and his ill-fated Tower of Babyl. That there existed a significant intersectionality between pagan practice in Chaldea, Assyria, and Persia is beyond reasonable dispute and such practice soon made its way to Greece, Rome, Egypt and the rest of the known world at the time. The Hellenistic influence of philosophical intellectualism through Socrates and Aristotle but particularly via the Gnostic dualist theories of Plato, Plotinus, and their epigones, coupled with the focus of Epicureans and Stoics on hedonistic materialism, combined to give continued advance of secular humanist and neo-paganist constructs which persist and thrive in existing cultures (*cf.,* Geisler, 1990, p. 7).

The concept of worshipping a deity, one with several manifestations, became a hallmark of Hindu religions and resulted in a plethora of gods. These religions derive their origin from the Babylonian influence of the pagan Magi priests. Actually Nimrod himself was reckoned a manifestation of the war-god, Urta (*ad. loc.),* an autotheistic composite common in later Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Not only did this form of pagan worship expand to India but also to Greece, Egypt (Faber*, ibid.,* p. 24), and other civilizations. Boyce explains that "the downfall of the Achaemenian empire led to most Zoroastrians coming under Macedonian rule" (1991, p. ix), thereby assisting in propagating paganism. In an analogous fashion, and according to the historian Hathiram, occult practice made its way to India (2009, p. 1), by way of a migration of a contingent of some 2,000 persons, including pagan priests, at an uncertain date but certainly earlier than 651 B.C.E. (*cf.,* Kotwal, 1990, p. 1). It axiomatic that a significant

community of Parsi (Persians) remain in India to this day, with many members maintaining their ancient Zoroastrian religion (*cf.,* Lopez, 2017, p. 353).

The pantheon of gods peculiar to Babylon-Assyria-Persia spread world-wide, undergoing variations in name but generally maintaining the same characteristics. And so the same conflict between the adherents of pantheistic, polytheistic, pagan idolatry and the monotheists who worship Jehovah (and his Redeemer-Messiah), continues[274] into current society resulting in a battle of Judeo-Christian tenets against pagan heterodoxy and secular humanism. One of the fundamental problems associated with the occult is that it involves worship of created entities which have no ethical attributes, no deontological fabrications, and are themselves immoral and unattached to the natural law of the Divine. It is then incumbent upon attendant religious mendicants, and often the acolytes themselves, to formulate their own ethical and moral paradigms, relying solely on contextual circumstances, emotivism, and solipsistic fabrications. Hence, this is the philosophical source, to a significant degree, of what later became known in post-modernism as 'situation ethics', a relativistic composition based solely on two principal factors, namely, that of a Platonic and Gnostic duality, and a subjective, agent-centred, opinion as to what constitutes their best interests and those of others. This theory is propounded by philosophers such as Bultmann and Robinson in contemporary times (*cf.,* Hampton, 1968, p. 3), not to overlook Jean-Paul Sartre and his existentialist circle, but arises anew through the philosophies of Joseph Fletcher, the modern proponent of the term 'situation ethics'. Nonetheless, situation ethics obviously has ancient orphic roots. Such *assemblages* are in plain contradistinction to the high ethical and moral order of monotheistic, rational and absolutist Judeo-Christian tenets fundamental to the common good and moral order of society.

To conclude, the element of *hybris* evident in the rebellion of Adam and Eve resulted in their postdiluvian descendants, Nimrod and his allies, likewise rebelling against Jehovah in the assertion of their secular identity, the affirmation of their sovereign-self and an attempted establishment of a kingdom of man, with a paganist spirituality of their own fabrication. Nimrod, is the earliest identifiable 'seed of Satan'[275] manifesting after the Garden curses of Genesis 3:15 (with the possible exception of his antecedents Ham and Canaan in Genesis 9: 22 – 27), indubitably having the same nefarious agenda as the diabolical serpent and his own

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274 Delsol brings to attention that, polytheisms, or cosmotheisms, have "never disappeared from the scene in Western societies. Many beliefs, ideals, movements or authors are inspired to it to various degrees", including, "Kabbalah, alchemy, Goethe, Freud, Nazism, New Age spirituality, and so on. Cosmotheism remans dormant, always reborn as soon as the secondary religion (Christianity) which replaced it shows signs of weakness" (End, 2021).

275 *cf.,* Gen. 3:15: "Seed of Satan" refers to those malevolent actors who, through the ages, represent and/or act in the manner of their diabolical ruler, Satan, in multifarious contexts, guises and roles.

treasonable forebearers, Adam and Eve. Nimrod demonstrated great arrogance in endeavouring to establish a new world order, a *Lebensraum* reflecting the prevailing *Zeitgeist* he instigated. Such hermetical order would be formed with a new secular reality of life in the subsequent paganistic and humanistic civilisation that would replace the disrupted Edenic utopia. This proposed order would come to reflect the mortal struggle between the Creator's soteriological strategy for humanity, through the Redeemer-Messiah (*cf.,* Gen. 3:15), and those of the 'seed of Satan,' until an ultimate eschatological resolution. In the interim, the Creator's redemptive plans for humankind would only later be recommissioned through Abraham (*cf.,* Gen. 15) who departed from paganist Chaldea and for whom Yahweh undertook to create 'a great name' (*cf.,* Gen. 12:2). The Creator's blessing on Abraham as a man of faith is in contradistinction to the humanist attempt by Nimrod to promote his own name, "let us make a name for ourselves" (Gen. 11:4), exemplifying the essence of secular humanism's promotion of the self. The pericopes of Genesis 11:4 and 12:2 are prescient of the enduring great confrontation between theistic orthodox precepts and contemporary Identity ideologies; between those of the 'city of love of self' and those of love for the Creator (*cf.,* Augustine, 1890, City of God, Book xiv, Ch. 28, p. 407).[276]

4.3 Astrology

Esotericism as a whole can be "viewed as a global phenomenon, at least in the modern period" (Asprem, 2021, p. 3). Astrology, a narrow expression of esotericism, can be defined as, "the divination of the supposed influences of the stars and planets on human affairs and terrestrial events by their positions and aspects".[277] Astrology is deemed a pseudoscience[278] by most of its acolytes although, strictly, it does not meet the criteria required for classification as either a science or pseudoscience (*cf.,* Thagard, 1978, p. 223). It must then be viewed as a belief system, a hierophany, incorporating worship of created, cosmic, entities such as 'starry hosts'. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the popular practice of Astrology in ongoing cultures is ubiquitous and a hallmark of many extant pagan religions dating from ancient times. The original source of this form of nature worship, that is, "starry hosts" (*cf.,* 2 Kings 17:16; 2 Chron. 33:5), was evident in early Babylon (*cf.,* Pinches, 1906, p. 4), as with the origin of other paganist beliefs, commencing from the time of Nimrod as recounted in Genesis 11. Ancient

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276 It needs to be acknowledged that Augustine also had in mind the dichotomy between philosophical Athens and theological Jerusalem, one representing the wisdom of man, the other the wisdom and imperatives of the Divine (*cf.,* Manent, Athens, 2012).

277 'Astrology', Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

278 The dividing line differentiating science from pseudoscience is whether or not, "advocates of a hypothesis deliberately search for evidence that could falsify it and accept the hypothesis only if it survives" (Pinker, Rationality, 2021, p. 14).

Babylonian Astrology is mentioned in the Babylonian Astrological diaries, the 'Quarters,' some datable to the earliest times of humankind in that locale.[279] From Babylon, the practice of Astrology spread to Persia,[280] Greece and India (Pingree, 1963, p. 229). And, in Campion's view (2000, p. 509), "Contemporary popular Astrology can be seen as a remarkable revival of the practical applications of an ancient, non-western astronomy, that of Mesopotamia of 4,000 years ago, and one which predates all the other intellectual pillars of western society from Greek philosophy to Judaism, Christianity to modern scientific method". Not only is Nimrod's Babylon the source of pagan worship practices but the source of surviving manifestations of Astrology, little different if at all from its ancient roots, for as Campion (2000, p. 509), avers, "it is possible to identity a fundamental continuity from the earliest Babylonian Astrology to the present day".

The pericope of Genesis 15:5, "number the stars, if you are able to number them", recounts the rejection of Astrology and instead affirms a reliance upon the sovereignty of the Creator and his salvific plan for Abraham and his descendants. Theologian Kris Sonek (2019, p. 217[10]) concludes that, "Genesis 15:5 has become a proof text for the rejection of Astrology, divination and a deterministic view of the universe and human history" especially among the vast majority of both Rabbinical and Patristic exegetes through the ages. Yet by the time of Moses, worship of the "starry hosts" was evidentially manifest within the Israelite community to some unknown degree, for Moses cautioned the tribes, "And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them" (Deut. 4:19; *cf.,* Deut. 17:2-3; 18:10-11). Moses' warning to the Israelites against nature worship was ostensibly written some 2,500 – 3,000 years after the Tower of Babyl episode, and so alludes to the early origins of this practice. There are other canonical verses which likewise condemn the practice of both the worship of heavenly bodies (*cf.,* 2 Kings 17:16), which King Manasseh introduced into Judah (*cf.,* 2 Kings 21:5), and the practice of Astrology: "those who divide the heavens" (Isa. 47:13). Finally, Revelation 18 identifies the wicked spirit of an archetypal Babylon as the source of all occult practice, recording that "all nations were deceived by your sorcery" (v. 23), and which '"sorcery" is to be eliminated in the eschaton (*cf.,* v. 2-4).

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279 *cf.,* George, A., Astrology, 1997.

280 Jewish scholar, Yoram Hazony, in his study of the canonical book of 'Esther', posits that the Persian name, 'Esther' ("derived from the Persian word, '*Stara'*, meaning '*Star*'"), that Mordecai allocated to Esther in replacement of her Hebrew name ('*Hadasa'*), was "meant to appeal to the followers of Astrology in the fortress of Susa" (Esther, 2016). It seems clear, then, that the practice of Astrology in Persia was recorded in millennia past.

Astrology remains an influential and pernicious practice in coeval society and has ensured the continuation of paganism, of divination of the sacred (the essence of Astrology), into the modern and post-modern eras. Campion (2000, p. 509) confirms that "Astrology in the 20th century West has a central place in popular culture". It is not only in popular culture that Astrology has gained acolytes, but also among intellectuals as some of the great thinkers of modernity, who significantly influenced the circumambient culture, were adherents. For instance, the famed Psychoanalyst Carl Jung, a colleague of Sigmund Freud, was a practitioner of Astrology, "Astrology was a lifelong interest for Jung" and he had a "great regard for it and other paranormal or occult practices" (Buck, 2018, p. 207). Buck adds that Astrology constituted a "fundamental role" in Jung's development of analytic psychology and was an especially, "important aid in his formulation of psyche and psychic process" (2018, p. 207). Jung and others of the renowned Eranos Circle for intellectuals, considered Astrology as an adjunct of Gnosticism,[281] an arcane, insidious, pseudo-intellectual, metaphysical and somewhat inexactly defined, enduring belief system endemic in society since ancient days.[282] The interrelationship between Astrology and the mystical, all of which lead to supernatural structures such as reincarnation, paganist spirituality, Gnosticism, and other demonstrations of the occult, is explained as follows when applied to the issue of fate: "Gnostic cosmologies operates on its own principles, designed by the demiurge and implemented by the zodiacal band, the planets and other astral deities" (Pleše, 2007, p. 240). Jung claimed that ancient Gnostics were the "virtual discoverers of 'depth psychology'",[283] which is a central tenet of psychology known as "Jungian spiritual therapy" (Hoeller, 2021). Jung's own words, written in a letter to his colleague Freud, displays the firm grip of Astrology on his psychological theories, "At the moment I am looking into Astrology which seems indispensable for a proper understanding of mythology…I shall return laden with a rich booty for our knowledge of the human psyche. For a while longer I must intoxicate myself on magic perfumes in order to fathom secrets that lie hidden in the abyss of the unconscious" (McGuire, 254j, p. 421).

The significance of the aforegoing is that formative and influential thinkers of the 20th century, like Jung and Freud, covertly uncovered strong relevance for their psychotherapy and

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281 The "Gnosticism of the Greek and Roman world" can be described as, "brilliant, extraordinarily spiritual, amoral and totally false" (Satinover, Jungian, 1994).

282 The heterodoxic ideology of Gnosticism discussed in this study refers not so much to the ancient Platonic hypothesis, although that is the primary redacted source, but, rather, to what Augusto del Noce describes as the "spiritual essence that manifests itself in different forms in different epochs" (2014, p. 33), albeit founded on the Platonic and Plotinus model which in turn arises from an original archetype in the Edenic Garden (*cf.,* Chapter 3).

283 Hoeller is correct, for scholar Jeffrey Satinover likewise argues that, "Jung specifically identified 'depth psychology' as heir to the Gnostic tradition, especially in what he considered its superiority over Christianity in its handling of the problem of evil" (Satinover, Jungian, 1944).

phenomenological theories in somewhat hermetic construals, through an interconnection of Astrology, pantheistic religions and Gnosticism. Adam and Eve's *de facto* declaration of independence as autonomous-selves and free moral agents, likewise finds life in neo-Gnosticism, for their actions became typological of ancient secular and theistic articulations of this philosophy. DeConick (2016, p. 5), in his commentary on 'The Gnostic New Age', posits that Gnosticism is a "counterculture orientation towards a transcendent God and the divine power of the human". The statement aptly describes the "counter-culture" style motivation of the First Couple in rejecting their *imago Dei* and the parameters of the Divine's economy, as well as the subsequent actions of Nimrod and his acolytes. Furthermore, the statement explains the continuing secular, humanistic, and generally pagan ideologies underlying the present counter-culture instability.

Freud's fascination with, and devotion to, the characteristics of the Greek god Dionysus indicate the occultist roots of modern Freudian humanistic psychology. The arcane origins of Freud and Jung's popular psychology should be borne in mind for their influence has significantly permeated society through their psychoanalytic and phenomenological theories. To the end, Freud eschewed any Christian convictions.[284] Instead, pagan animism was recognised by Freud as "a psychological theory giving a truly complete explanation of the universe" (Turner, 2008, p. 45). In a manner reminiscent of his esoteric beliefs, Freud's theory on the origin of humankind was based on an affinity for evolutionary materialism, for, as he records, "the theories of Darwin …strongly attracted me" (Schweigerdt, 1982, p. 225). The evolution theory propounded by Charles Darwin originate with his paternal Grandfather Erasmus Darwin who believed that, "all warm-blooded animals have arisen from one living filament" which was formed by "spontaneous vitality" in the "primeval ocean" (Darwin, E., 1794, p. 478ff.). Firm practitioners of the humanist Unitarian religion, the Darwin clan believed that the Bible, "was merely one more book of ancient mythology" (Wiker, 2009, p. 17). The Unitarian Church website describes Erasmus as not only the originator of Darwin evolution theory (40 years prior to Charles) but also as an atheist (Unitarian, 2009, p. 1). Upon a rejection of the creationist account set out in the Book of Genesis, the Unitarian Darwin family, commencing with Erasmus through Robert the father of Charles, and then Charles himself, fabricated an atheistic alternative to the origins of humankind resulting in the myth of

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[284] Freud's ashes reside in an ancient urn depicting his god, Dionysus (Turner, 2008, p. 43), which urn remains lodged in the Golders Green Crematorium in London, UK, for public display (Mc Smith, 16th March, 2010).

materialist determinism with no objective, scientific or pseudo-scientific validation or any moral rubrics.

In the post-modern matrix, Richard Dawkins, spokesperson of the so-called New Atheists, an activist group, opined that "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist" (Dawkins, 1996, p. 10). Dawkins is the creator of 'Foundation for Reason and Science,' a group of like-minded atheists who pride themselves on justifying their position, and defeating competing views, through superior reason. Antagonistically, Dawkins' stance on evolutionary materialism reflects evidence of a lack of intellectual vigour for evolution cannot be substantiated on any rational, empirical, or scientific grounds whatsoever. Darwinism is simply a pseudo-science at best, being an attempted amalgam between philosophy (preferably, ideology) and science, but without the compelling grounds of rationality[285]and coherence which underly reason. Darwin's evolutionism is but an irrational and summary rejection of religious absolutism, especially theistic creationism, the compelling facts and data of which are casually dismissed. Evolutionary materialism remains an unsubstantiated theory which has become a secular religion and faith system in fashionable times, while metastasizing into manifold Identity ideologies such as those entailing race, sex and gender. The primitive origins of secular humanism – of which Darwin's evolution theory is but an early modern iteration – arose in the Garden through the renouncement by the First Couple of their personal identity, their restrictive *imago Dei,* and thus the creationist construals of the Divine. Instead, Adam and Eve desired an identity, an *imago hominis* with a morality, and a philosophy of their own subjective invention, much like that of Dawkins and his circle of New Atheists.

The highly influential modernist thinker, Frederick Nietzsche, based his philosophical theorems on the characteristics of mythological pagan gods, such as Apollo and Dionysus. He avers that he took seriously that "marvellous phenomenon" bearing the name Dionysus. In the symbol of "Dionysia" he discovered "the eternity of life… the very path to life…a holy life" (Twilight, 1998, pp. 79-80). He refers to Dionysus in his autobiography, 'Ecce Homo', as "God, only Dionysus" (1911, p. 113, Para. 8). In the model of Nietzsche's philosophical and psychological narratives is the concept of duality, the interaction of opposites, as exemplified by the Greek gods Dionysus and Apollo. Nietzsche "regarded life and its experiences as a dynamic interplay of opposites" of the "Apollonian and Dionysian impulses". It is Nietzsche's fabricated *Übermensch*, a "whole self", that "seeks to configure the opposites into a union" (Huskinson, 2004, pp. 3-4, 11). This is reminiscent of Heraclitus' philosophy of a 'union of

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[285] Prof. Steven Pinker defines 'rationality' as, "the use of knowledge to attain goals, where knowledge is 'justified true belief'" (Q & A, 2022).

opposites' whereas Plato and his school in their "Theory of the Forms' did not attempt a union of the body and spirit dichotomy but focused on the importance of the spirit, the body being evil, corrupted, matter created by a Demiurge – a lesser creator - and thus irrelevant for their purposes. Throughout Nietzsche's *corpora* is located the concept of 'hidden knowledge,' esotericism, to be accessed either through his protagonist, Zarathustra, and/or the *Übermensch*, a figure reminiscent of Thomas Carlyle's Hero archetype, and the Gnostic Elite possessors of the desired arcane knowledge. It is submitted that the Gnostic idea of *gnosis* and Nietzsche's 'hidden knowledge' amount to much the same concept, that of an obstruse knowledge remaining to be uncovered by enlightened Adepts. In this consideration, Nietzsche follows colleague Jung with his occultist bent. Such are the paganist epistemological centers of three of the modern age's foremost and most persuasive humanist thinkers. Contrarily, the words of the prophet Isaiah refute any concept of duality in the God of Judeo-Christian thought. Isaiah 45:7 reads as follows, "I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things" (NIV). The JPS Tanakh (1917) interprets the verse, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil". The Hebrew word for 'evil' (רָע [ra']), can refer to an immoral or unethical act but in this context is better read as 'hardship' or 'distress' or 'disaster'.[286] The beauty of creation in all its facets (declared as such seven times by the Creator in early Genesis), often distinct yet united and complete, including the human form, displays the harmonious sovereignty of the Creator. On the other hand, Plato's epistemological dualism considers the human body to be corrupted material, created by a Demiurge – a lesser being than the originator of the Gnostic spirit. On the other hand, the canonical book of Isaiah makes it clear that 'evil' ('disaster') as well as 'light' and 'peace' are all created by the Divine – there is no duality in Him, no aspect of human creation whether body or spirit, that is not created to be whole and 'good' by the exclusive and most holy creative authority. The claims of secular and theistic Gnostics and dualists involving, *inter alia*, the denial of the importance of the body (*cf.,* the 'Temple of the Holy Spirit' in 1 Cor. 6:9), of created matter, are accordingly defeated and consequently so is moral and sexual antinomianism emanating from a disregard of significance of the human body. This position finds relevance in the current humanistic and neo-platonic dichotomous proposals that, as the body is of no consequence, the human binary gender is then fluid, subject to whichever gender the persons desires (in a solipsistic way) whether male, female, transsexual, transgender, or a hermaphroditic or androgenous combination, ignoring the reality of biological binary sex-gender assigned at conception. Not surprisingly, this often leads to mutilation of the person's divinely created gender and, generally, immense confusion in the particularly vulnerable youth

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[286] Strong's 7451, Hebrew.

of society, with critical results including suicidal actions and tendencies.[287] Ongoing autogynephilia, gender dysphoria confusion, is the concluding contemporary result of ancient occultist, Gnostic, dualistic concepts.

In western esotericism there exists an intersection of Gnosticism, Astrology, and the belief in reincarnation. Reincarnation is mentioned in early (100-300 C. E.) Hermetic texts for, as Hermes Trismegistus (The Way of Hermes, p. 33) asks; “O son, how many bodies have we to pass through, how many bands of demons, through how many series of repetitions and cycles of the stars, before we hasten to the One Alone”.

And, in a section of his study titled, ‘Astrology: On Rebirth and Poimandres’, Larsen writes that, ”*Palingenesia* (spiritual rebirth) happens …when Tat really wants it to happen” - all in reference to the Hermetic text ‘On Rebirth’, and the twelve astrological signs of the Zodiac (2008, p. 80). Larsen continues, “going out of the body (into *nous*) is synonymous with going out of the Zodiac (i.e., leaving the world of phenomena) into pure unity (wholeness, God)*;* (*ibid*., 2008, p. 85). Here, the astrological Gnostic duality between the corrupted body and the purity of the immaterial spirit is demonstrated. So, too, Nietzsche with his metaphysical doctrines of the true ‘self’ which, through Astrology, leads to his theory of ‘eternal occurrence’. In ‘Twilight of the Idols’, he refers to himself as, “I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus - I, the teacher of eternal recurrence” (1998, p. 81). He explains further in ‘Ecce Homo’, referring to ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’ that, “The fundamental of the work, the Eternal Occurrence, (is) the highest formula of a Yea-saying to life that can ever be attained” (1911, p. 97, Para. 1), while referring again to his concept of eternal occurrence on page 109, para. 6. Astrologers elucidate the connection of Astrology with reincarnation as follows, “The Doctrine of reincarnation should have a special claim upon Astrologers, as Astrology comes especially under Saturn, and Saturn is the planet of Justice” (Hall, 1980, p. 9). Hardly a rational, scientific or even pseudo-scientific creation but a faith system, consequently neither rational nor objectively verifiable. Irrespective, reincarnation is viewed as pivotal to the application of Astrology for, “the science of the stars stands or falls with karma and reincarnation” (Leo, 1913, p. vii).

Venture capitalists in Silicon Valley, California, fund a start-up enterprise based on Astrology and which “algorithmically generates insights about your personality”. Commenting further on Astrology in the post-modern matrix, Samuel Kriss (2021) perceives that, “Astrology is hip now. It is queer and diverse and empowering, maybe revolutionary, definitely unavoidable”.

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[287] *cf.,* Chapter 6.

Ancient astrological concepts have been adapted to accommodate fashionable terminology and ideologies. Carl Jung pointed out in relation to the arcane that, “Eternal truth needs a human language that alters with the spirit of the times” (2020, CW 16, Para. 396). Gnosticism, hermeticism, Astrology, and ensuant facets of the occult, remain endemic in the post-modern age through multifarious forms.[288] In each articulation lies the ancient, prehistoric even, roots of secular humanism and paganism based on discontent with time-honoured theistic morality and identity, and so giving rise to the current social upheaval grounded on philosophies and Identity ideologies originating from these esoteric systems.

4.4 Age of Aquarius

A variety of schools of thought exists among astrologers as to exactly when the astrological ‘Age of Aquarius’ commenced, and even for how long each ‘age’ persists.[289] The common consensus is that in astrological terms, Aquarius commenced during the 20th century and will continue for some 2,160 years, being the average duration of each astrological age (*cf.,* Campion, 2004). The actual method of computation of each astrological age is irrelevant for the purposes of this treatise as it is generally accepted among leading astrologers that Aquarius is in session (*cf.,* Campion, 2004).

Within this so-called Aquarius has arisen the ‘New Age’,[290] a post-structuralist (*cf.,* note 22) period in which the politically driven ‘great reset’ of western society is transpiring in the fields of politics, psychology, philosophy, theology and economics. In the main, however, the crux of social engineering alludes to the demise of the cultural Judeo-Christian orientation upon which western jurisprudence is based. It is historically verifiable that “the Judeo-Christian worldview…has provided the foundation for the rise of western civilization” (Simmons, 2019, p. xii). That the politics of Anglo-American civilization give popular vent to rising ideologies should not be a surprise, as political issues are driven by the culture of society which in turn is a manifestation of prevailing religions in a motley cohort of forms. Richard John Neuhaus (Editorial, 1990), succinctly encapsulates the underlying factors driving politics:

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288 Gnosticism can be identified as “one of the fundamental directions of western thought” (Del Noce, 2014, p. 25).

289 Wittenburg, K., Aquarius, 2021.

290 ‘New Age’ can be explained as a 20th and 21st century phenomena pertaining particularly to pagan spirituality outside mainstream religions. Defined as an “eclectic group of cultural and religious attitudes arising in late 20th century Western society that are adapted from a variety of modern and ancient cultures outside the mainstream and which emphasize beliefs such as reincarnation, holism, pantheism, and occultism, and which advance alternate approaches to spirituality, right living, faith and health” (‘New Age’ in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022). The significance of the New Age era is more fully considered in Chapter 5.

"It is true to say that politics… is an expression of culture, and at the heart of culture is religion….and so politics is the effort to give just order to public life, employing the ideas made available by the culture… the most communally binding of those ideas are by nature religious, whether or not they bear the label of religion".

The key antagonist of Identity ideologues in reformulating society must, inevitably, be that of the Judeo-Christian tradition with its ethical and moral values underpinning the decency, the social virtues, the moral order, and the 'common good' of society.[291] Once the culture has adjusted to the 'new normal' then a political drive for legal enforcement occurs. This is precisely what is taking place in Western societies. Significant inroads in the re-creation of society by ideologues have been made, despite objection and resistance by conservatives and action groups. Still, the proponents of public and political secularisation of society have no interest in the customary constraints on morality, leading to the blatant and systemic public blasphemy of the name of the Redeemer-Messiah, for instance, legally condoned and permitted through the media. The British Board of Film Classification ("BBFC"), for instance, considers "using the names of God, Jesus Christ blasphemy, as suitable for all" (Christian Heritage, 2021). In contradistinction, the blasphemous use of the name of the god or prophet of Islam has severe violent repercussions as occurred in the Charlie Hebdo matter in France, 2011. Pope Benedict XVI points out that in European societies anyone who denigrates Islam or Judaism will pay a legal penalty but "when it comes to Jesus Christ and that which is sacred to Christians, freedom of speech becomes the supreme good" (Europe, 2006). The so-called right to freedom of speech is a contingent freedom, with a narrow exclusivity characteristic, for such freedom is *verboten* concerning Christian claims to absolutist sacerdotal truth. It is the creationist truth and otherwise exclusivity of Judeo-Christian dogma that offends in this post-modern age of relativist moral and ideological monopolism. This factor marks it as a target for destruction, under the guise of a plastic social justice, misdirected principles of equality, and multiculturalist theory.

Political promotion and judicial enforcement of cultural ideologies are regnant. The principal ideology is that driven by Identity politics, energised through a conflation of diverse action groups such as the 'Alphabet' (LGBT+) tribe who assail the veracity of natural born binary gender of individuals, instead promoting transsexualism and transgenderism (autogynephilia).

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[291] Ethical and moral values in Western societies emanate from the West's Judeo-Christian foundations. Considered one of the West's "most influential public intellectuals", Jordan Peterson (Cowen, Intellectuals, 2018), states that, "the Bible is the original book of western civilization – or, more precisely, the foundation of the Western canon of literature". He adds, that, "the Bible is the precondition for the manifestation of truth, which makes it more true than just true… literally and factually" (Mahlburg, Peterson, 2022).

The ideologues, furthermore, advocate secular and humanist ideas like mainstream acceptance of homosexuality, same-sex marriage, aberrant sexuality, and the uprising of minority ethnic anarchist groups such as Black Lives Matter ('BLM'). The latter, through a program of racial readjustment, are driven by a Critical Race Theory resulting in the resegregation of society into ethnic groups and the ostracising of majority groups such as Caucasians, Hispanics and Asians. In the same vein, BLM activists with leftist, socialist, neo-Marxists, cultural Marxists, and sundry socio-anarchists, desire to reconstruct the capitalist economy. The core agenda of Identity activists is the attempted destruction of orthodox monotheistic religions in favour of occultist driven pluralistic and spiritual paganism. For example, reactionary feminists in striving for identity,[292] assault the Fatherhood concept of the Judeo-Christian God. By so doing they advocate dismantling traditional marriage between created binary genders in favour of same-sex marriage, polyamory, polygamy, and other permutations of relationships. There likewise exists assailment upon a literal-historical interpretation of orthodox biblical concepts such as Adam and Eve, the Garden at Eden and generally the Book of Genesis as a whole - now being discarded as a myth, allegory or simply a literary narrative technique. Fundamental Judeo-Christian concepts are under lethal attack. For example, the *imago Dei* of humankind; original sin; the necessity of the Cross; and the Resurrection of the Messiah of Israel – are all under pressure from both within the professed Church and from without. Secularism, coupled with identity ideologies, has resulted in the emergence of widespread euthanasia of curated categories of persons and associated instances of eugenics. Selective abortion constitutes an extension of euthanasia and eugenics. These practices are applied to millions of both perfect, and suspected non-perfect, defenceless, unborn infants and the egregious trade in their remains. The hallmark of the anarcho-social movement is that it is victim motivated and hate-driven especially against those who exemplify contrary views. There is no attempt at human solidarity, no place for compromise, no adherence to a professed embrace of equality and diversity, no acknowledgement of the common good of society, no substantive arguments, but merely situational, emotivist, irrational, idealistic and idiosyncratic Identity constructs, all in the name of a narrow view of social justice. Minority groups control the agenda, the politics, the media, the education, and to an ever-increasing extent infiltrate and influence Christian Churches[293]

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[292] Prof. Gerald Izenberg posits that the modern idea of identity is a "negation of the previously taken for granted possibility of a fixed and permanent definition of self". In replacement thereof, "modern identity asks about my self-definition under a set of rubrics that ostensibly determine my stable beliefs, commitments, loyalties and, in consequence, my actions. It is in this sense that identity is a new idea" (2016, pp. 445). The operative idea here is the "self-definition" of identity, a paradigm upon which identity ideology is founded, in the search for an *imago hominis*.

[293] Jewish and Christian practitioners alike are equally aghast at the mortal Identity challenges to seminal Judeo-Christian principles underlying Western society. Cultural commentator Caroline

albeit mainly those of the established denominations. As an exemplar, 943 clergy from the Swedish Lutheran Churches declared that they are now a "trans-inclusive institution" (Kuman, 2021). Roman Catholicism itself is not safe from the influence of licentious ideologies as in 2022 some 100 German Catholic priests, in a blasphemous act, endorsed same-sex unions by invoking God's blessing on them contrary to canonical scripture and despite an injunction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ('Congregation") prohibiting such endorsement. Prefect of the Congregation, Bishop Müller, avers that the reprobate priests, "claim to have secret exegetical knowledge" that allows them to justify interpreting scripture in a blasphemous way (2021). The articulation of esoteric knowledge is a hallmark of neo-Gnostic mysticism which endures in post-modern society within sundry faiths. It is understood that western culture is, in the main, based on the three main pillars of Judeo-Christian precepts (Jerusalem); ancient Greek rationalism and philosophy (Athens); and Roman law (*i.e.,* the rule of law). Yet, there is another factor to be taken into account that has seminally influenced modern culture, and that is, "the importance of inner enlightenment or *gnosis*: a revelatory experience that mostly entailed an encounter with one's true self as well as with the ground of being, God" (Van den Broek, 1998, p. vii). Originating in the ancient Garden and continuing through the ages into modernity, the influence of western esotericism, the tradition of hermeticism, in its multifaceted communications and through a wide variety of conduits such as philosophers, psychologists and occultists, remains an alternative source of transcendence for those disillusioned with conventional religions. Added to such postulate is the failure of the Enlightenment's rationalism to explain the meaning of their lives and the complexity of human society. Therefore, in the post-Christian[294] (*cf.,* note 22) milieu, many people "turn again to the basic principles of Gnosticism and hermeticism often integrated with some kind of New Age thinking" (Van den Broek, 1998, p. viii), which has resulted in New Age spiritually becoming the "fastest growing alternate belief system in the country" (Geisler, 1990, p. 9). A search for meaning and identity apart from a Christian cultural orientation is the core motivation of the secular, humanist, and generally neo-pagan ideologies, fuelling the social unrest plaguing western societies.

Briefly, immoderate Identity ideologies have their dualistic roots in the incident of *gnosis* first articulated in the Garden. These ideologies have endured through ancient occultist ideas and

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Glick writes in the May 2022 issue of 'Jewish News Syndicate' that, "It is startling just how small a number of people in Western societies are impacted by transgenderism. There is almost a war against the Judeo-Christian roots of Western society on behalf of these very radical, made-up issues" (Radicals, 2022).

294 Bauerschmidt perceives the contemporary situation as follows: "Just as Christendom replaced paganism, a religion founded on *mythos*, with one that claimed to be founded on truth, so now, in our post-modern moment, 'truth' has once again been eclipsed by *mythos*" (Christendom, 2022).

ideals promoted continually through the ages, and remaining extant in the overlapping modern period[295] with that of the post-modern age.[296] The advent of post-modernity is evidenced through the hypotheses of sundry philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, economists, cultural Marxists, materialists, artists, writers, dedicated feminists and other secular humanists, not to overlook liberal theologians, theistic evolutionists, progressive Christians and Open Theists[297] with their beliefs compromised to accord with fashionable humanist ideologies. Originating with Eve's desire for creative authority and autotheism, *eritus sicut Deus* (Gen. 3:5), the emergence of a coetaneous demonstration is to be expected for it comprises a fresh iteration of similar events throughout the ages, initially through the First Couple, then via Nimrod and his secular, paganist, ideological successors. Galbreath (1971, p. 629), in describing the modern American psychic scene, mentions that "the idea of the adept and initiate in secret knowledge, the idea of a divine man or woman, of the god-inspired, of the human with super powers, is in the air". Although highly relevant to a post-modern context, such description is also fitting when applied to Eve's esotericism, her determination to emulate the Divine's creative authority, and the attempted realization of meaning through a self-identity constructed outside her conferred *imago Dei.*

4.5 Conclusion

Through assorted guises, the desire for *eritus sicut Deus* (Gen. 3:5), as encapsulated in Gnostic-like elitist arcane concepts, manifests through the ages in construals like Astrology and other neo-pagan[298] demonstrations, into the New Age of Aquarian post-modern spirituality,

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295 The period commonly referred to as 'modernity', arose from the Renaissance (17th c.) and Enlightenment (18th c.) reflecting emerging emancipation from religion (particularly Roman Catholicism) with rising secularism and humanism in the late 20th Century (Veith, 1994, p. 27ff.). However, Thomas Olden views the period of modernity, more specifically, as "lasting exactly 200 years – from the fall of the Bastille in 1789 to the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989" (Veith, 1994, p. 27); in sum from c. 17th century to c. mid 20th century.

296 The term, 'Post-modernism', derives from the lexicon of French philosopher J-F. Lyotard through his 1979 publication, 'The Post-Modern Condition' (1984 [1979]). Largely indefinable exactly, but considered the period from circa mid 20th century to the present (*i.e.,* mid 20th century onwards), the period of post-modernism can be regarded as evolving from, but significantly intersecting with, the period of modernism. The practical effect of post-modernist thought can better be understood through the associated concept of 'deconstructionism' (post-structuralism) whereby a reformulation of extant cultural and societal norms, order, ethics, morals, religion and values is underway, particularly through religious pluralism, secular humanism, relativist personal identity and sited meaning. Post-modernism can be deemed a post-Christian, post-truth, period.

297 Open Theism can be described in the succinct terms, "God is open to receiving input from his creatures. He invites us to particulate with him to bring the future into being… as the future is not yet settled" (Pinnock, 1994, p. 7). A distinctly humanist influence in the Creator's omniscient and immutable soteriological program for humankind, with such program being partially dependent upon individuals for their cooperation.

298 The consensus of many evangelical Christian scholars is to the effect that the "United States and other nations rooted in Judeo-Christianity have entered a time of paganization - what might also

inimical to Judeo-Christian tenets. Widely promoted in society by highly influential philosophers like Marx, Darwin, Freud, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Jung among others; supported by popular existentialist writers like Sartre, Camus and Kafka; and added to by groups like the 'New Atheists', secular theists and others of the same ilk; secular humanism coupled with neo-paganism has become the nebulous, pluralistic, popular, nihilistic and morally contextual new religion of Western society. It is evident that influential ancient heresies like pagan and humanist-based Gnosticism have reappeared, *inter alia,* in "psychological guise as a fully articulated and widely spread counter-theology, reflecting both the influence of Jung in Divinity schools and the truly astonishing number of clergy who have become Jungian analysts, quite prominent within the Churches" (Satinover, Jungian, 1994). Manifestations of the aforegoing heresies are collectively seen in the Identity, 'woke',[299] crisis besetting society generally, and Churches in particular. Woke activists, in striving to find meaning in a confused milieux, claim that "identity is the source of divinity" (Patterson, 2021). However, the divine identity they seek is not so much realized in an individual persona as "in shared group identities" (Patterson, 2021). Hence the objective to reconfigure society into an idiosyncratic woke tribal identity, as exemplified by 'Alphabet' sect members.

The aforegoing verifies the persistent manifestation, through the eons, of ancient heresies now iterated in refreshed forms in the contemporary era. It can rightly be claimed, therefore, that:

> *"A single historical line connects the pagan religions of the ancient Near East, to the Jewish heretical-mystical sects of the Qumran community (precursors of later Gnosticism), to pre- and early Christian Gnosticism itself, to Manichean dualism and other classical heresies, to medieval Alchemy and Templarism, to the transforming alembic of Renaissance Neo-Platonism with its interpenetrating emphasis on magic, humanism, and science. From there it is a short step to the modern reduction of spirit to psyche and/or soma and the consequent pagan resurgence, through which we are now suffering".* (Satinover, Jungian, 1994).

To elaborate further, Frederick Bauerschmidt views the contemporary situation as follows: "Just as Christendom replaced paganism, a religion founded on *mythos*, with one that claimed to be founded on truth, so now, in our post-modern moment, 'truth' has once again been eclipsed by *mythos*" (Christendom, 2022). Society has thus come full circle, back to its post-exilic pagan roots. The need for sound doctrine and inerrancy of the scriptures is as vital now

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be called 're-paganization'". The influence of conventional religion is "diminishing even as a-religious and anti-religious elements accumulate mass" (Eberstadt, Secularism, 2018).

299 'Woke' is the vernacular slogan for identity politics, in its many iterations (Patterson, 2021).

as ever before. This is especially the case for, as Francis Young (Paganism, 2022) concludes, “the influence of the idea of paganism within secular culture is inescapable”.

The contention of a re-capitulation, a fresh application in a contemporary context, of the aborigine advent of secular humanism and paganism - together amounting to the rise of the occult - continued through to an ultimate eschatological iteration (*cf*., St. John’s Revelation), can be theologically validated through a *darash* of the ancient Rabbinical Jewish hermeneutic of midrashic *haggadah*. This issue is addressed further in Chapters 6 and 8. It is in the New Age of post-modernity that secular humanism and the occult, primarily through Gnostic paradigms, find full expression challenging the traditional liberal order long founded on principles emanating from the ancient tripartite city-states of Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem (*cf.,* Chapter 1, Note 19), as examined in Chapter 5, next.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE GNOSTIC NEW AGE[300]

> *"Restlessness and brooding, rebellion against authority, interchange with nature, the power of the visionary imagination and of poetry, the pursuit of ideal love and the untamed spirit ever in search of freedom".* (Romanticism, 2022).

5.1 Introduction

The epistemology of Plato (c. 424 – 348 B.C.E.) can succinctly be defined as, "teaching based on Gnosis, the knowledge of transcendence arrived at by way of interior, intuitive means" (Hoeller, 2021). The actions of the Edenic First Couple in seeking their own "knowledge of transcendence" (*cf.,* Gen. 3:5), through esoteric revelation imparted by the serpent - the original 'Gnostic Elite' (*avant la lettre*)[301] - for the purposes of emancipation from the presence and constrictions of the Divinity - confirms their Gnostic-like actions. The result was a secular humanist construal.[302] The heretical spiritual philosophy underlying Platonic Gnosticism therefore has nascent roots, harkening back to particular transactions in Eden[303] when the First Couple rebelled, with a motive of *ressentiment,* in order to create a future milieu free of theistic constraints. Upon the realization of their desires, through claims of self-divinity, transcendence, moral determination, creative license and omniscience, they were free to devise their own reality, a new personal identity and philosophy of life. Suffice it to say that the First Couple created a secular *Sittlichkeit* enabling them to act as their own deity, with a hermeticist elitism derived from an analytic phenomenology of their own manufacture. Support for this view is found in the work of Gene Veith when he affirms that "New Age religions for all their pagan trappings, have in common the idea that the self is divine, that you are God, the creator of your own universe" (1994, p. 199). In other words, they endorsed "the assumption that we enjoy a default first-person authority for some of what we say about our own experience" (Siewert, 2016, p. 97). Such "authority" would be independent of empirical truths or any factor exterior to their own consciousness leading to a distinct transcendental phenomenological structure. Thomas White describes the situation thus: "the modern person

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300 The Postmodern worldview of secularism, humanism, relativism, deconstruction, neo-Marxism and plurality of pagan spirituality "manifests itself not only in New Age religions but even within the evangelical Church" (Veith, 1994, p. 23-24).

301 'avant la lettre' – meaning, "before the letter: before the (specified) word or concept existed".

302 Adolph Harnack concludes that the influence of Gnosticism, coupled with allegorical interpretation derived therefrom, was the commencement of secularization of the 2nd century, nascent, "Gentile-Christian" religion (Dogma, 1896, pp. 1, 251).

303 Borchert advises that a prime target of the Gnostic heresy were the "stories of Genesis". Furthermore, the ancient Gnostics sought to lead Christians "astray by the manipulation of words and the twisting of scriptural meanings" (Elwell, 1984, p. 444), a tactic well employed by contemporary neo-Gnostic based Identity ideologues.

is free to define his own meaning… free from the influence of religious authorities" with their "collective account of meaning. When it comes to defining or defending the meaning of life, it's every man for himself" (Metaphysics, 2018). In rebuttal, C. S. Lewis deduces that it is a "fatal superstition that men can create values".[304]

The spiritual genre of the First Couple, much later designated as 'Gnosticism,' has persisted in multifarious manifestations throughout the ages. The actions of the First Couple's descendent, Nimrod, confirms the continuation of a Gnostic-like arcane, omniscient, elitism into the postdiluvian era. Nimrod, like his ancestors, acted in blatant contempt for the divine boundaries of the Creator, determined to establish his own "knowledge of transcendence" through subjective intuition, his own cognisance and moral orientation. In order to achieve this target, Nimrod had to deny the historic concept of righteousness as understood and propounded to his antecedents, Adam and Eve, by the Creator and rely instead on his own fabricated 'intuitive means' (*supra*). The result, as is recounted earlier, is evident: Nimrod became the instigator of pagan worship and self-veneration. During his lifetime, he was deemed a demi-god. Nimrod was an adherent of astrology within which enduring system the same multifarious paganistic, pantheistic, pluralistic, Gnostic, spiritual structure has continued through the ages and into current society.[305]

It can be rightly claimed that Gnosticism is of prevenient origin for, "the more these beginnings (of Gnosticism) are studied the farther they seem to recede into the past" (Catholic Ency., 2021). The ties of Gnosticism to ancient Babylonian religion was determined by Kessler who delivered the findings in 1882 at the Fifth Congress of Orientalists, in Berlin (1882, p. 288). A few years later, Wilhelm Anz revealed the close interconnection between Gnosticism and Babylonian astrology (Anz, 1897, p. 4), which pseudo- scientific[306] system remains popular in both Western and eastern societies. And, further, taking into account both ancient anti-Gnostic authorities as well as significant Gnostic sources such as the Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi, the result is clear that Gnosticism is not a benign creation but is in fact, "a coherent doctrine of evil as derivative from a spiritual source and permeating all domains of a multi-layered reality" (Pleše, 2014, p. 101). This specious argument is evident in Gnostic-based Marcionite doctrine which claims that evil originates in the Biblical Creator (the 'demiurge') and, hence, the valid inconsequence, and rejection, of the Fatherhood of God concept and so the *imago*

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304 Lewis, C. S., Reflections, 1967, p. 73.

305 Professor Marion Montgomery concludes that, "modern Gnosticism is but a recent version of a most ancient heretical act" (Metaphysical, 1993). The "heretical act" referred to is the First Couple's declaration of independence through purported arcane knowledge (Gen. 3:5).

306 "The demarcation between science and pseudoscience is part of the larger task of determining which beliefs are epistemically warranted" (Hansson, S. O., Science, 2021).

Dei of humankind. Reality, knowledge, consciousness, and meaning is then postulated as emanating from a 'higher' spiritual source (the *Monad*) exterior to creation – as proposed in Docetism (Elwell, 1998, p. 326) – and accessible only to Gnostic Elites. Justification of the duality of the spirit (the incorporeal mind) contrasted with the material, corrupted, body naturally follows. This hypothesis, like all secular humanist heresies, patently originates from the transactions in the Edenic Garden and is the "doctrine of evil" which has "permeated all domains" (*cf*., Pleše, *supra*) of spiritual structures, and the search for ontological security in the form of personal identity, ever since.

5.2 Gnosticism, Phenomenology and Psychology

Siewert's proposal of a "first person authority" concept is little different from that suggested by Franz Brentano whose students included Freud (Freud, with Jung, created psychotherapy and analytic psychology) and Husserl (the originator of modern phenomenology). Brentano emphasised the "infallibility of inner perception" (2006, p. 76). In a similar vein Husserl, displaying a Platonist, Cartesian and Kantian background, claimed the pertinence of apodictic evidence in his transcendental phenomenological composition of knowledge. The philosopher, Terentyeva, concerning the basic tenets of Husserl's phenomenology, defines apodicticity as, "an idea that lies in the infinity of universal experience…and refers to correlative connections between the transcendental ego, the world and intersubjectivity" (2020, p. 495). The emphasis on the '"transcendental ego" of 'inner perceptions,' forming a psychological and philosophical make-up, has in turn resulted in Identity ideologies driving social engineering and moral contextualism in Western societies. The conceptual roots underlying the principles of phenomenology are the hallmark of ancient Gnosticism and so too, its post-modern utterances. A manifest extension of this contention is that the basic principles of modern psychology are based on the Aristotelian 'study of the soul' which in turn is derived from earlier Platonic and Plotinian epistemology. The influence of Thomas Aquinas introduced Gnostic thought into many Roman Catholic doctrines (*e.g*., consecration of the Host), much of which persists in official dogma.

Gnosticism finds fresh relevance in present times through esoteric concepts such as the aquarian, pagan, astrological systems - leading to a popular illustration of Gnosticism in a post-modern, New Age, world. Gnosticism remains an integral element in major eastern religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. In Anglo-American societies, Gnosticism is today little different from its ancient ideological antecedents, namely, an insidious philosophical and spiritual precept endorsed through diverse secular humanistic disciplines such as philosophy, the Behavioural sciences of psychology (particularly negative

psychotherapy) and sociology[307], cultural Marxism, pseudo-scientific materialist evolution, and neo-pagan spirituality, resulting in occult ideologies pervading much of society. The result is evident in the current struggle between the established doctrines and praxis of cultural Christianity pitted against a collection of fashionable heterodoxical fabrications. The discovery of the Egyptian Nag Hammadi Library in 1945 gave further impetus to the recent interest in, and rise of, Gnosticism.

Acknowledging the ancient roots of New Age spiritualism, Norman Geisler (1990, p. 11) states that its influences comprise a combination of elements such as the "occult, Gnosticism, and paganism" and "stands within a long tradition, it is not new". Robertson (2020, p. 75), in his decisive work, 'A Gnostic Study of Religions', confirms that the spirituality of the New Age is Gnostic in character. He goes on to suggest that given its ahistorical nature, its relevance in a coeval milieux is perceived through "philosophical or psychoanalytic affinities" which ultimately influence society and manifest the prevailing spiritual *Zeitgeist* through resultant ideologies. Ergo, the ideas and ideals propounded by scholars of both of philosophy and psychology are a major conduit of Gnostic concepts into the societies of modernity. A pertinent instance of this position is revealed in the influential mid 20th century lectures delivered at Carl Gustav Jung's famed Eranos Circle group by prominent scholars such as Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin, all three being self-described 'phenomenologists', and all being persons of "Gnostic minds" (Wasserstrom, 1999, p. 25, 30). These scholars can well be described as, "titanic figures in the history of 20th century history of religion studies" and who, "remain today immensely influential" (Versluis, 2001, p. 288). It is claimed that Husserl initially, and then Jung in particular, developed phenomenology to the extent that it became "one of the great intellectual movements of the twentieth century" (Brooke, 2020, p. 968). This phenomena is patent from a fashionable, dichotomous, therapeutic focus on the individual's 'inner-self', a therapy widely promoted by both Jung and Freud, and their ideological successors.

The philosophical outlook of these scholars could be summated by recounting their essential deductions which were basically to the effect that the roles of myth and mysticism should dominate in religion, and that monotheist, absolutist, moral laws should be repudiated (*cf.,*

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307 Prof. Christian Smith refers to American sociology as a type of secular, but sacred, salvation effort, having Marxist roots, in search of a social justice. He concludes that it is "a collective enterprise, at heart committed to the visionary project of realizing the emancipation, equality, and moral affirmation of all human beings as autonomous, self-directing, individual agents… constructing their own favoured identities…. enjoying the gratification of experiential, material, and bodily pleasures" (2014, Sociology, pp. 7-8). The ancient heresy of *eritus sicut Deus* clearly finds affinity with American sociology, in terms of Smith's definition.

Wasserstrom, 1999, pp. 29-30). Corbin (1999, p. 30) himself asserted that, "The entire human drama is played out on the plain of *gnosis* and Gnostic consciousness. It is a drama of knowledge, not a drama of the flesh*".* The historicity of religion was consequently disparaged for its reductionist tenets, leaving religion free of pragmatic verification and empiricism, and instead favouring an eccentric experience of the 'sacred' (*cf.,* 1999, p. 29), itself a statement of religion. The use of phenomenology as a science of the mind was simply a vehicle for rationalising these Gnostic claims, hence Eliade's "fantastic reality" led to the inference that perceived "myth was real and history wasn't" (1999, p. 30). In actuality, Corbin (1999*,* p. 27) described phenomenology as "a revealing of the concealed, a revealing of secrets". Corbin's mandate in phenomenological research was to "discover the primordial image – the *Imago mundi a priori* " (1999, p. 27) of material data. This could only be achieved through the application of his Gnostic inspired dualist phenomenological strategy.

Jung summed up the disparate propositions of the three scholars as follows, "In spite of the great variety of contributions in form and subject matter, they are all related to central and transcendent ideas – to the ideology and phenomenology of the way of salvation or redemption*"* (Wasserstrom, 1999, p. 28). The transcendental intent of spiritual, non-religious, paganistic phenomenology is to be noted for it is standard of classic Gnosticism: imprecise and indeterminate with no realistic protological resolution. Jung, seemingly in a mood of cognitive dissonance (which Leo Tolstoy would have described as 'energy of delusion' [Shklovsky, 2007, p. 4]), alleged that "the ultimate dialectic was that of gnosis" and gnosis was "valid knowledge",[308] "psychologically empirical", and that he was "studying a reality" (1999, p. 30). Scholars of Jung's persuasion merrily dismiss definitive and rational phenomenological truths, fabricating their own reality. Wasserstrom (1999, p. 30) concludes that, "These modern Gnostics…arrived at their *gnosis* just as did their ancient counterparts" - through subjective and esoteric construals. That Jung was a "modern Gnostic" is without doubt as he exhibits all the traditional Gnostic dualistic characteristics in his philosophical theories. The Center of Applied Jungian Studies emphasizes Jung's dichotomous construals of the "persona" contrasted with the "anima or animus", the objective and the subjective, the external and the internal. The teaching of Jungian psychology, as a "practical and accessible tool for personal individuation, increased consciousness, and the restoration of meaning" (CAJS, 2022),

[308] A source of *gnosis* for Jung was his "special spirit guide", an entity he named 'Philemon', who he described as, "an ancient magician with a white flowing beard, a kingfisher's wings and the horns of a bull" (Hart, D. B., Jung, 2013).

continues into the post-Christian, post-truth,[309] era. Hence, it can be said that "Gnostic and occult ideas are the predominate feature of Jungian thought" (Satinover, J. B., Jung, 1995).

It remains to recount the underlying paganistic, Gnostic, spiritually in the mystical sciences promoted by these esoteric scholars. Eliade studied under Hindu gurus in India; Corbin visited Iran to study Sufi 'Ishraqiyun' – al- ishraqat - under the Sheiks; and Scholem 'rediscovered gnosis' in the Merkabah mysticism of Kabbalist Judaism, arising in the 12th century C.E. (*cf.,* Wasserstrom, 1999, p. 30). Quite justifiably, Wasserstrom posits that the, "theorists of esoterism at Eranos…sought to perpetuate ancient secret teachings by publicly teaching those secrets today*"* (1999, p. 33) - to which might be added: 'under the guise of a philosophical phenomenology and of psychotherapy'. The phenomenology enterprise of the aforegoing highly influential philosophers is undeniably a resurrection and continuation of the Gnostic spirituality of ancient times. It is unsurprising therefore that these philosophers sought arcane knowledge in the 'secret teachings' of ancient religions given that those organisms likewise emphasise a model of the matter - spirit dichotomy, which is a hallmark of ancient Gnostic initiates who derived verification in many of Plato's concepts. Plato's key epistemological articulation was his 'Theory of the Forms' ('ideas'), a dualist cosmology which denied the reality of the 'illusory' and 'transient' material world, asserting instead the immutable, invisible, world of eternal incorporeal objects discovered solely through reason which alone could have salvific import of some fashion. In the theory of the early Gnostics, focus on the immaterial was paramount for the corrupted material world could only have been created by Platonism's Demiurge, a figure significantly less worthy of esteem than the Deity of creation, roughly equivalent to Plato's Monad. It therefore became incumbent upon the initiate to discover through his own *gnosis*, or through that of a Gnostic Elite, the secret knowledge ('*gnosis'*) of what is real through reason, that is, wisdom ('*sophia'*) which led to transcendence. Hence, the biological body being of no salvific, sacerdotal or eternal significance, was deemed malleable. From such theory, validation follows for rampant antinomianism and licentiousness. In the post-structuralist era, the rise of Identity ideologies through identifications such as synthetic gender categories, originates from the dualist concept of the insignificance of the body in favour of the essentiality and eternality of the spirit. In later Gnosticism, *sophia* became personified as a feminine entity, an element of the feminine aspect of the Deity, and soon polymorphed into a female goddess in her own right. In the collective unconsciousness of Jung's analytic "depth" psychology, the personified *Sophia* was identified

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309 Nicholas Babich claims that advent of a post-truth era is a "clear sign that the world as we know it is at the verge of semiotic collapse. Nothing seems to mean what it ought. Even the most basic linguistic utterances are treated with suspicion and often paranoia and fear" (Modernism, 2022).

as the anthropomorphic '*anima'*, the unconscious feminine aspect of man (Read, 1969, pp. 64, 106). In a Nag Hammadi text, 'On the Origin of the world', the personified *Sophia* is described as the "ultimate destroyer of the universe" (Robinson, 1988, Codex II, Book V). The existence of feminine and androgenous exemplars of deity have existed since prehistoric times and this practice continues in the occultist New Age[310] of post-Christian modernism.

It bears mention that the theories of Plato represented the pinnacle and summation of redacted intellectual secular philosophy up to that time in history, and therefore became highly influential not only in Greece but in all surrounding city-states. Plato's dualistic theories, as furthered by Aristotle and Plotinus (after whose concepts the term 'Neoplatonism' was applied), continued to be influential through late antiquity and the middle ages, remaining rampant in contemporary Western and eastern societies through their inexorable philosophies, faiths, and religions, as is indicated in this study.

5.3 Gnosticism and Religion

The religious features of obstruse New Age beliefs, all originating from Gnostic concepts, include astrology, reincarnation, psychics, and an amorphous entity described as "energy" which is apparently present in natural objects such as trees, mountains, rivers and other landscape entities. These features constitute a form of primitive animism, nature worship, naturalism,[311] in fact a pantheism which commenced with Nimrod and his sycophants (*cf.,* Gen. 10-11). Pantheism[312] is the most vigorous New Age "belief system" in the US (Geisler, 1990, p. 9), with approximately 60% of current Americans believing in at least one of these New Age features and some 30% believing in reincarnation and astrology (*cf.,* Gecewicz, 2018). Amongst professed Christians the situation is quite alarming for while 80% of Christians believe in a Biblical God, 60% also believe in one or more of the above features of the New Age religious components. Among atheist or agnostic affiliates, the percentages are about the

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310 Contemporary French philosopher, Chantal Delsol, deduces that, "the New Age will be the age of wisdom and paganism, necessarily rediscovered after the challenge of transcendence. Since the second half of the 20th century, particularly since the 1960's, our moral hierarchies have literally been reversed. Concerning individual behaviour and social acts, an evil has become a good and vice versa, that behaviour which was abhorred, is now praised, that former admiration now transforms into hostile challenge" (End, 2021).

311 Chantal Delsol avers that, "the new ecological religion is a form of post-modern pantheism. Nature becomes the object of a cult, only partly based on reality" (End, 2021). The fanatical global focus on 'climate change' is an iteration of the "new ecological religion".

312 Delsol, in her 2021 French text, '*La Fin de la Chretient'e* (The End of Christianity), posits that the "fading Christian faith" is becoming replaced by pantheism, that is, a "growing and widespread 'worship' of nature and strict demands of ecological morality" (Bertoglio, 2022). 'Ecological morality' is only part of the replacement of the cultural moral tenets supporting the liberal democratic tradition. Iterations of secular humanism (effectively, practical atheism), with its own emotively constructed morality, are likewise part of the replacement model (Bertoglio, 2022).

same as for professed Christians. Interestingly, women are more likely to hold New Age beliefs than men: 70% compared to 55%. This ratio would typologically accord with the serpent's machinations in approaching Eve first (*cf.,* Gen. 3:1-6). Politically, supporters of the Democratic Party in the USA are, "more like than others to hold to at least one New Age belief" (Gecewicz, 2018). These Statistics, as referred to by Gecewicz, are compiled by Pew Research Centre, an independent research service based in Washington, D.C., USA.

The esoteric Gnostic practice of seeking 'higher wisdom' ('*sophia'*) through a mystical Adept, an 'Elite', a person with special insight and revelation, or through an Initiate's own *gnosis*, is exemplified by the popular penchant for eastern religions in replacement of monotheistic Christianity and Judaism (Geisler, 1990, p. 8). Seekers after mysterious 'truths' flock to Hindu Gurus, Sufi Sheiks, Kabbalism's Mequbbāl, Islamic Ulemas and pagan Shamans. A pertinent example of eastern religion seekers is the vastly popular and influential 20th century pop group, 'The Beatles', who in 1968 sought spiritual guidance under Guru master, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in India (Chiu, 2021). It is recounted in the text, 'Hinduism and the 1960s', that "The relationship between the Beatles and the Maharishi brought about an enormous interest in the West in Indian clothing, meditation, customs, diet, yoga and the playing of the sitar" (Oliver, 2014, p. 10). Band member George Harrison remained a life-long Hindu and became a Devotee of the Hare Krishna sect under its founder, Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada. Even Judaism plays a role in the emergence of New Age Gnosticism as, for instance, Pop icon Madonna, has allegedly uncovered revelation of the sacred through mystical Kabbalism (Croucher, 2015). Mystical Kabbalistic Judaism attained further modern support upon the discovery of certain Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, Israel, in 1948. Community scrolls of the Essene Apocalyptic sect reveal claims by their leader, the 'Teacher of Righteousness', to a special, elitist, insight into prophetic passages, as recounted by Gershom Scholem in his Eranos lectures. The Scrolls' further indicate that the only acceptable interpretation of their scriptures was through the Teacher of Righteousness, who through employing the rabbinical exegetical strategy of '*pesher*,' was alone capable of revealing the mystery, the 'raz', of the passage concerned. The *raz-pesher* motif was a hallmark of Qumran exegetical hermeneutics (Longenecker, R., 1999, pp. 24-30), and can be likened to the interpretative claims of Gnostic elites. Incidentally, Apostle Paul claimed a special gnosis when he experienced insight into the heavenly realm and the revelation afforded him there (*cf.,* 2 Cor. 12:1-4). Paul could never be deemed a Gnostic-type Adept for he refused to elaborate, promote or share his revelations. There exist elements of Gnosticism in many Jewish and Christian texts, both canonical and extra-canonical, and naturally in secular Greek writings since the time of Plato and Aristotle. For example, Valentinus (100- 160 C.E.), a prominent Gnostic, acted as the instrument of *gnosis* for his initiates. His heretical system, known as Gnostic Valentinianism, had a

significant adverse impact on canonical orthodoxy in the matrix of early Christianity. Gnosticism instigated a mythological interpretation of the pivotal Judeo-Christian texts of Genesis chapters 1 – 3, for, if the Gnostics could justifiably, by way of their own cryptic assemble, undermine the truth and historicity of those three chapters then the whole systematic theology of fundamental Christian doctrines would be compromised. Pagels (2000, p. 413), in her study of these three crucial chapters of the *Bereishit*, opines that "Gnostic Christians…read the Adam and Eve story as myth with a meaning". Once that perspective had been adopted, it led to a contextual lacuna wherein any fanciful or allegorical embellishment could be warranted. A similar strategy was evidenced in the Edenic Garden when the serpent, a mimesis of Satan, persuaded Eve of his special *gnosis*, his omniscient arcane understanding of the Creator's dictates, thereby leading her and Adam into profanation. This Gnostic concept was endorsed by the First Couple and led to them rebelling against the divinely imposed rubrics of the Creator. Adam and Eve were of the view that they, too, were possessed of a *gnosis* as a result of a fallacious belief in their status of sovereign 'gods,' as propounded by the serpent. Evidence of this malevolent strategy, as applied to canonical texts, has continually been attempted through the ages and it can justifiably be claimed that the major heresy faced by the nascent Church was that of Gnosticism (*cf.,* Hobgood-Oster, 1999, p. 48).

Platonic dualism, the basis of classic Gnosticism, endures through fundamental concepts of the pantheistic Buddhist and ancient Hindu religions. The metaphysical dualism fundamental to these religions reveals itself in the dichotomy between *prakrti* (fluctuating, temporary matter representing the universe) and *purusa* the "true nature of the self" (Duffy, 2021) – an immutable, divine, transcendent, spiritual nature. It is through the practice of yoga, in its many particulars, that enables the acolyte to realize this dualism and to reach a state of perfection and freedom from the confines of the body, and the transient material world. By so doing, adherents realize their apotheosis through *aham Brahmasmi,* meaning, 'I am Brahman', a god, part of Brahman, "the ultimate reality… the whole universe is one in the self, which is called Brahman" and "that self… is called God" (Sharma, 1987, p. 180). The Yogi and the Guru of such religions act as Gnostic Elites, sharing the 'secrets' of their revelations with initiates and so enabling them to experience and understand the contradiction of the body and the mind, the mutable and the immutable. The ancient concept of Gnosticism has persisted, through early antiquity's Aristotelianism, Plotinus's Neoplatonism, aspects of Scholasticism and so forth, into the modern, liberalist, New Age of Aquarius through many intellectual and spiritual guises, particularly in the Humanities, as is evident above from the Eranos Circle discussions. It is in the field of Humanities that the force of secularism is focused, as all traditional fields of the Humanities have Judeo-Christian principles as their core pillars. Catholic University of

America's Professor Virgil Nemoianu perceives that the "humanities were born of a Christian religious tradition", the goal of which is the "reconciliation between human solidarity and the dignity of individual persons". He emphasizes that "religious transcendence was always part of the whole project".[313] Nemoianu's statement is valid for it is the existential criterion of transcendence that is vainly sought through substitute means by secularists and adherents of other faiths alike.

It is thus upon these principles, arising from the Italian Renaissance[314] and long expounded in Western secondary and tertiary education, that the virtues and culture of society are based. For these exact reasons, the prominent Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937), encouraged his epigones to indoctrinate society through infiltration of the vulnerable field of the humanities. Gramsci words were as follows, "Socialism is precisely the religion that must overwhelm Christianity. In the new Order, Socialism will triumph by first capturing the culture through infiltration of schools, universities, Churches and the media by transforming the consciousness of society" (1971, p. 118). Roger Kiska comments on Gramsci's agenda to the effect that "the problem with this type of Marxism is that an attack on the family, and the Judeo-Christian values[315] that sustain it, leads to catastrophic economic and social effects" (2019). These effects are evident in societies dominated by Marxist thought, such as North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela. The principles behind Gramsci's nefarious proposals[316] were endorsed and emulated by Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse[317] who was inspired by radical leftist Rudi Dutschke's[318] agenda of an infiltration through all categories of Western education. Dutschke termed his strategy, "the long march through the institutions" which Marcuse explained as, "working against the established institutions while working in them, but not simply by 'boring from within' but rather by 'doing the job', learning how to program and read

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313 Nemoianu, V., Christian, 1996.

314 Study of the Humanities (*Studia Humanitatis*), created during the 14th century European renaissance by the Italian Poet Petrarch (1304 -74), and his circle, was for the purpose of equipping Christians with knowledge of secular disciplines, for the common good of society. Harvard History Professor James Hankins, concludes that, "Petrarch and the Christian Humanists… wanted to "train the children of the elite in classical Greek and Roman literature and philosophy, with the goal of spreading virtue and eloquence among the future leaders of society" (2021).

315 Del Noce argues that in Marxian theory, "atheism is not the conclusion but rather the precondition of the whole system" (2014, p. xii).

316 Particularly Gramsci's theory of a "passive revolution" (1971, p. 106ff), which is akin to Dutschke's, "long march through the institutions" (*ibid*.).

317 Herbert Marcuse (1898 – 1979), was a founder of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theorists (The Institute for Social Research) advocating a rearrangement of social justice along cultural Marxist principles. Critical theorists have been instrumental in the advent (in Germany initially and then the USA), of influential ideologies such as Critical Race Theory, Critical Gender Theory and Social Justice theory (*c.f.,* Farr, 2021).

318 Rudi Dutschke (1940 – 1979), a social revolutionary greatly influenced by Critical Theories and cultural Marxism (*cf.,* Zündorf, 2021).

computers, how to teach at all levels of education, how to use the mass media, how to organize mass production etc., … and at the same time preserving one's own consciousness in working with the others" (1972, p. 55). The upshot of the successful "long march" infiltration of ideas is that "Universities have allowed political activists to commandeer the humanities, social sciences, and, in some cases, even the sciences". The view of radical ideologues is, therefore, "Everything must be thrown into the supposedly great cause of social justice" (Reno, What, 2021). An obvious Marxist construal. All sectors of public life are affected by the quest for social justice - even the empirical field of science. Evidence of social justice ideology permeating the sciences is revealed in the August 2022 issue of the respected Nature Human Science Journal. In that issue, the Editorial declares that "science must respect the dignity and rights of all humans",[319] thus hinting at a populist agenda.

It is thus appropriate to find concordance with the claim that the foundation for secular humanism, Gnosticism, "is the heresy that never dies"[320] and "is very much with us today" (Miller, 2013). This state of affairs is evident through a variety of fabrications, not least being Marxist[321] neo-Gnostic dualistic ideologies founding the Critical Theories so adversely affecting Western society in areas of race, gender and social justice.[322] In a way, Gnosticism is not unlike the Lernaean Hydra - a mythological, multifaceted and lethal serpent, impossible to destroy.

5.4 Gnostic Roots of Identity Ideology

The philosophical roots of all identity ideologies spring from ancient Gnostic dualism, the dichotomy of the corporeal and the incorporeal with the exaltation of the latter form. To exemplify, the Gnostic text, The Gospel of Thomas, describes a transaction whereby a female has dualistic capacity to not only become male but an incorporeal, authentic, spirit. The final paragraph of Thomas reads thus:

"Simon Peter said to them, 'Make Mary leave us for females don't deserve life'". "Jesus said, 'Look, I will guide her to make her male so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the domain of heaven'".[323]

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319 Editorial, Science, 2022.

320 Del Noce perceives an intersection between Gnosticism and modernity. This, he claims, is a continuum which has led to the present post-modern era of "Gnosticism after Christianity" (2014, p. 25), an era termed "post-Christian" (2014, p. 20).

321 Del Noce points out that all significant "secular political movements of the twentieth century can be understood only in relation to Marxism" which, he adds, has "really changed the world" (2014, pp. xix-xx).

322 According to Del Noce, Gnosticism is the "final outcome of one of the fundamental directions of Western thought" (2014, p. 29).

323 Pagels, E., 2004, Gospel of Thomas, c. 60 C. E., 114: 1-3.

The physical human body, whether male or female, has a sacred dimension, a blessing and purpose from God as is obvious from Gen. 1:27-31 (*cf*. 2:7; 2:22-23; 3:15). To deny the importance of the body, and for a person to mutilate their gender in a vain attempt to transmigrate to another gender, is to distain the sacredness of the body and to deny the Divine's creative order and his salvific dynamic for humankind and their society. Refusal to accept one's birth gender, the assigned biological sex, amounts to a negation of personal identity and the consequent loss of ontological well-being.

Philosopher and Bioethicist, Joseph Fletcher (1954, p. xviii) gave rise to the term 'Situation Ethics', an apt iteration of Gnostic moral concepts in a post- structuralist age. Fletcher describes himself as a 'personalist,' for one's personality he says is, "both the highest good and the chief medium of our knowledge of the good". Such view constitutes the essence of a Gnostic dualistic view of the spirit (the 'mind') versus the body with the emphasis on a *gnosis* only possible through an incorporeal personality. Fletcher goes on to say "Why not call to order what is over against us and send it packing into the realm of objects? Physical nature.. the body and its members.. are part of what is over us". Further, "if we live by the rules and conditions set in physiology… we are not men, we are not *thou*" (1954, p. 211). Here, Fletcher argues that to be an authentic person, to be '*thou'*, the value of the body is to be rejected – a proposal leading to agent-centred moral relativism[324] for, as he concludes, "spiritual reality and moral integrity belong to man alone" (1954, p. 211). The consequence of such theories led directly to Fletcher's later work, 'Situation Ethics' (1966), which, in a similar manner, advocates solipsistic decisions and contextual morality, without any objective or universal metrics, very much in the method of existentialist theory.[325] The connotation is that, for Fletcher, gender is an humanist fabrication for the body is to be relegated to the 'realm of objects', being unimportant, and subject to actions based on his theory of human liberty, totally ignoring biological sex. The immense influence of Fletcher's proposals have resulted in the ongoing rise of autogynephilia (transgenderism), and related examples of gender and identity dysphoria. Fletcher's theories are not new, arising as they do from ancient Gnosticism, particularly the neo-platonic version promoted by Plotinus whose view on life - on human

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[324] A "striking feature of the modern moral order" is the paradox that "relativism co-exists with limitless moralism" (Weiner, Morals, 2019). This perception is self-evident from the reasoning of existential philosophers who struggle in vain to present a coherent moral paradigm.

[325] Legal theorist James Petts points out that, "Insofar as an ethical statement does not in fact disclose an already existing sufficient reason for a person to behave as direct by that statement, it is a falsehood and ought to be rejected by any person at whom it is directed" (2021). Petts' argument is valid for it presupposes a rational, objective, ethical paradigm only from which ethical considerations directed at others should be derived. Fletcher's theories, like those of all existentialists, do not meet requirements of foundationalism, rationality, pre-existence, or objectivity, being instead reductionist and wholly agent-centred.

psychology and ethics - results in the finding that, “a person in a body can chose to take on the role of a non-cognitive agent by acting solely on appetite or emotion” (Gerson, 2018). Naturally, given the concept of original sin and the dearth of practical ethical controls, the ensuing actions of the relativist ‘free agent’ will inexorably result in a penchant for immoral actions, for the material body has no salvific or transcendent consequence. The physical body is perceived as inferior, contemptible even, to be handled in any way the possessor desires, including the transitioning of gender through mutilation to achieve that intention. Hence the rise of, and prevalence in, a leftist, secular humanist society of identity and sex-gender confusion and the ensuing ontological loss of personal, true, identity with which the body is the salient identifying feature. The search for meaning and identity with a composite body and relying on the mind or spirit only, is not attainable with such a confused posture. Morality then becomes plastic, and complicated in expression, with the simultaneous distain of the reciprocal rights of dissention by other sectors of society. These are desperate and grim issues confronting the individuals of today.

From a theistic viewpoint, the body is inextricably connected to a person’s identity of ‘self’. This is evident from the Lucan passage describing the Messiah’s resurrected body in 24:36-40 when the Disciples witnessed the risen Jesus. And so too will all followers of the Redeemer-Messiah be resurrected in bodily form at his second advent (*cf.,* 1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Thess. 4:16-17). The sacerdotal importance of the body is not be disparaged for it has intrinsic meaning (being a ‘Temple of the Holy Spirit’, *cf.,* 1 Cor. 6:19), and to accept any other proposition is to open everything created to a pliable and subjective rearrangement to suit whimsical penchants absent of any empirical or absolutist limits. With his wide effect upon post-modern culture, it is not surprising that Fletcher is rated the leading American Humanist (voted 1974 ‘Humanist of the Year’), and a major instigator of mortal concepts such as euthanasia, eugenics, abortion, infanticide and sterilisation. Correspondingly influential personalities are post-war secular philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Frans Kafka, Martin Heidegger, and to a lesser degree but also with some impact, Hans Jonas, and their circle. These scholars base their existentialist theories of meaning on Gnostic principles, a *Sophia*, created within their own idiosyncratic formations denying any practical, theistic, definitive or historical truths. However, it is the widely read novelist-philosopher Camus who is more accessible to an audience due to his use of narrative, reflecting vernacular terminology in describing complex ontological issues. Camus reaches his audience through the avenue of readable, commercially available, metaphysical novels, essays, and plays grounded in a context of

fictional everyday life. His use of this oeuvre to explain his theories of the 'absurd'[326] is reminiscent of earlier existentialist novelists like 1920 Noble Prize winner Knut Hamsun ('Hunger', 1890) and Franz Kafka ('The Trial', 1925), both of whose major novels predate Camus' 'The Outsider' ('L'Étranger', 1942). In like approach, the work of Miguel de Unamundo whose 'Tragic Sense of Life' published in 1912, is among the most significant existentialist novels of the early 20th century. De Unamundo unashamedly rejects a life based on reason, reality, and rationality in favour of an emotive, Greek and Cartesian dualistic individualism powered by intense emotions. These emotions, including *angst*, as is evident in his recount of the popular absurd-hero Don Quixote with his tragic-comic battle against windmills (reminiscent of Camus' Sisyphus and his struggle with the rock), exemplifies the passionate warrior striving to reconcile external cosmic irrationality with internal, subjective, identity in a confused, paradoxical, and parallel reality of his own fabrication.

Conveying philosophical hypotheses, existentialist theory, and absurdist views through the vehicle of fiction allows for those concepts to be accessible to a far wider readership. This assertion is observable in the popular novels of writers such as John Updike ('Rabbit' series), William Styron ('Lie Down in Darkness'), Saul Bellow (Nobel Prize 1976; 'Seize the Day') and J. D. Salinger's 'Catcher in the Rye,' the protagonist of which, Holden Caulfield, searches for the 'authentic' as a solution to the absurdity of life and his sense of alienation. Caulfield tries in vein to reconcile his "inner core as defined by feelings and intuition that need to find commensurate outward expression to be authentic".[327] And, not to overlook playwrights like Samuel Beckett (Nobel Prize, 1969), whose play, 'Waiting for Godot', is considered the paradigm of absurdist theatre.[328] Likewise, the works of Eugene Ionesco are considered to be of the 'Theatre of the Absurd' opus, in the genre of Camus' absurdist theory. Truth is often well exposed through works of narrative fiction, conveying theories and veracities in a manner difficult through non-fiction as is well illustrated by Bunyan's 'The Pilgrim's Progress', and John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. An example from the latter is the pericope where Satan has been dispatched to hell, "The mind has its own place and of itself; can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (Paradise, 1608-1674, Book One: 250, p. 40). Milton's words are prescient of the post-modern emphasis on the sovereignty and creative authority of the imperial-self. Trevor Merrill writes that fiction requires an "interest in characters, stories and concrete details rather

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326 Camus' theory of the 'absurd' is propounded in his 1942 publication, 'The Myth of Sisyphus" where he faces the paradox of an "rational and reasonable" desire for meaning in an irrational cosmos (Myth, 1955 [1942], p. 34). Camus' conundrum can be explained as "the futile search for ultimate meaning (which) constitutes absurd existence in its fundamental form" (Flynn, Absurd, 2001, pp. 6-7).

327 Trueman, C., Self, 2022.

328 *Cf.,* Flynn, Absurd, 2001, p. 7.

than problems, issues and abstract statements".[329] Merrill's view warrants that the medium of fiction can lend itself to a more readable text suitable for revealing complex propositions. And this point can be applied to the complex philosophical concepts disclosed through the fictional manuscripts of existential literalists. Even Paul acknowledged an occasional element of truth through secular texts, as mentioned in Acts 17:27-28, "for even some of your own Poets have said…". The same contention applies to works of fine art, *kunst*, for the sense of alienation, loneliness, *angst* and lack of meaning within society are quite evident, for instance, in the paintings of Edward Hopper, Edvard Munch, and the lesser known George Tooker.

Also a Noble Prize laureate (1957), Camus is widely thought of as an existentialist but referred to himself, rather, as an absurdist – a concept which in fact can only derive from existentialist theories in search of authenticity. While he criticized the philosophy of existentialism in his play Caligula, his essay Myth of Sisyphus[330], and others, the meta-narrative therein was basically that of Sartrean absurdist existentialism: the search for individual meaning in an irrational cosmology – the eccentric contra the objective, the dichotomy, the contradiction, between the senseless universe and subjective, authentic, living. In Foley's study of Camus' concepts of existentialism and the absurd, he concludes that, "broadly he (Camus) agrees with the initial absurd premise of existentialism" (Foley, 2008, p. 3). The inherent duality in the premise of existentialism finds resolution in the neo-Platonic, Plotinian, Gnostic mind (spirit) and matter (body) dichotomy. This contradiction is at the core, and is the meta-ethic, of existentialist narrated *corpora*. Finding harmony with the Hellenist theories of 20th century philosophers such as Nietzsche, Camus acknowledged his own worldview originated within Greek philosophy In fact his thesis at the University of Algiers was titled, 'Neo- Platonism and Christian Thought'.[331] The thesis examined the dualist views of Plotinus (the 'father' of Neo-Platonism) and St. Augustine who similarly had a Neo- Platonist interest in his early days. In the result, Camus' concept of the absurd was a search for meaning countering Nietzsche's stygian diagnosis that 'God is dead',[332] and therefore no absolute meaning exists resulting in

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329 Merrill, T. C., Fiction, 2022.

330 A theme founded on Homer's Iliad, Book VI (*cf.,* Britannica, Sisyphus, 2020).

331 Royal, R., Camus, 2014.

332 Phillip Johnson emphasizes the invalidity of drawing conclusions based on an irrational assumptions. He states that, "the most interesting aspect of any argument is not what it explicitly states but what it implicitly assumes" (Nihilism, 1993). In this context, Nietzsche's conclusion that "God is dead", lacks justifiable, empirically verifiable, validation and can therefore be relegated to the realm of wishful thinking irrespective of his, somewhat convoluted, and irrational, philosophical argument in support thereof.

a nihilistic worldview. Robert Royal describes Camus' position as a choice between "God and nothing".[333] He chose the latter.

Like the neo-paganism of the three great thinkers of modernity, namely, Hegel, Marx[334] and Nietzsche - described by Sharpe (2015, p. 20) as "the three evil geniuses[335] of contemporary Europe" - Camus was also "drawn to ancient paradigms". There existed "textual support" indicating that Camus was "either a pagan adept or pseudo-Christian on the verge of final conversion" (Sharpe, 2015, pp. 5-6). Despite deep commitment to his Algerian-French-European matrix, Camus claimed in a somewhat dithyrambic manner, that unfortunately he could not, "go to Delphi to be initiated" (Sharpe, 2015. p. 31). Camus' Greek philosophies incorporated, to a significant extent, Nietzsche's faith in the Greek art-deities Apollo and Dionysus with their duality representing the primal context of human life, as articulated in the historic roots of Greek tragedy. In his discourse on this duality, Nietzsche, in his work 'The Birth of Tragedy', avers that the dichotomy can best be described as the contrast between the fundamental elements comprising 'dreams' (the Apollonian principle) and 'drunkenness' (the Dionysian principle). These antimonies co-exist in a sort of paradoxical and vigorous tension exemplifying life and the duality of the subjective and objective: a Dionysian chaotic universe as opposed to an Apollonian ordered cosmos (*cf.,* Nietzsche, 1995, pp. 1-3ff.). In Nietzschean thought, the universe is chaotic (Dionysian), subject to the whims of happenstance, "the total character of the world…is for all eternity chaos… a lack of order…beauty, wisdom….". He goes on to say that there are, "no purposes… the living are only a form of the dead". And, furthermore, "there are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much of an error as the god of the Eliatics" (2001, pp. 109-110). The ancient Hellenistic Eliatic philosophers proposed an ontological universal unity of being which directly contrasts with Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian duality. In sum, the crux of Nietzsche's duality concept is clearly an ancient Gnostic heresy wherein created, temporal, corporeal matter is to sublated. This is the nucleus of Nietzsche's nihilistic philosophy[336] and which, in turn, leads Camus to propose suicide as a

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333 Royal, R., Camus, 2014.

334 Italian philosopher Augusto del Noce (1910 – 1989), opined that Marxism constituted the "philosophy of our time" (2014, p. xiv), that is, the period of the 20th century. Furthermore, Marxian thought continues to have seminal influence in the post-modern era through the ideology of identity politics, resulting in what Del Noce terms "absolute individualism" in the "spirit of (relativist) liberalism" (2014, p. xv).

335 The graphic words of novelist Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) come to mind in this context, "Visionaries work everlasting evil on earth. Their utopias inspire in the mass of mediocre minds a disgust of reality and a contempt for the secular logic of human development" (Westerns Eyes, 1911, p. 92).

336 Like Dostojevski (1821- 1881), his ideological nihilistic antecedent, Nietzsche "declared that the critical powers of man, sharpened by science, unmask all morality as mere conventions" (Polanyi, 1970, p. 913). Unable to intellectually rationalize the demise of God, Nietzsche and his circle placed

rational solution to a meaningless life in an irrational universe. The upshot of this construal is that it leads to a situation of the existentialist absurd in which Camus's alter egos, his mimesis characters (*cf.* Sisyphus), strive desperately to find meaning, the existential aspiration of all humanity outside of the Creator's theistic paradigm. It is to be noted that the endeavour of Nietzsche and Camus to find an explanation for existence and for moral guidance within the roots of ancient Greek tragedy (in the genre of playwrights Aeschylus and Sophocles), rather than explore, to any degree whatsoever, the eternal and essential moral truths[337] revealed in a Judeo-Christian or any monotheistic context. These two scholars rapidly and irrationally ignore all external constraints, as do other secular philosophers of their class, in favour of manufacturing their own moral *assemblage*, one lacking verifiable and pragmatic archetypes.

Camus commences the essay 'Absurd Reasoning,' (contained within 'The Myth of Sisyphus' collection), with a statement which summates his fatalistic worldview, "There is but one truly philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy" (Myth, 1955, p. 3). While there certainly is some truth in his statement - for as Socrates stated in his defence, "the unexamined life is not worth living for men" (Plato, Apology, 37e - 38a) - but given Camus' fatalist position, he inevitably reaches the assumption that, "this heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction" (Myth, 1955, p. 19). Camus is satisfied, in the rationalist manner of René Descartes, to confirm his existence through his cognizance powers - that he can think and so rebel, "I rebel, therefore we exist" (Rebel, 1956, p. 22). He finds further confirmation of existence through sentience, in that he can experience sensations of proximate corporeal objects and his own heart (*supra*), while the rest is a matter of "construction". It is the question of "construction" that is really the issue. For Camus, and secular existentialists generally, all ensuing rationale becomes a matter of eccentricity, a seeking of esoteric knowledge in the

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reliance on scientific rationalism, that is, modern scepticism, to eradicate the absolutist moral paradigm, hence the advent of Nietzsche's *Übermensch,* an idealist, anthropological, auto-created and ideological substitute.

337 The issue of truth necessitates consensus on the "foundational questions" required to define truth in academia, as an exemplar. Andrew Abel, while acknowledging previous work by the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria in Spain on this topic, lists five primary interrogatories. In summation, firstly, "anthropological questions: What it means to be a human person". Secondly, "Epistemological questions: what are the foundational truths underlying our various disciplines, and how do we know them? Thirdly, "Existential questions: questions about meaning". Fourthly, Metaphysical questions: questions about existence". Fifthly, Ethical questions: what determines right from wrong?". Clear, rational, comprehensive and coherent answers to these questions are evident in the eternal precepts of Judeo-Christianity, and not anywhere else. It is the compelling coherence, veracity, rationality, and exclusiveness, of these precepts that are considered abhorrent in the post-Christian environment (Abel, Truth, 2022).

genre of Gnosticism, to justify not committing suicide, but, instead, to cognitively and sentiently strive for life - to overcome the sense of alienation by constructing some sort of meaning in an absurdist environment. Meaning can be realized in the mundane, such as the fruitless and endless exercise of rolling a large stone uphill, as is seen in the efforts of Camus' absurdist icon, Sisyphus.

The hallmark of all secular existentialism is, simply put, the search for individual meaning, authenticity, in an inexplicable cosmology for, as Camus states on the issue, "the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (Myth, 1955, p. 15). The "unreasonable silence", the alienation, that Camus refers to is unsurprising given that he concedes to precipitously reject any theistic doctrines, to ignore any truths emanating therefrom, despite incongruously stating that Christianity is not merely an illusion, "I shall never start from the supposition that Christian truth is illusory, but merely from the fact that I could not accept it" (Unbeliever, 1990, p. 29) - a paraprosdokian statement. This claim is supported in his work, 'The Rebel', which describes Camus' own rebellious mindset, that of a resistance against any form of restraint or absolutism especially that of religion. Instead of seeking practical truth, seeking a protological explanation, he seeks instead meaning within the presumed 'absurdity' of life notwithstanding the ineluctable and tautological conclusion that it is truth alone that imparts meaning. Purveyors of truth, as in the doctrines of Christianity, are summarily dismissed without an attempt at a teleological argument, in favour of a 'construction' of his own creation. Again, this is an assertion of the sovereign-self in the manner of Adam and Eve when consciously rejecting a patent theism. The phenomenology of Camus, as of all secular existentialists, being unable to determine truth and so to overcome their innate sense of alienation, leads invariably to an absence of ontological status. In futility they sophistically try to achieve it through their humanistic 'constructions', and being unable to convincing do so, are forced to explore critical issues such as nihilism[338] and hence suicide. Adhering to some theories of Nietzsche, and that of ancient Greek philosophers whose concepts are also subscribed to by the atheistic Nietzsche, it is not surprising that it is only in the end of life, in death, where Camus finds his true definition of meaning, the ultimate, inflexible and certain fixture of life. In his works, 'The Rebel' and 'Myth of Sisyphus', issues such as suicide and murder are confronted and made plausible due to the absence of moral absolutism, as, for Camus, meaning is absurd "without the aid of eternal values" (Myth, 1955, Preface). His theory is that there are no observable, comprehensible, or eternal standards

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338 Ian Markham points out that the "only adequate protection against nihilism is belief in God" (Ethics, 1994, p. 154). With the rejection of God comes rejection of truth and all that is left is nihilism.

338 Camus, Myth, 1955, Preface.

and, consequently, life is without meaning. In such case, then antinomianism is understandable. He ignores the tautology that it is the absolutist, coherent, moral, and eternal precepts of Judeo-Christianity, that he so summarily rejects, that impart the meaning and identity he assiduously seeks.[339] A somewhat incongruous attitude from a prominent member of the French Resistance during WW2, defending France with its freedoms encompassed in a democratic liberalist Constitution based upon Judeo- Christian tenets providing meaning, morality and identity.

Despite Camus' renown and public profile, the most prominent and enduring 20th century existentialist is undoubtedly fellow Nobel laureate Jean- Paul Sartre who is, "arguably the best known philosopher of the 20th century…whose writings set the tone for intellectual life" after WW2 (Flynn, 2013). His 1964 Nobel Prize citation reads as follows, "For his work which, rich in ideas and filled with the spirit of freedom and the quest for truth, has exerted a far-reaching influence on our age" (Nobel Media, 2021). Sartre, initially influenced to some degree by a range of philosophical predecessors such as Georg Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and others, went on to crystalise the concept of the absurd in his ontological work, 'Being and Nothingness.' Sartre summated as follows, "Absurd. That which is meaningless. Thus man's existence is absurd because his contingency finds no external justification". He then revealing explains that man's "projects are absurd because they are directed towards an unobtainable goal - the desire to become God or to be simultaneously the free For-itself and the absolute In- itself" (1956, p. 629). Yet, in 'Existentialism and Human Emotions' (1957, p. 63), Sartre incongruously claims that "the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God. To be man means to reach toward being God. Or, if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God". Here, Sartre endorses the primeval heresy of *eritus sicut Deus* while yet arguing the impossibility of attaining such divinity. This paradox is what results in existential 'nausea' and an 'absurd', cosmic, meaningless. Sartre has the perspicuity to comprehend that the desire to become an autotheistic and autonomous-self inescapably leads to an absurd and untenable situation due to the absence of "external justification". Sartre's denouement harkens back to Adam and Eve's eventual realisation that a rejection of the Divine and their declaration of an

[339] Philosophy professor Christopher Tollefsen, clarifies that, "moral absolutes are not mere restrictions on our actions. Nor should they be suspended even when upholding them might bring about grave consequences. They are essential for protecting human wellbeing" (Moral, 2011). The absolutes he refers to are those emanating from the natural law tradition, itself rooted within the Judeo-Christian precepts of the Divine.

independence free of absolute and objective moral paradigms is untenable, hence their futile experiment with fig leaves.

The proclamation of secularism - independence from God in every way, including the removal of religion from the public square - leads to an irrational ontology which originated in the Garden and continued in a postdiluvian context through the exploits of Nimrod and his cohort, persisting through the ages into post-modernity[340] through a variety of avenues. The terms, existentialism, absurdism, and situation ethics are shibboleths for favoured philosophical structures, integrating articulations of a belief system which stems from ancient times. The hallmark whereof is always secularism, humanism, antinomianism, moral pliability, dualism, and often a form of spiritual paganism comprising an idiosyncratic and generally sited fabrication. Affirming the Cartesian *cogito* as the sole form of ontological personal identification, and ignoring all theistic doctrines of *imago Dei* to the contrary, leads predictably to the neo-Platonic duality theory. The ethical dualism articulated by Sartre and his circle, which led to Sartre's "radical ontological disjunction" (Butler, 2007, p. 210, Note 21), can be attributed to his Cartesian dualistic inheritance of consciousness ('spirit') contrasted with a reductive material body. The secular existentialist philosophers, despite their fecund literary *corpora*, merely regurgitate ancient heresies in popular new disguises.

The concept of the existentially construed absurd (the belief that life in an irrational cosmos is meaningless, but which is the universal predicament), which Sartre described upon a realization of such a condition, as 'nausea' - the title of his first novel, is one of the crucial factors that have given impetus to the current turmoil surrounding personal Identity and gender. Joseph Fletcher's theories (*ibid*.), albeit coming from a different approach, have the same end result, namely, the insignificance of life and hence the human body, and therefore the consequential resolution of suicide and death in their miscellaneous representations. This is not surprising given Camus' and other secular existentialists' anti-theist humanist outlook, with others likewise proposing suicide as a solution to the absurdity of a universe and a life devoid of meaning. The resultant ideologies ensuing from such dualism including, to a degree, fatalism and nihilism is described by the existentialists in terms which Fletcher later rendered as 'Situation ethics'. Failing, or rather unable, to elucidate a coherent ethical and moral code to be applied to a bare situational ethics proposal, Sartre inchoately added the agent-centred, pseudo- messianic, ethical proviso that any action arising out of the application of a situational

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340 Stanford University scholar Russell Berman explains that whether or not "we describe our current condition in terms of postmodernism, neoliberalism, or globalization, the core problem is the loosening of traditional social bonds and institutions" (State, 2022).

ethic theory should consider the best interests of others, a contextual concept eschewing observable and objective paradigms. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), had earlier developed his idea of the moral imperative to a slightly finer extent by directing that one should, “always act so that you might also wish that the maxim of your action becomes a universal law” (Tim, 2012). Yet Kant decried moral legitimacy of objective or eternal moral absolutes. Instead, he relied on the innate faculty of reason and self-reflection by posing the deliberative question, “What ought I to do”, in each particular situation (Johnson, R., 2021). Again a secular, humanist, stance much emulated by existentialists in a later age.

Consideration also needs to be given to the legal positivism (in which the difference between law and morality is highlighted) of philosophers such as Joseph Raz (1939) and Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997), who eschew claimed, but tenuous, State neutrality for regulating morality in public life. They instead advocated a value pluralism (Cherniss, 2020), whereby a selection of ostensibly morally acceptable alternatives are considered for application in a certain situation. Despite Raz’s avowal that “individualism is rejected and the importance of collective goods is given due emphasis” (Raz, 1986, p. 165), the essence of such option is little different to that of the nebulous situational ethical theory promoted by Joseph Fletcher, and earlier existentialists, claiming to act for the common good.[341] The reason being that, in the result, Raz’s proposal also amounts to an autonomous humanist construal, culturally constructed, and so susceptible to becoming devoid of coherent ethical and moral rubrics containing objective and empirical guidelines. As a caveat, Raz did emphasize, though, that “autonomy when exercised immorally is valueless”. And, concomitantly, that autonomy has value only when exercised in morally good ways”.[342]

To the same effect, Albert Camus, in the context of morality, avers that the absurd man, “lives outside of God … and has nothing to justify. I start out here from the principle of innocence*”* (Myth, 1955, p. 44). Without applicable external moral codes in the structure of existentialist ethics, a secular humanist subjectivism and relativism results in a moral independence[343] accountable only to individual conscience, if any, with questionable values. And so too, humanism rules in existentialist ontological phenomenology for, as Camus’ states in ‘Myth of

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341 The concept of the ‘common good’ has been seen as a seminal factor in the well-being of society for “thinkers as profound as Aristotle and Aquinas, and for the Western tradition ever since” (Anderson, Promise, 2022).

342 George, R., Freedom, 2022.

343 Professor Phillip Johnson brings to attention the valid position that, “If there is no ultimate evaluator, then there is no real distinction between good and evil” (Nihilism, 1993). This deduction was the type of reasoning enthusiastically adopted by Gnostics to justify their licentiousness through disparaging the importance of materialism, that is, the body, while valuing the spirit (the mind), as the true self.

Sisyphus' when the protagonist achieves victory over the absurd, achieving some sort of meaning, albeit through repetitive and mundane activity, "it drives out of this world a god who had come into it with dissatisfaction and a preference for futile suffering. It makes of fate a human matter, which must be settled among men" (Myth, 1955, p. 77-78). Were it that simple to dispense with the economy of the Divine in the affairs of men. Camus incongruously imitates the alleged suffering imposed on humankind by 'a god' through the directive of committing Sisyphus himself to a life of suffering, of ceaselessly pushing a reticent rock, all in the name of seeking meaning. Perhaps he should have capitulated to Viktor Frankl's view that "meaning is possible even in spite of suffering" (1946, p. 136), and so have accepted that it is also suffering through cognitive and environmental challenges, not only monotonous labour, that can impart meaning.

In the hypotheses of secular existentialists, freedom leading to numerous antinomian activities is justified, as is demonstrated by Sartre's libertine lifestyle, and that too of Camus. It is a short journey for such ideas to polymorph from philosophies into eccentric ideologies through existing dualistic and pagan paradigms, such as astrology. This has occurred in existing Western society with the rise of identity ideologies, advocating fluid morality and contextual truth. The Identity ideologies relate to existential issues such as euthanasia, eugenics, abortion of unborn humans, and legally sanctioned assisted voluntary suicide - all purporting to reflect the aims and desires of the majority of a democratic society, yet driven by a political faction with a powerful but narrow support base, lacking universal scope or a search for truth based on reason - the true connotation of an ideology. The value of the human body, with its *imago Dei* identity, is being dispensed with, negated, cast aside as unimportant, temporal, corporeal matter, in the very mode of dichotomist occultist thought, through politically and ideologically empowered leftist, secular, and atheist promoters. It is interesting that no secular existentialist philosopher attempts to refute the claims of the *imago Dei* identity of humankind but rather, and without further debate, abruptly dismiss all theistic claims to authenticity. Galloway (1981, p. 7), in his study of secular existentialist literature, confirms that Camus and fellow existentialist writers share, "a common concern for religious and moral themes especially in terms of the struggle to find value and fulfilment in a world without God". Galloway's averment is unconvincing for, unfortunately, the existentialist's "concern" has not led to a coherent, rational, solution and never will until the claims of Judeo-Christianity, particularly the Fatherhood identity of God and the ensuing *imago Dei* identity of humankind, are genuinely considered and adopted.

5.5 Conclusion

It has invariably been the purpose of secular humanists to purge the literal- historical interpretation of the monotheistic compilation, the *Tanakh*, and to likewise abolish in favour of their own contextual construals the natural and moral laws of the Divine, thereby enticing human freedom into unfettered licentiousness. Perhaps the vehicle of Gnosticism is what 19th century philosopher Thomas Carlyle was seeking - having rejected his Calvinistic background - when he desired to couch, "the divine spirit of religion in a new Mythus" (1898, p. 154). In 1840, Carlyle proposed the 'Man of Letters' as a suitable replacement for the 'Hero-god' as "the predominant form of heroism" (Haynes, 2005, p. 287). Carlyle's theory has become evident through the pre- eminence of humanistic thinkers such as psychoanalysts Freud and Jung, philosophers Marx, Nietzsche, Camus and Sartre, all famed 'men of letters,' who promoted their Gnostic doctrines as a replacement for Judeo-Christian orthodoxy. It goes without saying that such noble 'men of letters' would drive society into the 'murky waters' of pagan humanism or whatever ideology, religion or composition that they desired, which is precisely what has occurred. It is thus fitting to agree with Sharpe's observation that Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche are among "the three evil geniuses of contemporary Europe" (2015, p. 20), together with others mentioned herein.

Gnosticism remains a conveniently amorphous**,** deceptively non-threatening, enduring, malleable, and arcane spiritual structure, enabling acolytes to manufacture their own reality unfettered by inconvenient practical and definitive truths. In this manner, Gnosticism provides a vehicle for adherents to embrace apotheosis concepts, following the example of the original Gnostics, Adam and Eve. In many ways Gnosticism could be described as a meta-religion whose multifarious offshoot religions[344] give demonstration to the basic theories thereof. This concept continues to find popular reception in the New Age of post-modernity, for as Jung claims, "Eternal truth needs a human language that alters with the spirit of the times" (2020, CW 16, Para. 396). It is incumbent on each such seeker after truth to create their own, idiosyncratic, version of truth and reality - a popular, malleable, concept. The results of such strategy are evident in the prevailing social disorder through, *inter alia*, Identity and related ideologies, plastic morality, and pliable considerations of truth. Apologist Norman Geisler concludes that, "the fundamental identity between the human self and the divine self makes the New Age utopian dream possible". He continues by adding, "the underlying dream of the New Age is that as self-realized gods we inherit the supernatural. New Age disciplines teach

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[344] Such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Kabbalah Judaism, mystical and philosophical Islam as evident in Sufism – Darwish and Hikmah - certain doctrines of Catholicism, Taoism, Shintoism, New Age spirituality, and numerous Christian sects.

that as lords of our own universe, we create our own reality by the power of our thoughts" (1990, pp. 10-11). An apt description[345] of the occultist New Age ideologies underlying the contemporary societal contest for identity and meaning in contradistinction to the cultural Christian tenets establishing civilisation. Augusto del Noce sums up the exigent situation facing Western civilization as follows, "the important question is whether Christianity can withstand Gnosticism" (2014, p. 33). The concept of an institutionalized Christendom, which is what Del Noce is alluding to, has not been able to defeat secular humanist or pagan ideologies, as history indicates. Nonetheless, pure Christianity, as demonstrated through the true, eternal, and universal Church of the risen Messiah, is not an organized, formal, religion but, instead, is reflected only in a personal and individual romantic *agape* relationship with the Divine (*cf.,* Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17). The malevolent spiritual assault on the legitimacy of this interpersonal relationship will ultimately be unsuccessful for, in the determined words of the Redeemer- Messiah, "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Until such time, the foundations of contemporary Western society remain faced with existential challenges from secular humanism and the occult. The devastating effect thereof is considered in Chapter 6, following.

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345 Such description finds support in the view of Jeffrey Satinover, who states that, "pagan society is pantheistic or animistic: gods and goddesses inhabit the natural world and are one with it; nature is worshipped as divine; and as there is no serious distinction between creature and creation, this means that men worship not only nature but their own nature, that is, their instincts, e.g., hunger, sex, aggression and pleasure. In all this, paganism is idolatrous, which is an archaic word for humanistic, for man becomes the measure of all things" (Jungian, 1994). In this concept, there is a close correlation between secular humanism and paganism, which heretical construals permeates the age of post-modernity.

CHAPTER SIX: THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION[346]

"Modern history is the dialogue between two men: one who believes in God, another who believes he is a god" (Nicolás Gómez Dávila, 1913-1994).

6.1 Introduction

Arising from a primordial, ancient Gnostic and otherwise heterodoxic matrix, a contemporary social reorganisation[347] is underway in Anglo-American civilisation. Spurred on by post-structuralist, non-religious, spiritual, philosophical and psychological[348] humanism, and sometimes progressive[349] paradigms like Moralistic Therapeutic Deism and the Open Theists, multifarious ideologies have arisen to energise social anarcho-activists to attempt a recreation, a metamorphosis, and inversion of cultural Christian values in an ultra-libertarian and humanist milieu.[350] Related to such reconfiguration of society is the nullification of basic freedoms such as of religion and speech under the guise of promoting equality, love, tolerance and diversity[351] - as quixotically defined by intemperate leftists, and differing from conventional interpretations. Enshrined democratic constitutional rights and obligations are under severe threat of

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346 Referred to by Carl Trueman as "cultural revolution" (Pride, 2022).

347 Stephen Miller, a Director of the legal action group, America First Legal, summates the current social maelstrom by claiming that, "Everything we cherish as Americans is under threat from the radical left. They are on the march in our schools, our corporations, our media, our professional sports and our politics, in fact everywhere you look in American life". This has come about, says Miller, due to an "unholy alliance of corrupt special interests, big tech titans, the fake news media, and liberal Washington politicians" (Mission, 2022). The same conclusion equally applies to other Western countries.

348 Yale psychiatrist professor, Jeffrey Satinover, concludes that, "after 90 years (since introduction of Jung and Freudian psychoanalysis), there is nothing to suggest modern, psychological, man is happier, or more serene, or more farseeing or more generous towards his fellows than his predecessors". He says that a society "dominated by the idea of a psychological man does not give evidence of having progressed because of psychological influences; its many, obvious, and increasing problems might tempt one, if anything, to argue the opposite" (Jungian, 1994).

349 Satinover explains the term 'progressive' as follows: "our understanding of the world has progressed" so that, "we are now in some way morally superior to those who came before us. That is, after all, how we justify major changes in *mores* and social policy, and why we so often refer to these changes in all sincerity as 'progressive' even though they, more often than not, prove disastrous" (Jungian, 1994).

350 In a 2021 work, Professor Victor Davis Hanson, perceived that ideological progressives were determined to evolve society, believing that "America is stymied by a…constitutional albatross", that is, the "Christian values that supposedly have no relevance today" (Citizen, 2021, p. 17).

351 Diversity', by its very definition can only result in divisiveness and disunity, fracturing society along ideological, ethnic, and religious lines, thus attenuating a hitherto dominant national identity. In his 2021 publication, Victor Davis Hanson, addressing the issue of disunity, concludes that, "Citizenship in American is being pulled in two different and often antithetical directions…spontaneously and by design, through both ignorance of, and intimacy with, the Constitution" (Citizen, 2021, p. 13). To which should be added "and refusal to comply with the principles and rights enshrined in the Constitution".

replacement in favour of conformity to a fixated leftist and cultural Marxist[352] agenda avowing to attain 'social justice' - a misappropriated term with a narrow and eccentric application despite avowedly egalitarian motives.[353] This is none other than the increasing advance of practical atheism, the essence of secular humanism, which arose in the Edenic Garden. In 1993, Robert Wilken presciently wrote that the intent of such atheism is, "to dismantle the common Western culture, to turn everything into a sub-culture". Hence, public articulations of Christianity are in danger of becoming a sub-culture in the very society rooted upon its tenets, for "secularism wants religious practice, especially Christian practice, banished to a private world of feelings and attitudes… while at the same time, the earlier secularist appearance of tolerance towards religion is now seen to have been a sham" (Wilken, 1993). To this end, established scientific,[354] objective, verifiable and accepted truths are concomitantly under assault, particularly as exemplified in the person and deity of the Messiah. Karl Barth acknowledged that "the Word of God is itself the source and norm of all truth"…which "cannot be transcended" (Dogmatics, 1961, p. 235). It is this obstinate, metaphysical, enduring truth that is a "stumbling block" (1 Cor. 1:23) to Identitarianists aiming to circumvent established truths of the natural order, that is, the natural laws founding society as displayed in the Judeo-Christian tenets of Western culture.

Further to this context, reference can be made to the words and actions of Pontius Pilate when he rejected the exclusivity of truth found only in the Messiah who explained, "I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice". Instead, Pilate claimed a sited construal of truth, a truth of his own fabrication, as evident in his rhetorical question, "What is truth?'".[355] In two pivotal scenarios: the first occurring in the Garden of Genesis 3 where the First Couple rejected the absolutism of truth realized in the Deity, in favour of an idiosyncratic version of reductive truth. The second is redacted in John 18 with a demonstration by Pilate of relativistic truth in a Second Testament setting, indicating yet again the reiteration of seminal prophetic utterances through the ages, in typical Rabbinic midrashic fashion. In this regard, a further and final application related to the rejection of absolute truth as found in the person of the Redeemer-Messiah, is evident in the eschatological setting of Revelation 20. In effect, the Creator who is the embodiment of truth,

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352 Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre describes Marxism as, "the most influential adversary theory of modern culture" (Virtue, 1981, p. 58).

353 'Social justice' and its adjunct, 'distributive justice', are terms discussed more fully in Chapter 7.3, but suffice it to say here that true social, and all justice, emanates from the natural law tradition, itself a Judeo-Christian construal.

354 Russell Kirk emphasizes that, "pure science is the pursuit of truth, with no end except the increased apprehension of the truth" (Confessions, 1963, p. 249). Naturally, Kirk is referring to empirical truth.

355 John 18:37-38; cf., Jn. 14:6.

was rejected by his children, the federal First Couple, in the Edenic Garden much as the Messiah, again the immanentization of truth, was rejected by gentile powers epitomized by Pilate in a later context. In both cases the actors rejected plain truth in favour of a malleable construction of their own making, creating a parallel secular humanist-based reality. Identity activists of the 21st century Western matrix hold steadfastly to an autonomous and plastic concept of truth in a tradition set earlier by the First Couple and the typological secular authority, represented by Pontius Pilate. The standard response, therefore, by Identitarianists to the question of objective truth imitates that of Pilate's dismissive reply, "What is truth?". Once the question of truth has been detached from all "burdens of reality", activists are then "free to think with their emotions and to reason with their feelings".[356] In this manner, idiosyncratic truths are justified. Apologetical counters to claims of sited truth need to be set within the framework of the midrashic hermeneutic of *darash*. Such strategy reinforces the veracity of the Creator's salvific program from beginning to end and in all pertinent ongoing situations. Furthermore, the technique assists in understanding current events by applying solid Biblical principles to aberrant claims of truth and reality. Hence, the central importance of grasping past and future prophetic events and directing their persistent principles to complex Identity ideologies confronting the contemporary Western order. In this way, an apologetical viewpoint of heretical demands can be rendered.

The prominent early 20th century philosopher, Max Scheler, surmised that the root of the attempted defenestration of Judeo-Christian ethics and morals in society is *ressentiment* - the deep hostility directed against the absolutist moral and ethical rectitude of the Creator. Scheler states that "the core of bourgeois morality", which gradually replaced Christian morality ever since the 13th century and culminated in the French Revolution, is rooted in *ressentiment*. In the modern social movement, "*ressentiment* has become an important determinant and has increasingly modified the established morality" (1915, p. 2).[357] It was the deep hostility, the *ressentiment*, of the diabolical serpent against the status of the Most-High God, as God the Father of all creation, that motivated his attempted destruction of the Creator's relationship with the First Couple. His successful strategy resulted in a unilateral declaration of independence contrary to the Creator's prohibitions, allowing thereby the assertion of an auto-constructed authority and, consequently, the advent of secular humanism with its contextual morality. With regard to the latter concept, Mark Mitchell stresses that once the "language of (human) rights" is detached from a foundation of "God-given moral value" then such claimed

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356 MacPherson, J., Charms, 2022.

357 Alasdair MacIntyre coined the term, 'emotivist' morality, which aptly describes purported morality ensuing from a motive of *ressentiment* (Virtue, 1981, p. 19).

rights “have the appearance of moral content but lack any moral substance”.[358] This statement well describes the contextual morality of secular humanists and of all Identity ideologues.

A synopsis of core issues relating to the preponderant identity ideologies, all essentially amounting to a nullification of Judeo-Christian[359] creeds, specifically those of identity, needs iteration. It is germane to note that the radical[360] activists’ idea of social justice[361] is devoid of objective, agent-neutral principles of natural justice and the idea of a common good[362] compact, but, to the contrary, is agent-centred, emotivist, contextual, and fluid. It is therefore contrary to established community standards of virtue,[363] morals,[364] equality, fairness, rationality, common-sense, decency, and justice - both distributive and due process justice. This severe polarization finds with no realistic opportunity for mutual consensus. Identity engineers initially commenced with the demand for recognition of same-sex marriage in society; followed by the demand for biological men claiming to be women to be accepted as a normal iteration of gender; then leading on to the claim of historic and current systemic racism perpetuated against the black minority ethnic group, in a form of essentialism. The ideologues’ bromide aphorisms, all of which amount to a *cause célèbre* and a reductionism of complex issues, may be recounted as follows:

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358 Mitchell, M. T., Progressive, 2020.

359 A contemporary, often technical, phrase for the grounding of identity is ‘anchor of identity’, which well describes the necessity of establishing a personal identity in absolutist and eternal Judeo-Christian precepts rather than an emotivist, plastic or contextual fabrication or an identity grounded on a fluid tribal, religious, national, or familial context (Garang, Anchors, 2022).

360 The term ‘radical’ has a variety of meanings herein depending on the context. However, the primary application of the word relates to social action groups or activists, namely, those “advocating, or based on, thorough or complete political or social change; and/or representing or supporting an extreme or progressive section of a political party”. Sometimes the classical meaning of the term is relevant, that is, “forming an inherent part of the nature of someone or something” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021).

361 Legal theorist James Petts refers to idiosyncratic social justice as a case of “ethical deceit” (2021), due to its reductionist, narrow, and relativist nature.

362 Harvard law professor, Adrian Vermeule, defines ‘common good’ as, “the flourishing of a well-ordered political community” (Common Good, 2020, p. 7).

363 MacIntyre suggests that once an objective, identifiable, foundation for the understanding of virtue is discarded, it then becomes impossible, through replacement by relativist agent-centered imitations, to find agreement on what virtue actually means. As MacIntyre says, this results in, “modern denials of the factual character of moral judgements” (1981, Virtue, p. 209), and thus, in practical application, virtue becomes indefinable and irrelevant.

364 MacIntyre refers to relativist morality as “emotivism”, which “rests upon a claim that every attempt… to provide a rational justification for an objective morality has in fact failed”. MacIntyre adds that, “Emotivism’s attempted reduction of morality to personal preference continually recurs in writings of those who do not think of themselves as emotivists. The unrecognized philosophical power of emotivism is one clue to its cultural power” (1981, Virtue, p. 19). MacIntyre’s conclusion is perceptive, for the “cultural power” of emotive relativism is what has devastated Western society through agent-centered ideological identity construals.

- ‘Black lives matter’ – which is quite correct, as is the concomitant statement that all lives matter equally. The racist nature of the BLM movement disguises a deep motive of attaining economic and socially advantageous power;
- ‘Love is love’ - *eros* as the new all-embracing universal love language justifying same-sex relationships, detached from sacred *agape* requirements. An ostensible but deceptive mimesis of *agape* love;
- ‘Born this way’ – the claim that same-sex persons, of miscellaneous genders, are not responsible for their sexual deviancy and so should be accepted as being normal from birth, that is, their condition is congenital;
- ‘Gay rights are civil rights’ – this slogan indicates the new civil rights movement, without acknowledging that all sectors of society have equal civil rights, and at the same time validating same-sex marriage under the umbrella of human and civil rights;
- ‘Woman’s rights are human rights’ – emphasizing the absolutist authority of a woman’s choice to terminate her pregnancy should she so desire. It simultaneously denies recognition of the right to life of the unborn person;
- ‘Abortion rights are woman’s health care rights’ – again, an intention to sublate the fetal child’s rights to life under the guise of a mother’s health care primacy;
- ‘Pro-choice: my body, my choice’ – unless the woman’s rights infringe on the existentially rights of others, particularly the fetal child in this context, then such claim is justifiable;
- ‘Transgender women are women’ – the claim that all sex-gender choices through gender self-identification are equally valid irrespective of biological sex reality evidenced at birth (McLaughlin, 2021, p. 1).

The above slogans in actuality constitute a synecdochical whole under the umbrella of Identity Politics,[365] colloquially referred to as ‘woke politics’,[366] or queer theory,[367] depending on the

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365 The expression, ‘Identity Politics’, was first encountered in literature in a 1977 Statement released by a ‘radical Black feminist lesbian socialist’ organization (Harris, 2008), the Combahee River Collective in Boston, USA (Combahee, 1977). Identity Politics has the divisive effect of parting people by gender-sex, race, ethnicity, religion and other identity concepts.

366 The term, ‘woke’, is a derivative of the slogan referred to as the “Great Awokening”, that is, the “Great Awakening” of society to the necessity of a refabrication of the culture in accordance with identity ideologies. The effect is an onslaught upon the prevailing liberal democratic political and social tradition with its Judeo-Christian heritage. Political theorist, M. D. Aeschliman, refers to the effect of this phenomena as being “lethal to our civilization, to that of which we are the beneficiaries and should be the guardians” (2022).

367 Queer theory’ can be understood as a contention that, “white Europeans created a false ‘gender binary’ and used the categories of male and female to dominate racial and sexual minorities” (Rufo, C., Dismantlers, 2022).

context. A public refutation of pervasive identity ideologies can result in a 'cancel culture'[368] situation due to the intolerance[369] of radical ideologues - a process which Roger Scruton refers to as, "a culture of repudiation".[370] The obfuscatory terms are indicative of the all-encompassing agenda of social zealots to reformulate the human image, the *imago Dei,* into an anthropology of their own fabrication, while controlling the public narrative.[371] Yet, the claims of activists in pursuing identity rights patently lacks a moral context. Rights *per se*, lacking a sound moral and ethical background amount to a mere situational, relativist,[372] opinion without a compelling rationale or absolute reference point. Resultantly, such rights seemingly arise from an unwavering focus on the 'therapeutic-self' irrespective of the need for a communal and consensual common good or balanced by concomitant rights of others. Legal scholar, Erika Bachiochi, points out that the "enduing moral principles" which the earlier traditional feminist movement "employed to make a reasoned critique" no longer exists. Instead, the motivation of contemporary radical feminists is "bereft of noble purpose and ultimately dangerous". In a scathing view of current Identity slogans, Bachiochi comments, "self-determination and liberty – for what end? Dignity – according to what measure? Love – as evident in what kinds of acts? The moral vacuity implicit in the present meanings of these age old terms is something altogether new" (Rights of Women, 2021, pp. 1-3). To which can be added, 'and not for the better'.

Underlying the motivation of drastic secular humanists in attempting to establish ideological control, is the accompanying subordination of cultural Judeo-Christian tenets from having influence or application in society. Consequently, to publicly proclaim Christian or other contrary positions is considered opprobrious speech in many instances. Fortunately for devout disciples of the Redeemer-Messiah, their faith is not limited to a communication of Christianity in public demonstration for it is in essence a personal relationship between the Redeemer-

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368 Harvard professor P. Norris, in the 'Political Studies Journal' of August 2021, defines 'cancel culture' as "collective strategies by activists using social pressures to achieve cultural ostracism of targets (someone or something), accused of offensive words or deeds" (2021). Needless to say, 'offensive' is very much a relativistic term in the post-modern age.

369 On 20th December 2021, the UK Court of Appeal, in the case of Harry Miller v. College of Policing, noted that, "the evidence demonstrates how quickly some involved in the transgender debate are prepared to accuse others, with whom they disagree, of showing hatred or of being transphobic when in fact they are not, but simply holding a different view" (2021).

370 Scruton, R., Conservative, 2014, pp. 6, 40.

371 In a related context, an exemplar is Melissa Fleming the Under Secretary for Global Communication at the United Nations, who stated that, "We own the science and we think that the world should know it, so we partnered with Google to ensure only UN climate results appear" (October 2022; *cf.,* Note 87).

372 While ideologues are generally utterly convinced of the moral validity of their position, such moral validity is agent-centered and malleable in contrast to the absolutist moral precepts of the Judeo-Christian faith.

Messiah and his "new creations" (2 Cor. 5;17). Regrettably, the iteration of eternal truths and the influence of Judeo-Christian values and principles on society through the 'Great Commission,' has become practically restrained[373] in the current social climate through the hegemonic actions of Identity ideologues, leading to the emergence of a political and ideological sectarian structure described by Reno as the "Rainbow Reich".[374]

In philosophical essence, the therapeutic orientated ideologies constitute a search for meaning through self-realisation,[375] especially the search for personal identity in the secular void outside the dogma which affirms the *imago Dei* of each person. Protagonists of these ideologies denigrate, in every possible category, the veracity of an individual's divine image while enforcing the irrational[376] claims of their secular and humanistic based alternatives, namely, that of the autonomous and autotheistic self. This strategy has given rise to post-modern identity creeds, through actioned identity politics – a form of civil religion - at their core all seeking tribal[377] and shared-identity alternatives to their conferred sacred identity. 1981 Nobel laureate, Elias Canetti, describes crowd dynamics in an analogy with the sea: "The dense coherence of the waves is something men in a crowd know well. It entails a yielding to others as though they were oneself, as though there were no strict division between oneself and them".[378] Within a crowd, in a tribal dynamic, the Identitarian can remain anonymous, free from individual accountability and exposure but enjoying the emotion of power and validation through a shared identity of like-minded activists.

Sociologist Peter Berger posits that certain creeds (particularly those variable categories touching on ethnicity and gender) forcing the current re-creation of society can be described

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373 Columnist Ayaan Ali comments that, "truth is the first casualty of progressivism" (Universities, 2022).

374 Reno, R., Harm, 2022.

375 Yale psychiatrist Jeffrey Satinover submits that Freud and his circle of psychoanalysts assumed that "to understand the sources of our neurotic yearling for meaning would somehow relieve us of it" (i.e., the search for meaning satisfied after being discovered within the sovereign-self). He concludes that "this has not proven to be true". He continues by adding that, "when we have no higher object of our devotion, we make gods of the lower objects at hand" (Meaning, 1994), i.e., ourselves, through exploring the inner-self.

376 Noted Harvard scholar, Steven Pinker, summates the meta-narrative paradox of his 2022 publication, a New York Times bestseller, 'Rationality: What it Seems Scarce, Why it Matters', as follows, "Rationality explores how the rational pursuit of self-interest, sectarian solidarity, and uplifting mythology can add up to crippling irrationality in a society" (Q & A, 2022). The evidence of this discordance is manifest in the core emotivist precepts of Identity ideologues.

377 For much of history, meaning, identity and the concept of immortality was realized through tribal, familial, clan, membership (Weigel, Individual, 2022). However, the advent of the Messiah, particularly his resurrection, emphasised the unique identity, purpose, dignity (Gal. 3:28), and immorality (*cf.,* Rom. 6:5, "a resurrection like his"), of the individual person. Hence, the importance of Christian tenets influencing society.

378 Canetti, E., Crowds & Power, 1978, p. 80.

as a manifestation of the fact that, “modern man is afflicted with a permanent identity crisis”. Berger concludes that such identity crisis results in “a condition conducive to considerable nervousness” (Berger, Mind, 1974, p. 78). He submits the socio-psychological view that a comprehension of identity is what actually roots an individual in the reality of existence. Berger’s contentions appear correct for in the post-Christian age, personal *angst* (“nervousness”) arises due to the “fluid and unreliable” (Mind, 1974, p. 92) characterisation of identity through variable principles. It is apparent that Identity actors endeavour to validate a form of identity, and so meaning, through institutionalized structures such as LGBTQ+ assemblies rather than through a personal appreciation of an *ens realissimum* - an ultimate reality based on definitive strictures. Rational eternal truths and moral values are contained only in Judeo-Christian tenets without which the individual is subject to life-long *angst*. The underlying *angst*, the “considerable nervousness” (1974, p. 78) and “deep uncertainty about contemporary identity,” amounting to an “identity crisis” (1974, p. 92) mentioned by Berger, is a manifestation of mans’ alienation from the Fatherhood of God concept and which alienation causes the “nervousness’, the “fear of death”[379] to which all such alienated persons are subject (*cf.,* Heb. 2:15). Society’s increasing alienation from the Fatherhood of God concept, and thus the individual’s *imago Dei*, is reflected in a comprehensive, 2021, Pew Research survey of factors determining satisfaction with ‘meaning in life’, in 17 advanced economies. The survey indicates that ‘Spirituality, Faith and Religion’ rated very low (only 2%), being 15th of 16 categories, just one category above ‘Pets’ at 1% (Silver, 2021).

The contemporary ‘battle of ideas’ amounts to an internal conflict of diametrically opposite beliefs, contrasting narrow ideologies with cultural Christian precepts. This ancient contest had its commencement in the Garden of Eden between the *sui generis* humans and the diabolical serpent - an *alter ego* of Satan. In the postdiluvian context, the battle continued with Noah’s descendent, Nimrod, the initiator of paganism, which spiritual system has continued into the post-Christian age in multifarious guises. The conduits of paganism are the ideas and ideals promoted through secular philosophy, psychology, economics, various ideologies and sundry manifestations of heterodoxical religions, culminating in New Age identity creeds with their manifold formulations. These are cultural challenges to orthodox doctrines and praxis and the societies instituted upon their principles. Additionally, there are challenges to orthodoxy from within the Church, particularly in the established Protestant Denominations but

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[379] The Biblical notion of “fear of death” to which all humankind, estranged from their Creator, is subject, has, unsurprisingly, been empirically verified in a scientific study which revealed an “overall hypothesis that anxiety or a lack of certainty about one’s relationship with the divine represents a threat to psychological well-being” (Henderson and Kent, 2021).

also in evangelical circles and certain Roman Catholic forums.[380] Sacrilegious Christians in the form of sectarian epigones such as Christian Platonists, Christian socialists (cultural Marxists), Progressive Christians, Moralistic Therapeutic Deists and Open Theists, all advocate a non-literal and historic interpretation of the book of Genesis and allied canonical literature. Equally, there exist Christian materialists and militant Christian feminists[381], motivated by an agenda to generate empathy with drastic social ideologies and so make Churches and synagogues more 'inclusive', to exhibit 'diversity', and to be more attractive to society. The casual appropriation of the appellation 'Christian' is simply an illegitimate pretext to add credibility to these 'alien invasive' (to borrow a Botanical phrase) heretical principles, in a mimetic strategy. The net result is that the 'world has infiltrated the Church' instead of the reverse, thereby deflecting the aims of the 'Great Commission' of Matthew 28:18-20 and allied scriptures. Politics is the new religion in the Anglo-American public square and that of many other countries, with political opinions advancing a new cultural religion. To a significant extent, juridical authority has supported these ideological doctrines arising, as they do, from a secularised, humanistic, atheistic and purportedly democratic liberalist society but in actuality stimulated by a vociferous anarcho-leftist, demographically verifiable[382] minority,[383] who seek cultural dominance for their narrow ideology.[384] It needs to be clarified that the term 'anarchist' is not

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380 A perturbing event is that, contrary to Pope John Paul 11's long-standing encyclical on moral theology, the compelling *Veritatis Splendor*, the Relator General Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich S.J. of the 2022 Synod on Synodality in Rome, has indicated that "the Church needs to rethink its opposition to homosexual acts in order to account for new 'sociological-scientific' advancements" (White, S., Splendor, 2022).

381 A 2020 study, based on a national survey of the intersection between religious affiliation and feminist identification, found that "religious women are no more or less likely to identify as feminist than the religious unaffiliated". Both Protestant and Catholic religious members who 'identify as feminists express hostile sexist sentiment to a higher degree than their feminist unaffiliated counterparts" (Hernandez, 2020, p. 27). In similar words, Christian feminists are no less antagonistically sexist than non-religious feminists. The canonical notion of complementarianism (*cf.*, Gen. 1: 6-31; 2:7-25), as between a man and woman in marriage, was disrupted by the antinomianism of Genesis 3. The effects of the curse in Genesis 3:16, however, finally destroyed the harmony of the hitherto archetypal complementary relationship between the binary sexes, as is manifest in the advent of militant feminist authority ever since. Restoration of a harmonious marital fellowship is only possible through the power, love, and restorative program (*cf.,* Rev. 21:5) of the Redeemer-Messiah, as predicted in Genesis 3:15.

382 A 2021 census in Canada revealed that, "of the nearly 30.5 million people in Canada, 100,815 were transgender, accounting for 0.33% of the population" over 15 years old (Statistics Canada, Census, 2022).

383 Harvard University legal theorist, Adrian Vermeule, points out that Identity activists, "while claiming to represent the real will of the people, or the best of our national ideals, form a tiny minority of the population, even a tiny minority of the intellectual class" (Imagination, 2021).

384 It may well be asked as to how a narrow fringe of the population came to dictate the narrative on personal identity, particularly that of sex-gender. Vermeule explains that, "committed minorities have often been able to set the terms of political life for large, relatively apathetic majorities, especially in a system like our own that offers many points of access for minority influence such as the Courts" (Imagination, 2021). Vermeule's view is valid, for the courts of justice often interpret the prevailing laws in ways favorable to radical activists, as is evident in the Bostock matter.

applied here in the sense of violent, armed, revolutionaries. Rather, to be understood as a philosophical abolition of conventional controls and the humane order, thereby enabling unfettered freedom of utterance and praxis of non-traditional values - some perhaps extreme - and norms, irrespective of contrary views and rights. A closer examination of cogent ideologies confronting the established Judeo-Christian values-based footings of Western society follows.

6.2 Critical Theory

The key hypothesis of the Marxist derived Critical Theory (variably referred to as cultural Marxism or neo-Marxism) is that it provides, "the descriptive and normative basis for social enquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms" (Bohman, 2021). Critical Theory ("CT") has a practical intent, and is not simply a theory or enquiry without concrete application for its purpose is to transform traditional social systems in order to attain "freedom, justice and happiness" (Cooke, 2001, p. 211). With such a broad and tenuous field of application, it is unsurprising that Critical Theory, in its persona as Critical Social Justice Theory ('CSJT'), is utilised as the underlying idea, the core ideal, empowering the intersectionality[385] of ambient secular ideologies, particularly those of race, gender and sexuality. CSJT contains within it a political philosophy together referred to as Identity politics or 'woke', in the vernacular. Identity politics is an expression of cultural Marxism - a reinvention of classic Marxism for an altered situation - a prevalent ideology that considers the human struggle for meaning and individual identity as a struggle between diverse social orders and identity sets.[386] This is evident from the ideological power conflict between black and white race groups, women verses men, women against transgender identifiers, and homosexuals conflicting with heterosexuals.[387] The minority race groups claim racist oppression; the

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385 The term, 'intersectionality', in the context of feminist theory of societal domination through varied iterations of power differentials, emphasises the, "complex, interconnected and cross-cutting relationships between diverse modes of domination including sexism, racism, class oppression and heterosexism" (Allen 2021). Intersectional feminism arose out of early Black feminism and the antecedent theories of the Combahee River Collective who emphasised in their 1977 Manifesto, the "interlocking systems of oppression" (Combahee, 1977). Contemporary usage can be accredited to legal theorist, professor Kimberle Crenshaw, who refuted a "single-axis framework" in the area of feminist oppression. She instead claimed that, "the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at race.

386 Herein exists a paradox. On the one hand, all individuals are ideologically encouraged to be autonomous and to self-identify through selecting a gender, truth, meaning, morality, and a faith of their own fabrication. On the other hand, however, "each person is pressed to conform to the opinions and behaviours of the herd", that is, the tribe of like-minded ideologues. This results inevitably in a culture of "simultaneous egotism and groupthink" (Chaput, Believe, 2018), proudly exhibited in the public square as political correctness and a social justice for the common good.

387 Ideology can be understood as, "an attempt to overthrow order, for the Ideologue wants to overthrow God and the divine order" (Giubilei, F, Conservative, 2019, p. 13). In his study of

feminists allege sexist and patriarchal oppression; the homosexual and sundry gender identifiers aver heterosexual oppression. Society, according to the theorists, needs a complete make-over - *res delenda est* (everything must be changed) – so as to reflect a new iteration of social justice, itself a form of justice in line with their idiosyncratic radicalization. Marxist actors highlight the dualism and inequality of society[388] and endeavour to restructure the social fabric and culture through a class struggle with the alleged aim of achieving an idealised, but abstruse, concept of social justice. The zealots aver that identity, meaning, and justice is accomplished through a tribal identity, with its own peculiar argot, and not only through individualism. This Marxist hypothesis has the practical effect of vanquishing the cultural Judeo-Christian claim that personal identity emanates from the Fatherhood of God, from which concept the *imago Dei* of humankind results.

Critical Theory driven Identity ideologies have been catapulted into mainstream thinking via the philosophies of Herbert Marcuse and others of the 'New Left', who through "activist scholarship, made everything about race, gender and identity" (Pluckrose, 2020, p. 1). Pluckrose elaborates that Critical Theory, under the façade of social justice, is "concerned with revealing hidden bias" in society (2020, p. 14), and seeks to expose the purported[389] power domination of a certain class of society in the vital areas of race, sex and gender. Unsurprisingly, this subjective paradigm leads to all manner of perceived[390] accusations such

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European conservatism, Giubilei cites Russell Kirk as saying that, the "triumph of ideology would be the triumph of the 'opposite world', the world of disorder" (Conservative, 2019, p. 13), a consequence antithical to societal stability sought by conservatives.

388 Prof. Quintin Anderson brings to attention the oxymoron inherent in claiming primacy of both a self-identity and a clan (socially defined) identity, as sought by identity activists. He states that, "historical fact appears to be that American intellectuals show a reluctance or inability to admit that any limitation to the goal of 'self-fulfilment' is implied by membership in the community" (Americans, 1992, p. 203). Anderson points out that American progressive polity claims that "we can have both self-defined self-fulfilment and social justice for all" (1992, p. 202). To the contrary, says political theorist M. D. Aeschliman, "these two aims are clearly antithetical: if 'diversity' means that my personal definition of success, value, or pleasure cannot be critiqued or limited by any external moral, social, or civic norm then there can be no shared, binding 'equity' in society, no binding idea of obligation or justice" (2022). That is to say, no prospect of attaining a comprehensive and objectively defined expression of social justice for the common good of society.

389 Pinker opines that ideologues, "treat their beliefs as expressions of moral solidarity rather than assessments of empirical reality" (Q & A, 2022). For tribal Identity activists, reality through scientific empiricism has been substituted for relativism and emotivism, thus highlighting their cognitive discordance.

390 In the UK, the issue of perception, as pertaining to the offended person, is very much a subjective and eisegetical construal, without objective verification. It is demonstrated in the iniquitous 2014 'Hate Crimes Operational Guidance', compliance with which is mandatory for Police. Part 6.3 thereof allows for a perception-based offence of hate crimes, irrespective of any supporting evidence. The significance is that alleged victims of hate crimes "should not be challenged (in their allegations) or have to justify their belief to the police as this could lead to a secondary victimisation" (Phillimore, 2021). The wide mode of interpretation of the Guidance by Police was severely criticised in the case of Miller v. College of Policing, with the court finding that the relevant chapter (6.3) of the Guidance was "not necessary in a democratic society" and, furthermore, in

as overt systemic racism, aggressions, microaggressions and other prejudices directed towards minorities, hence the necessity of Critical Race Theory to overcome such discriminations and realize distributive justice.[391] Social structures, such as in traditional religions, are identified as the culprit, not individual antinomianism with personal culpability. Ergo, individual responsibility and the concept of original sin are sublated in favour of agent-centred relativist morality, amounting to a situational ethic. Personal identity is to be rather realised in a tribal forum of like-minded ideologues.[392] Sectarian usage of the obstruse but coercive term, 'social justice', entails the reframing of political and legal prerogatives to give effect to the allegedly justifiable moral demands of the victimised factions of society. Certain large institutions including Fortune 100 corporates,[393] force their workforce to participate in Critical Theory education. Evident to all, CRT has become endemically institutionalised in the US public square, portending the development of further strife in the public arena.[394]

In practical application, Critical Theory is so-named for it seeks human "emancipation from slavery" (Bohman, 2021) - a 'critical' issue, particularly in the issue of race through the ongoing efforts by the descendants from slavery, the black citizens, for freedom and equality. Furthermore, the intersectionality[395] theorem of Critical Theory is, in addition to ethnicity, equally applicable in the polemical area of sex and gender. The latter issues motivate fervent

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contravention of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Court of Appeal, UK, 2021). A significant victory was thus attained for freedom of expression over gender ideology.

391 See Chapter 7.3 herein.

392 Pinker opines that ideologues, "treat their beliefs as expressions of moral solidarity rather than assessments of empirical reality" (Q & A, 2022). For tribal Identity activists, reality through scientific empiricism has been substituted for relativism and emotivism, thus highlighting their cognitive discordance.

393 "Every Fortune 100 company has now adopted 'diversity, equity and inclusion' programing" (Rufo, C., Regime, 2022).

394 In line with existent CRT practice, the State of New York ("NY") has implemented controversial racially restricted medical intervention for potential Covid patients. A New York Department of Health directive, dated December 21, 2021, states that, "Non-white or Hispanic/Latino ethnicity should be considered a risk factor as long-standing systemic health and social inequities have contributed to an increased risk of severe illness and death from Covid-19". Only in such particular case, among a select few others, "Oral anti-viral treatment is authorized" (Bassett, 2021). The blatant racial discrimination against some ethnic groups is in contravention of various Federal and State Constitutional laws and codes, and reminiscent of Apartheid South Africa. It is unsurprising, therefore, that legal action has been taken against the NY Department of Health (Commissioner: Mary Bassett), in the 2022 class-action case of Jacobson versus Bassett (Jacobson, 2022), pending a Court decision. Legal action is also contemplated against the States of Utah and Minnesota for implementing the exact same racist and immoral discrimination, as New York, in their Covid-19 treatment protocols (AFL, Utah, 2022). Social disturbance arising from such ethnic bias is predictable. All three States are heavily supportive of the Democratic Party whose Statist ideologies are manifest through CRT and other identity concepts.

395 Intersectionality can be described as "the unique intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and religious affiliation creating differing circumstances in which a feminist identification is forged" (Hernandez, 2021, p. 31).

feminist[396] and other Alphabet group[397] activists to seek 'emancipation from slavery and entrenched power', endemic in an allegedly patriarchal, heteronormative, and unjust society. Emancipation, according to Critical Theorists, can only be achieved through a societal reorganisation in the areas of ethics and morality, as seen through ethnic and sex-gender ideological concepts. Therefore, ideologues attempt to philosophically overcome the absolutist ethical and moral constrictions of monotheistic religions, particularly that of Judeo-Christianity whose moral precepts are inherent in a liberal democratic political dispensation. Along these lines, Nietzsche, apart from deprecating prevailing definitive, grounded, morality, proposed an ideological replacement strategy which he describes as a "trans-valuation of values". Nietzsche elaborates on this proposal by referring to it as a "visualized declaration of war and victory against all the old concepts of true and not true" (1918, Antichrist, p. 58:13). Through his 'declaration of war', Nietzsche's *ressentiment* against immutable precepts of the Father Creator is once again to the fore. In practical terms, Mary Eberstadt describes Nietzsche's strategy as "ways in which the existing moral code would become transformed in a social order no longer centred on Judeo-Christianity" (Adam, 2015, Ch. 1, pp. 4). It is exactly a "transvaluation" of morality that has occurred in Western society with the emergence of Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics (*cf.,* Ch. 5.4); the existentialist cohort's moral relativism (*cf.,* Ch. 5.4); the agent-centred contextual and plastic[398] morality of Identity actors; and philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's emotivist ethics (*cf.,* note #7 *supra*). All these concerns amount to much the same thing, namely, the emergence of *homo superbus* (*cf.* Ch. 3.5) – a hybris driven, autonomous, auto-creative entity in the manner of the First Couple, creating his or her own structures of reality, morality and ethics independent of the Divine's restrictive parameters.

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396 In her 2021 publication addressing feminism in the 21st century, Amia Srinivasan clarifies that "Feminism is not a philosophy, or a theory, or even a point of view. It is a political movement to transform the world beyond recognition" (Sex, 2021, p. xi). However, this is not quite correct as behind every social movement there exists a philosophy, in effect an ideology. The ideology of 21st century feminism is none other than that of Identity theory, justified through diverse Marxian dualistic Critical theories, but having the same transformative agenda as a social movement *per se*.

397 Claims of a tribal identity can arise from an important need of a moral identity among individuals alienated from customary family or religious structures (Aquino and Reed, 2002, p. 1423). Once a group moral identity has been established, then moral behaviour compliant with the group's ideology, in the form of both values and praxis, inevitably follows (Reynolds and Ceranic, 2007, p. 1610).

398 Theologian Carl Trueman posits that the idea of 'plastic', that is, malleability, "shapes our thinking of our sexual natures". He adds that, "the modern cultural imagination sees the world as raw material to be shaped by the human will". Therefore, "We no longer think of ourselves as subject the world's fixed nature, or of it having an objective authority or meaning. We are the ones with power, and we are the ones who give the world significance" (Plastic, 2022). The idea of malleability has given vent to dualistic sexual self-identification, such as transgenderism, an ideological construal based on Plato's Gnostic dualism, through neo-Marxist Critical Theories, vigorously adopted by Identity activists.

Critical Theory, derived from the theories of Marx, Hegel, and German Idealism has as its focus the “cultural life of humanity” (Brincat, 2016, p. 563). This amounts to a revolutionary agenda, more fully explained by Antonio Gramsci who proposed a “new order (where) socialism will triumph by first capturing the culture via infiltration of schools, universities, Churches and the media through transforming the consciousness of society” (Kiska, 2019, p. 7). In contemporary times, the leading exponents of Critical Theory are scholars Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm, Habermas and other members of the ‘Frankfurt School’ (the Institute for Social Research, established in 1923). These Critical Theorists claim that their theorems were designed for “the abolition of social injustice” and that, “the future of humanity depends on the existence today of the critical attitude” (Horkheimer, 1972, p. 242). There exists a context to these remarks but the context is that of neo-Marxism, also referred to as cultural Marxism, which is evident in the practical application of the ‘critical attitude’ by promoters of Critical Race Theory and Critical Gender Theory ideologies. As deduced by Horkheimer, “solidarity with the innocent victims of history and human progress” have, “migrated from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam into secular historical materialism and humanism and their praxis”, and can be referred to as “inverse theology” (Siebert, 2006, pp. 100-102). Critical Theorists hardly have an altruistic motive to act in the best interests of current society for the imposition of their ideology has as its purpose, according to Kevin Donnelly (Editor of the 2021 publication, ‘Cancel Culture and the Left’s Long March’), “the overthrowing of Western capitalist societies”. So, inextricably connected to the reframing of society through Identity ideologies is an economic and political renewal to achieve the egalitarian aims of an eccentric social justice concept. In the result, current Anglo-American cultures experience upheaval in multifarious facets of society, all driven by the dogmata of Critical theorists.

As can be expected from secular philosophy generally particularly with socio-philosophy, religious monotheistic concepts and doctrines are redefined to accommodate secular viewpoints and their practical, post-structural, societal representations. This is also the case with Critical Theory and its post-truth era enthusiasts for, as the atheist Karl Marx stated, “the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism”. These words remain at the “core of the critical theory of Adorno and Horkheimer” (Brittain, 2006, p. 151). Very much in the form of Karl Marx, who averred that “philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it”, Critical Theorists aim to refabricate Western society. Critical Theory, in Horkheimer’s view, is not only for the purpose of identifying the many iterations of social abuse and injustice but to analyse the supporting structures, “with the intention of overcoming them” (Devetak, 2013, pp. 163-164), and so create a just society. This strategy would transform

society into an egalitarian enterprise that accords with their peculiar and contextual socio-philosophical views of social justice and the common good.

Critical Theory social engineers apply Marxian strategies so that the dichotomy between the 'innocent workers' – the victims of society – and the purported 'masters' - the employers and 'captains of industry' who have oppressed them, is exposed and remedied. And, as with the very nature of secular ideologies, the Critical Theory zealots do not countenance criticism or dissent, for to identify as a victim[399] is to hold the high moral ground. In the result, repentant guilt and financial compensation is demanded from the oppressors,[400] defined as those who are unable to identify as victims due to their differing race, ethnic or gender set. The claims for financial compensation arising out of racial discrimination decades or even hundreds of years previously, can be considered ridiculous and a mendacious artifice designed for financial enrichment without merit or effort. At the core of the issue is the striving for identity but once the *imago Dei* is dispensed with, the only remaining alternative is a shared tribal identity, whether in a common racial cluster or with persons of related aberrant gender or with other philosophical anthropological categories. The 'oppressed' claim a presumption of innocence and annex the moral advantage. To the contrary, white ethnic member 'oppressors' are unilaterally deemed collectively guilty, in usual Marxist style, with any protestations of innocence leading to a Kafka Trap[401] situation. Questions relating to the original sin common to all humanity are summarily ignored in such a secular environment, for the white racial set is considered to be inherently racist, guilty and sinful, and the cause of enduring cultural and racial systemic oppression of the Black faction. The Black ethnic faction claims moral and racial hierarchy through claimed neo-Gnostic esoteric knowledge of the dualistic nature of a racial society irrespective of empirical data to the contrary.

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399 The cry of victimhood is the *sine qua non* of Identity politics for, as Political professor Joshua Mitchell spells out, what the identity activists, the 'innocent', strive for in the political arena is "legitimacy, because the basis of political legitimacy is innocence. The past belongs to the transgressors… but the future – politically, economically and socially, belongs to the innocents." It is thus to be expected that, "white heterosexual men, in the world of identity political constructs, can have nothing to say" (Identity, 2019).

400 The underlying justification for the ideologues' assault upon established Western culture emanates, therefore, from their standpoint of the 'innocents' versus the 'transgressors', a classic Marxian dualistic class fabrication. Prof. Mitchell summates the ideologues' outlook as follows, "The indictment that Identity politics levels at the Western inheritance is comprehensive. The stains of slavery and colonialism are the 'original sins' that taint the entire inheritance of the West. The accomplishments in science, philosophy, art, theology, politics, and economics that are the inheritance of the West subtract nothing from the debt that transgressors can never repay" (Identity, 2019).

401 A Kafka Trap: the more vehemently one denies being a racist, for example, the more racist one appears to be in the perception of the accusers (*cf.,* Kafka, The Trial, 1973).

Cultural 'wokeness' – the revolutionary political correctness concept designed for ideological driven social transformation in the name of justice and egalitarianism - is the new religion. A religion superficially focused on justice, but motivated by a lust for power to generate a new ruling class, one that is ideologically correct. Activists display *ressentiment*,[402] discrimination, spleneticity, with allegedly loftier, esoteric, and idiosyncratic knowledge in the genre of esoteric elitism. Yet, their paradigm does not offer a *Sittlichkeit* or soteriology other than common sectarian identity and victimhood; or an eschatology of hope of any sort; or a definable and practical moral compass; or a rational[403] basis for establishing normative truth. Judeo-Christian dogma denies any inequality of status of the Black or any other race band, as is seen in Genesis 1:26-28 and John. 3:16, for all humanity is created equal, all have descended from the same forefather in the Garden, and all have a common *imago Dei.* Nevertheless, there is a need for social equality and redress in certain instances but such need does not supersede the basic natural law positions of equality, fairness, and sundry freedoms (*cf.,* Luke 6).

6.3 Critical Theory and Race

6.3.1 Background

An established but minor academic discipline in the United States ("US") educational system for the last three decades, Critical Race Theory ("CRT"), is a narrow branch of socio-philosophical 'Critical Theory.' CRT is admixed with 'Critical Legal Theory' (a socio-legal concept) for, as the proponents of CRT claim, the laws of the US are utilised to perpetuate the marginalization of the Black minority and the maintaining of such *status quo*. The essence of CRT ideology is that proposition that the United States was established upon the racist principles of a euro-centric social dominance theory resulting in black slavery. White dominated society accordingly prospered through such racism, remains racist at its core and remains systematically, endemically, and inescapably racist. White social and economic privilege is solely to blame for the unjust situation. Although the issue of ethnicity, a form of biological essentialism, is the core identifying feature of CRT, the ideology itself gives rise to

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402 In this context, Harvard and Toronto University professor Jordan Peterson's analysis of *ressentiment* is beneficial. He explains, "*ressentiment* – hostile resentment – occurs when individual failure or insufficient status is blamed both on the system… and the people who have achieved success and high status within that system. The system is then deemed by fiat to be unjust". Therefore, "all attacks on the successful can be construed as morally justified attempts at establishing justice" (Beyond, 2021, pp. 174-175). Hence, the excuse for construction of an ideological and idiosyncratic form of social justice, by whatever means necessary, to replace the existent dystopia. It is noteworthy that Jordan Peterson is described by the New York Times as "the most influential public intellectual in the Western world right now" (2018).

403 If the search for truth is not coupled to rationality, then as Professor Montgomery says, the individual will be "buffeted by confliction notions that yield false visions of reality (when) not anchored by our intellectual responsibility to the fullness of reality" (Metaphysical, 1993).

multifaceted practical implications such as power - economic, financial and political power to the Black minority - which will remedy historic and current racial disadvantages. Fine intentions, but the practical consequence will probably be an inversion of such goals in the form of reverse apartheid, much like what has transpired in the economy of post-apartheid South Africa (*cf.,* Gilson, 2021).

Stimulated by 20th century secular Marxian ideology,[404] CRT has attained fresh relevance and application in social and political circles through appropriation by zealous race activists, particularly the 'Black Lives Matter' ("BLM") zealots, adopting CRT as their key creed and *raison d'être*. The BLM movement, founded by three feminists, namely, Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometti, purportedly strive for a militant[405] and idiosyncratic concept of social justice (*cf.,* Gonzalez, 2020). Initially based on commendable objectives, BLM soon evolved into a leftist anarco-social[406] crusade, which is unsurprising as Cullors describes herself as a "trained Marxist" (Steinbuch, 2020), as are the other two founders. As a result, and in accordance with Marxian thought, CRT proponents, particularly the BLM action group, demand a total metamorphosis of society in all its aspects. The stimulation, in ever swelling measure, of such theory has commenced with vigour in the public education system. A demonstration of practical CRT is the 'New York Times' sponsored idea of the '1619 Project' created in memory of the '400th year arrival of Black slaves to America'. The agenda of the movement, according to the instigator of the 'project', Nikole Hannah-Jones, is so that, "there will be a reparations Bill passed" (2019). She adds that "white people must give up whiteness" (Milikh, 2020), which means in practice that the social narrative of the allegedly suppressed black race victim is beyond question, sacred even. Social critic Lipton Matthews states that "The 1619 Project's fabrications commit a horrific injustice on American history. The project perpetuates dangerous myths about the country's origins and by painting its roots as structurally racist and oppressive, it stokes racial tensions" (2020); to which might be added: quite unnecessarily so, and purely in the cause of reductive CRT racial ideology. African-American Princeton Professor, Carol Swain, confirms the atomising effect of the sectarian '1619 Project' agenda by explaining that it is a "misguided effort to keep open historical

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404 Augusto del Noce perceived that, "Marxism is the *subject* of contemporary history". By such statement Del Noce implied that, "contemporary history is at the same time the story of its (Marxism) success and failure" (2014, p. xiv).

405 On September 12, 2020, it was reported that, "a gunman attempted to assassinate two Los Angeles Police Officers. As the critically wounded Officers were rushed to the hospital, BLM protestors mobilized to block entry, shouting, "I hope they f…..g die" (Reno, Season, 2020).

406 In an analysis of the 10,600 incidents of civil riot occurring during a four month period pursuant to the death, during arrest by police, of George Floyd in 2020, 570 incidents involved violence. Of the violent incidents, "most have involved Black Lives Matter activists" (Eberstadt, Fathers, 2020).

wounds while telling only half of the story. It is flawed because it is connected to CRT and the diversity-inclusion grievance industry that focuses on identity politics and division. Blaming todays' families for the mistakes of our ancestors is not a prescription for unifying the country or empowering racial and ethnic minorities" (2020).

CRT is a recent version of Marxist class conflict schisms whereby a minority troupe acting upon a narrow ideology and alienated from main society, attempts to overthrow the established order to achieve political warrant, and so create a socialist society of their own construction (*cf.,* Rufo, CRT, 2021, p. 1). But instead of the orthodox Marxist dualistic, dialectic, class category of oppressed (slaves) against the 'master' oppressors narrative, the focus is shifted to the ideological elements of race and gender. The intended outcome remains the same, namely, liberation from oppression and the attempt to establish a Marxian utopia - an irrational idea lacking moral parameters. The ethnic component in the movement is restrictive, with validity only for those considered Black (to any measure, irrespective of how slight), who are lauded as a 'morally superior' race[407] and at the same time predominantly excluding non-Blacks such as the whites and Asian ethnic factions. It is therefore a direct challenge to the majority Caucasians who are intimidated, guilt driven, and shamed as enduring systemic oppressors, due to allegedly racist atrocities perpetrated by their supposed ancestors many years ago. Historically, the advent of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, embraced the democratic and egalitarian principles of the American Declaration of Independence, affirming the natural law principle of equality and freedom of all peoples under the law. To the contrary of the equality achieved through the Civil Rights movement, the BLM actors seek to establish CRT as the dominant ideology in the US education system, in all aspects of corporate life, in all public institutions including the military and government agencies. This agenda is a far cry from the egalitarian principles redacted in germinal documents upon which the USA was established. A commentary in the June 8th, 2021, issue of the 'Washington Examiner', considering CRT ideology, explicates as follows, "In this telling, all whites are inherently racist, stained by the racialist equivalent of original sin, and must become second-class citizens as a matter of policy in order to establish 'equity.' Meanwhile, no black or Hispanic person can ever possibly be racist, no matter how great and obvious his animus against whites on the basis of their race" (Washington Examiner, 2021, Editorial). The cognitive disconnect of CRT ideologues is revealed from reported Statistics that

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407 Claims of moral superiority, through victimhood, are conducted by a process of 'virtue signaling', which essentially has the opposite effect to that intended for, as cultural theorist Scott Nelson, points out, "virtue signaling is a way of pointing at others' faults and flaunting our superiority" (Nelson, S. Virtue, 2022). This action is the antithesis of true virtue which is not self-claimed but, instead, is recognized by outsiders.

in New York, for instance, anti-Asian hate crime in 2020 increased 900% over the previous year but, *"*only two of the 20 people arrested in connection with these attacks were white… 11 were African-Americans" (Blacks), and the rest Hispanics (*cf.,* Elder, 2021). The U.S. Department of Justice report that Asians are the victims of over 182,000 violent crimes annually. Yet, although the largest ethnic group in the U.S., Caucasians are not responsible for the majority of anti-Asian violent crimes.[408] Exaggerated accusations of race crime need to be moderated to reflect official Statistics.

Aristotle perceptively lectured that, "Everywhere, inequality is a cause of revolution" (350 BCE, Politics, Bk. V, Part 1). Certainly, there is truth in his viewpoint for the natural law principle of equality was included in the Judeo-Christian based US Declaration of Independence and subsequent Constitution. To give effect thereto, the US Civil war took place and subsequently, eventually, effective Black affirmative action in the US became mandatory in government and corporate life during the decade of the 1960's. It appears that equality is an insufficient recompense for the CRT proponents for they seek dominance in US institutions through equity ('equal outcomes'). The CRT's misappropriated term, 'equity,' has a significantly different meaning to that of 'equality' with which most Western persons are familiar, and so the term can be deemed a deceptive homophone. The principle of equality' is the crucial base tenet of the 1776 US Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal…". The idea of equality is a noble one, not so the principle of 'equity', for in CRT ideology, 'equity' is simply an example of neo-Marxist biased economic redistribution with all the injustice that such term implies. The practical import of economic distribution based on the socialist principle of equity entails State ownership of property rights; State coerced equal outcomes; and reallocation of all wealth and property, according to the dictates of the allegedly suppressed and disenfranchised Black minority. The victim-focused claim for compensation arises from historic allegations of slavery and continuing systemic white supremacy and patriarchal dominance. The CRT designation, 'equity,' refers in practice to a socio-economic equal outcome irrespective of opportunity, merit, investment, sacrifice through labour, or any application of effort. The famed Austrian economist, Fredrich Hayek[409] - a Nobel Prize laureate and initiator of the Mont Pelerin Society - opined that *"*there is all the difference in the world between treating people equally and that of attempting to make them equal", for the latter idea is a "form of servitude" (Individualism, 2017). Striving to make all persons equal when all are subject to the same rules governing, for instance, economic and financial achievement is a socialist construal contrary to the fundamental capitalist, *laissez-*

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408 DOJ, Criminal Victimization, 2018 Full Report, 2019, p. 13.
409 Author of the 1944 International bestseller, 'The Road to Serfdom'.

faire, principles of Western societies. These are “two traditions of thought, while bearing the same name, are divided by fundamentally opposed principles” (Individualism, 2017) – with one resulting in freedom and the other in ‘servitude’. Outcomes in democratic and capitalist societies are generally not equal but they are pursued in freedom of choice and effort, and this result is what the CRT proponents wish to demolish. Philosopher Roderick Long describes the discrepancy between equality and equity as follows, “The difference between the two becomes increasingly blurred these days as inequality of outcome is taken as *prima facie* evidence of inequality of opportunity” (2001). Expecting to ‘reap’ what one has not ‘sown’ is unbiblical, as is observable in Luke 19: 21-22; while being responsible for the ‘sins’ of forebearers is likewise unscriptural (*cf.,* Ezek. 18:19-20).

CRT actors couch their Marxist terminology in language familiar and acceptable to unsuspecting citizens, but which language amounts to sophistical proposals, that is, artifices designed to deceive. For instance, ‘equity’ purposely replaces the familiar term of ‘equality’; ‘social justice’ obfuscates the Marxist principle of the dominant empowerment of an elite few; and the terms, ‘diversity, ‘tolerance’ and ‘inclusion’ camouflage instead their antonyms. Use of idiosyncratic language is a characteristic of CRT theory. Hence, while averring the concept of ‘diversity’, the actual upshot is an intolerance of dissenting views. In like manner, the slogan of ‘equality’ is in reality strongly biased in favour of the Black minority. In the arena of education, the CRT slogan of ‘culturally response teaching’, is but a guise for emphatic promotion of CRT racist ideology - a woke concept. A Boston University Professor, who is a leading U.S. CRT proponent and a New York Times Bestselling author, Ibram X. Kendi – a *nom de guerre* for Henry Rogers - seeks to advance the demise of democratic capitalism, which is a central aim of Marxism (Rufo, CRT, 2021), all under the auspices of Boston University’s Centre for Anti-Racist Research. Social commentator, Mark Levin, remarks that CRT, as enunciated in Kendi’s book, “derives from Marxism and seeks to destroy the existing society” (Baker, Levine, 2021).

A nationwide poll of Americans in April 2021 reveals that the majority of US citizens remain extremely concerned about ongoing social challenges, and cultural discontent. The Poll reports that capitalism is preferred to socialism (62% versus 31%); that the social re-set activity described as “cancel culture” is repudiated (73% versus 11%); that there was a negative opinion of 48% versus 44% of BLM; that some 74% of parents did not believe schools should teach that white people are inherently privileged and that Black people are inherently oppressed and victimised. Only 9.3% believed that CRT should be taught in schools; and that overall, 61% versus 33%, believe that American society is “headed down the wrong tracks” (Heine, Poll, 2021). Nevertheless, ‘woke’ (a somewhat amorphous concept) universities, like

the once prestigious Princeton University, have lowered their standards in the fields of the Classics, as an indicator, allegedly to assist the emergence of the Black academic class (Stepman, Princeton, 2021). Relatedly, in California, Professor Gordon Klein of the University of California, Los Angeles, was suspended for refusing a request that "Black students get easier final exams" (Heine, Poll, 2021). The irony seems to be lost on CRT exponents that such actions constitute an insult towards Black students. The lowering of academic standards in the US to accommodate African-Americans is much like what has transpired in certain Universities in South Africa, especially the Medical faculties with two differing standards of entrance requirements depending on the applicant's ethnicity, all under the guise of social justice, transformation, and equality.

The most recent available data from the 2019 Annual Report of the Census Bureau: Income and Poverty in the US, shows the immense amelioration of the Black race cohort over other race clusters. This fact is apparent from data reflecting significant improvements Black social and economic health (Parker, State, 2021). A 'Fact Sheet' released by the White House of President Biden's Administration on June 1st, 2021, announced, "New Actions to Build Black Wealth and Narrow the Racial Wealth Gap" (White House, June 1, 2021). The Administration is a strong promotor of CRT despite significant opposition by the American people (*supra*). The details enunciated in the official Fact Sheet are perturbingly racist, unjust, factually incorrect, and strongly reminiscent of the neo-apartheid, unconstitutional, race-based Black economic empowerment laws, lacking the meritocracy that so adversely affect minority owned businesses, employment, and Tax generating private sectors, and the general economy in post-Apartheid South Africa. President Biden's Administration, while ignoring the fundamental tenet of equality before the law as described in the Declaration of Independence and the provisions of the US Constitution, remains subject like all US citizens and entities to the rule of law.[410] Ergo, in May 2021, the US Court of Appeals, 6th Circuit, ruled in the case of Vitolo versus Guzman that the Federal Administration may not award Covid-19 relief on the grounds of ethnicity or gender bias. It transpired that the US Small Business Administration was charged with distributing $29 Billion in Covid relief but decided that, in the category of restaurants for example, to distribute financial relief only to businesses satisfying the requirement of at least 51% women or non-white proprietorship. Judge Thapar pointedly stated the issues and the finding as follows, "This case is about whether the government can allocate limited Coronavirus relief funds based on the race and sex of the applicants. We hold

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410 Professor Ryan Anderson posits that, "Apart from living in a political community under the rule of law, our families, our Churches, our businesses, and our schools won't flourish. We won't flourish". He continues by adding, "The State, which serves the political community, and her laws are all at the service of this end which is for the political common good" (Promise, 2022).

that it cannot" (Vitolo v. Guzman, p. 1). In an Editorial of the Washington Examiner Newspaper on June 8th, 2021, dealing with this case, the comment was that, "Today, a race-obsessed pathology is infecting institutions that wield cultural power. Under the misleading banner of 'anti-racism', those spreading the pathology treat our entire national experience as an ineluctable battle between 'white privilege' and the perpetual victimhood of ethnic minorities (with the notable exclusion of East Asians)". The stated purpose of CRT animus-motivated, race-based essentialist ideology, is to refabricate the culture supposedly to achieve social justice and to engineer society in favour of their neo-Marxist socialist/communist class-struggle, disguised as racial 'equity,' particularly in the area of the economy and finance. This goal is patently manifest in the machinations of the Biden Administration, supported by other CRT agents and the anarcho-social activists, BLM. Contemporaneous with the enforcement of CRT is the negation of freedom of speech and religion, fundamental tenets of the US Constitution. An Opinion in 'The Wall Street Journal' expounds CRT as a, "radical ideology that seeks to use race as a means of moral, social and political revolution*"* (Rufo, WSJ, 2021), which 'revolution' is distinctly designed to perpetuate political and so power hegemony for the leftist US administration and its acolytes.

6.3.2 Education

The enforcement of CRT in the US education system is representative of Marxist indoctrination and control over issues of personal identity. For instance, in mid 2022, the San Diego Unified school district "adopted the principles of academic queer theory" inculcating such principles into the whole of their educational pedagogy. The end purpose, it is revealed, is to promote a wide ambit of "new sexual identities such as genderqueer, non-binary, pansexual and two-spirit" identities.[411] Such agenda is introduced at kindergarten level, continuing through to Year 12, and is unmistakeably based upon neo-Marxist dichotomist theory which itself emanates from Gnostic body-spirit dualism.

Social Commentator and noted Broadcaster, Dennis Prager, proposed a solution to protect children against leftist educational policies by recommending parents withdraw their children from the public education system.[412] His reasons are that the children will be harmed "intellectually and morally" as the schools are "busy teaching them race-centred hatred of whites", hatred of America and its values. They are taught that "gender is chosen", not biologically assigned at birth. Concerningly, children are "prematurely sexualised" (Single, 2021). This perturbing scenario is a fair indication of the US public school system. The children

411 Rufo, C., Dismantlers, 2022.
412 Prager, D., Single, 2021, June, 8th.

are taught hostile orientated ideologies, not Judeo-Christian principles, nor tolerance, fairness, justice, diversity and equality, as traditionally understood. Marxist theory, as an atheistic ideology, is devoid of the basic elements, the values, virtues, and emotions like compassion, altruism and decency necessary in a human being. To the contrary, in the view of Professor Chenyuan Snider, Marxian theory is in fact "filed with hate". On the other hand, the only faith with *agape* love as the core element in both its dogma and praxis is that of Judeo-Christianity for it is an essential attribute of the Divine and, therefore, of humanity. Moreover, advises Snider, "Christians have always been the ultimate target in any society controlled by Marxists" (2021). In term of Chinese Communist Party precepts, there can only be one absolute truth and that is Marxist-Leninist Party doctrine, which leads to a form of deification of the State. This observation has empirical validation in China with the ongoing persecution of Christians, a view upheld by the United Nations on October 29, 2021 (Introvigne, Nations, 2021). The same sentiments equally apply to derivatives of classical Marxian thought such as Critical Theory in its many representations.

It is understandable that the alternative educational option of home schooling is appealing, and probably the only option for those parents unable to afford private schooling which is often equally captive to 'woke' forces. To select a professed Christian or Jewish school is hence risky for "most of them are as 'woke' as most secular schools" (Prager, Single, 2021) - a sorry indictment of the influence of cultural Christianity on public life. In a like way, Paul Rossi, a maths teacher at a prominent Christian High School, writes that the, "school is asking me to embrace 'antiracism training' and a pedagogy that I believe is deeply harmful" for it "requires teachers like myself to treat students differently on the basis of race" (Mahlburg, Woke, 2021). A few days later Rossi was banned from teaching and informed his contract would not be renewed. Such is the 'tolerance' of the 'woke' forces who promote equality and diversity. A dire situation exists in the public and, to a significant level, the private US educational system, including ostensible Christian colleges.[413] On this issue, rather than withdraw her child from the school, parent Mrs. T. Ibrahim of New York, verbally challenged the School Board at a Parents' Meeting on 8th June, 2021, by claiming that they are "committing treason against our children by pushing a communist curriculum unfavourable to her values". She goes on to say "You are

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[413] In April 2022, Baylor University in Texas, USA, "officially chartered PRISM, an LGBTQ+ and allies student organization" (Brictson, Prism, 2022) thereby giving official imprimatur to the Alphabet lobby on campus. This development contradicts the original charter of the university which is self-described as, "A Private Christian University and a Nationally Ranked Research Institution" (Baylor, About, 2022). In a similar way, the famed Christian college, the Yale Divinity School, in April 2022, conducted the first non-Christian Sunday service in its 200 year history. The organizing student Tasha brownfield advised that the service was "indigenous and Black ecology-based with a sprinkling of cosmology and pantheistic mysticism" (Ori, A., Divinity, 2022).

saying that any child that does not believe in BLM should be cancelled out, you're teaching my children… that if they believe in God Almighty, they're part of a cult". The Reporter, Chrissy Clark, pithily states that "Parents across the school have rebuked CRT" (Mother, 2021). Similarly, it is reported that a prominent and highly qualified teacher resigned her job at a major New Jersey private school due to the school "fostering a hostile culture of conformity and fear". The report added that the School Head twice informed the Faculty that he would, "fire all the white teachers if he could and replace them with people of colour" (Berrien, Fire, 2021). In her resignation letter the teacher wrote, "Over the past few years, the school has embraced an ideology that is damaging to our students' intellectual and emotional growth… I reject the hostile culture of conformity and the fear that has taken hold of our school" (Stangel-Plowe, Dwight, 2021). Parents and Teachers are pushing back against the narrow, unconstitutional, secular agenda of the CRT ideologues, while support arises from unexpected sources such as Professor McWhorter of Columbia University. McWhorter supports the resignation of Stangel-Plowe from the high-profile school at which she taught, saying that only through resignations of staff would the School Board revise their CRT curriculum. He is reported as proclaiming that the school, "teaches students an 'antiracism' that sees life as nothing but abuse of power, and teaches that cringing, hostile group identity against oppression is the essence of a 'self'" (Schrader, Black, 2021). McWhorter has identified the root of the issue for the CRT agenda is in its essence a search for self, for personal identity, to replace one lost in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). Personal identity is the core issue which alienated humankind has been seeking ever since Eden through multifarious means, but predominantly through secular humanist, paganist, and often malleable self-fabrications. The consequence of CRT enforcement in US educational systems is that, as reporter Tyler O'Neil states, "CRT has Sparked a Civil War in American Education", but "this nefarious ideology cannot have the last word" (2021, CRT). To July 2021, some nine US States, and growing, have passed legislation prohibiting the teaching of CRT in their public schools. Chris Rufo, the intrepid antagonist of CRT, states that by so doing, "75 million Americans will be protected from state-sanctioned racism" as "public schools can no longer promote the principles of race essentialism, collective guilt, and racial superiority theory" (Victories, 2021). The most effective method of countering CRT seems to arise from the 'grass roots' level of concerned parents, pressurising their State political representatives to enact laws protecting children from racist Federal regulations. The resistance of certain parents, exemplified above, to CRT indoctrination in the US education system is reflective of CRT resistance by the majority of parents across all ethnicities. Data from the Manhattan Institute reveals that in 2021, "two out of three parents expressed concerns with CRT in public school curriculum" (Hendrix, Majority, 2021). Being aware of rising parental resistance, President Biden directed the Department of Justice to, "scare parents, to punish them for speaking out for their children and to shut down First Amendment protected

speech and assembly" (Hamilton, AFL, 2021). The directive reflects a blatantly biased, leftist, ideological and dictatorial program. Biden's Administration will clearly stop at nothing to advance and protect CRT indoctrination in the schools.

An expert of historic European Marxism in Hungary, Stephen Sholl, avers that under Marxist rule, "Hungary's education system became little more than a glorified system of indoctrination". He adds, "the communist education system was based on impressing students that their history was nothing more than a story of oppressors and victims" (Lessons, 2021). This description well elucidates the education system adopted in US public schools with its focus on CRT, which amounts to a classic Marxist class conflict with a new emphasis on race for a contemporary application, *autres temps, autres moeurs.* A feature of CRT is the biased treatment of persons according to their ethnicity, allegedly for the sake of 'equity', not 'equality'. The requirements of merit and effort are dispensed with, the sole criterion being ethnicity while at the same time denying differing ethnicities, especially Caucasians and Asians, the same or even similar rights. Again, reminiscent of elitist Communist Party members and their hegemony over non-members whose rights hardly exist, in an economy where the producers of goods (the workers) are detached from the benefits of their labour. The irony is that the inescapable rise of an elitist class is the antithesis of fundamental Marxist economic objectives of value for labour and just reward. Sholl points out that the atrophying of indoctrination should not be assumed as "those who advocate for CRT have tools…such as social media, the support of large companies and the voluntary support of most social institutions", all of which the Communist regime did not have. These factors force the concession that CRT ideology should be viewed as a potentially significant challenge to the Constitutional and democratic rights of all US citizens. Sholl concludes that, "it is up to the parents to counterbalance CRT wherever it is taught" and to, "speak up and take a stand for our children" (Lessons, 2021).

6.3.3 Military

The malignant influence of CRT actors, part of the nebulous Cancel Culture[414] movement, is also prevalent in the US Military, the world's leading power. The implications for world stability and democracy are no folderol matter as the opposing external forces comprise, in the main, the triptych of Marxist, despotic, anti-theistic China, authoritarian and irredentist Russia, and

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414 Mary Eberstadt refers to the practice of 'cancel culture' as the "new intolerance", while averring that "it has established residency in societies of the West so quickly that its existence is now commonplace. " The 'new tolerance' is about "using intimidation, humiliation, censorship and self-censorship to punish those who think differently". Eberstadt points out that the 'new intolerance' "claims to command the moral high ground but in fact it does not and it cannot" (Intolerance, 2015). Many of these issues are addressed herein.

totalitarian Islamic Iran. These three nations have hegemonic intentions, to differing measures, and are driven by illiberalist ideologies with which cultural Christian tenets and the liberal democratic framework have no political or moral equivalency. Marxist China, in particular, has world domination as its aim, evidenced through a perturbing and vast build-up of nuclear military power (Bergman, China, 2021). The net effect of China as the military world leader would be that Western democratic liberalist polity, the preservation of Judeo-Christian values and natural law based human rights could be eliminated. Still, China's attempts at global dominance might, in fact, very well result in a Thucydides Trap scenario.[415] The attenuation and vitiation of US military prowess resulted in Republican Senator Tom Cotton, in June 2021, publicly recounting "several hundred" reports from 'Whistle blowers' in the Military who complained that their seniors are enforcing CRT. He went on to say that such action has, "set members of the military against one another", and that this has led to resignations in all arms of the military. Senator Cotton said as follows in his address to the Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin, "Mr. Secretary, we are hearing reports of plummeting morale, growing mistrust between the races and the sexes where none existed six months ago". Despite a request to condemn this ideology in the Armed Forces, the Secretary declined to do so (*cf.,* O'Neil 2021, 'Whistle blowers'). In the most prestigious military academy in the US, West Point, similar situations relating to compliance with CRT principles have arisen. A report dated June, 2021 relates that Congressman Waltz, a decorated former Special Forces soldier, introduced legislation to Congress which would, "prohibit the US military and academies from promoting doctrines associated with CRT", for these teachings are "antithetical to unity, discipline and order within the US military" (Pavlich, West, 2021). A Memorandum issued by the same US Secretary of Defense on April 9th, 2021 highlights as its subject matter, "Immediate Actions to Encounter Extremism in the Department". Upon reading such a dramatic command it would be assumed a dire military situation had arisen but, instead, it was a canard directive by a 'race-obsessed' Secretary to combat and purge alleged racism in the Military (Sec. of Defense, April 9, 2021). The Secretary's hyperbolic and parochial directive is couched in standard CRT terminology under the facade of an 'immediate' and 'extreme' military situation. John Perazzo, in his article titled 'Betraying America', commenting on the Secretary's Memorandum, endorses the view that such document comprises "a political purge of the military by a radical administration". He adds that consequently, the "security and safety of all Americans" is in jeopardy (America, 2021). Perazzo's warnings have materialised with devastating reality with

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415 'Thucydides Trap' refers to the "natural, inevitable discombobulation that occurs when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power" but invariably results in the threatening power being "brought to its knees" (Allison, 2017, p. xvi). Thucydides established the principle which arose when Greece (Athens) ineffectually challenged the ruling power of Sparta in 5th Century B.C.E.

the 2021 shambolic withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan after 20 years. The result was numerous unnecessary deaths and the abandonment of large amounts of US weaponry, all left behind for the extremist Islamic Taliban militia. The Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense will indubitably have attendant adverse outcomes as a result of the decline in morale of military personal in the US Forces, thereby severely attenuating their efficacy and making the entire Western world susceptible to the rise of a new world power. The new dominant world military power could only be totalitarian, atheist, Communist China which seeks domination in all fields, particularly that of the military (Arcand, 2021). This advent would enable China to enforce their Marxist ideology worldwide and would cause a diminution of the Western tradition. As serious as external threats might be to Anglo-American civilisation, it cannot be overlooked that it is a climate of severe internal civilian strife - where the social and moral fabric conflating society is compromised - coupled with internal military discord that has historically led to the collapse of great civilizations. History is replete with compelling examples, not least being the mighty Roman empire (c. 410 C. E.). In 1971, past US President Richard Nixon comparing the USA with ancient Rome, opined that, “as the great civilizations of the past became wealthy, they lost their will to live, to improve, and they then become subject to the decadence that eventually destroys that civilization” (Bendle, Dire, 2021). Ominous words indeed.

6.3.4 Neo-Marxist Ideology

In a recreated neo-Marxist society a typological ‘Communist man’, the perfect anti-racist individual, would be established - a fully compliant and enlightened human being very much like the lauded ‘Anti-Racist’ person of CRT with a contextual morality. Neo-Marxist humanism attempts to find a fresh solution to the theory of alienation through the establishment of the idealist ‘Anti-Racist,’ a person similar to Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* concept. Again, the emphasis is on the autonomous individual for humanism is the philosophical essence of Marxism and has as its central concept that of alleviation of alienation. There is a duality to this concept for the subjective aspect is indicative of the estrangement of personal identity in a meaningless world, whereas objective alienation arises when the individual is unable to, or prevented from, fulfilling his or her human potential in society. Both these aspects depict an ontological insecurity. Cultural Marxism is but an avenue for individuals to achieve some sort of secular identity through a humanistic composition. In the neo-Marxist landscape of post-modernity, identity and personal meaning are sought through Identity Politics. One demonstration of identity is race, leading to the promotion and emergence of the romanticised, ‘Anti-Racist’ individual representing a narrow form of identity idealism. To disagree with CRT ideologues is to be labelled a racist person and this has the unfortunate but foreseeable consequence of leading to an eponymous Kafka Trap paradox. The latter paradox operates

on the basis that the more vehemently one denies being a racist, the more racist one appears to be, in the judgement of CRT activists. It is a no-win, absurdist, and irrational Kafkaesque scenario (*cf.,* Kafka, The Trial, 1937), emblematic of Marxist and totalitarian judicial trials, not unlike certain scenes in George Orwell's 1949 dystopian masterpiece, 'Nineteen Eighty Four'.

To give advent to the newly created 'Anti-Racist' individual, society has to be restructured for the purpose of achieving a confined form of racial justice, ending in an equitable outcome by achieving a populist identity. Concomitantly, alienation and *angst* are alleviated as the individual is affirmed through a newly acquired antiracist class identity, which in turn circumvents the Creator's designated *imago Dei* for humankind. Polish philosopher, Ryszard Legutko, contends that both socialist democratic (leftist) and communist regimes, "are nourished by the belief that the world cannot be tolerated as it is and that it should be changed: the old should be replaced with the new", a view justifying intrusion into the 'social fabric' of society. Society would then enter into a 'completely new era', one focused on an ideological fabrication and giving rise to *homo novus*, a 'new' man (*cf.,* 2018, pp. 5-6, 178). In so doing, the Messianic imperative of a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) is bypassed in favour of an alternative *assemblage* which is the ultimate aim of secular humanism, the practical atheism which initially emerged in Eden but which is simply a *chimera*, an unrealisable dream.

Karl Marx established his philosophy on the theories of Georg Hegel, the 19th century German philosopher who developed absolute idealism in which the apparent dichotomy, the dualism, between the subject and the object, the mind-spirit and matter, the master-slave, was philosophically resolved. Based on neo-Gnostic theorems, Hegel's dialectic would only be final, and self-consciousness fully achieved, when the class difference between the master and the slave ceased and they became synthesised into an integrated citizen. Then there would be equality, with no further alienation from one's labour and personal meaning would result. In short. Marx obtained from Hegel "two basic themes of Gnosticism" (Allen, R., Marx, 1993, p. 95) and reformulated them into a construct supporting his theories. Allen explains that "the cosmic drama of a fall into alienation from nature and one's fellow men, can be resolved through the saving knowledge of Marxism which explains… the way out of alienation" (Marx, 1993, p. 95). Surfacing from Hegel's phenomenology, Marx developed the class struggle theory as the catalyst for social reconstruction to achieve his aims and in so doing, "tried to derive matters of fact and existence from 'relations of ideas' which Hume's Fork theory states to be impossible" (Allen, 1993, p. 94). Hegelian philosophy likewise influenced Nietzsche's understanding of the master-slave dualism whereby the individual subjectively defines his own morality and creates a self-actualisation (*cf.,* 'On the Genealogy of Morality'). Albert Camus similarly unearthed meaning, and settled the issue of alienation in an absurd

cosmology, though repetitive albeit monotonous labour, as is clear from 'The Myth of Sisyphus'. These philosophers base their dualistic concepts on Plotinus' philosophical principles which result in a focused actualisation of self, outside of any absolutist guidance. CRT is but one articulation of such philosophy, the underlying purpose being a search for identity. It is evident that the CRT ideologues base their worldview on Hegel's original master-slave dichotomy, via Marx's class struggle, in a redefined context of contemporary race conflict, namely, the oppressed Black race (slaves) against the racist master oppressors (all races except Black).

There are religious overtones in the Critical Race Theorists' proposed new society. Historian, Alexis De Tocqueville, observed that the spiritual philosophy behind the French Revolution of 1789-1799, endorsed "the regeneration of the whole human race… and became a sort of new religion, imperfect, without God…but still able to cover the earth with its soldiers, its apostles, and its martyrs" (1856, p. 27). In like manner, CRT amounts to a 'new religion'. The French uprising was a class struggle with its own civil religious doctrines (Hittinger, Pontificia, 2017), just as CRT is a race struggle with its peculiar, contended, virtuous, secular doctrines to suit. Legutko elaborated on De Tocqueville's deduction by averring that the anarchist structures of both Marxist Communism (of which CRT is an illustration) and the liberalism of the French Revolution do, in fact, have a theology. He explains that they are not simply 'without God' for they both, "embody the secularised soteriology of the Enlightenment, the narrative of Progress" (Vermeule, Liturgy, 2017). Nothing of value is to be discovered, according to the doctrines of these anarchist movements, outside of their political systems to which unadulterated loyalty is to be committed. A religious system without God is a secular humanist composition, a demonstration of atheism, as is the political religion of the emergent neo-Marxist-based CRT.

The rise of social and political Identity despotism (justified through socialist, neo-Marxist-communist theory) challenging classic democratic liberalism (which contains elements of

modern conservativism),[416] [417] especially of the Austrian School of economics, enforces upon society a post-liberalist social and political theory. The progression of these political philosophies amounts to a confrontation with the regnant fundamental tenets of classic liberal democracy, instituted upon cultural Christian principles which underscore Western civilization. The main features of classic liberalism, which has been the dominant political theory in US politics for centuries, are constitutionalism, the rule of law,[418] separation of powers, separation of Church and State, equality before the law, federalism, a *Laissez-faire* capitalist economy and the dignity of all persons (*cf.,* Deneen, 2012). The libertarian principles of democratic republicanism reveal that the State holds no divine warrant for either punishing religious unbelief or coercing belief or determining what constitutes heretical belief or orthodoxy. Hence the importance of the dichotomy between the State and the Church. Such conclusion is obvious from Matthew 22:21, which in effect allocates to each entity its own: to 'Caesar' belongs matters of the State and to God matters of his Kingdom (*cf.,* Matt. 22:21), until the establishment of the eschatological theocratic State on earth.[419] For these fundamental rights, obligations, and privileges to be preserved in the face of an oppressive and heretical onslaught, political courage needs to be demonstrated. And in practice, courage needs to be driven by those ordinary citizens acting on their Judeo-Christian principles. The right of religious liberty,[420] freedom for all citizens, is essential in creating an environment in which the Kingdom of God can expend freely through the Church exercising its mandate to continually influence society as a whole, but always through the spiritual renewal ('New Creations'; 2 Cor. 5:17) of persons who then mature into disciples of the Redeemer-Messiah (Matt. 28:18-20). Apart from direct intervention by the Messiah (as is anticipated in the eschaton and as has

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416 A Conservative, according to Yoram Hazony, is described as "someone who strives to defend and build up the political and intellectual traditions of their own tribe or nation" (Democracy, 2019). In similar vein, Russell Kirk underscores the sited perspective of a conservative when he states that, "the conservative person is simply one who finds the permanent things more pleasing that chaos". He adds that, "conservatism is sustained more by a body of sentiments than by a system of ideological dogmata" (Kirk, R., Principles, 1963). A further perspective is provided by Italian philosopher Francesco Giubilei when he posits that, "a conservative is one who is averse to rapid change". A conservative political party, he adds, is "disposed to maintain existing institutions and to promote private enterprise" (European, 2019, p. 1).

417 Public Policy scholar, Antony Mills, views conservatism as having an, "ambivalent relationship with liberalism, seeking a balance between rights and responsibilities, individualism and community, tradition and progress" (Colors, 2022).

418 The core objective of the Rule of law principle, as emphasized by constitutional founder John Adams, is so that "our system is designed to the end that it may be a Government of laws and not of men" (McLaughlin, D., Executive, 2022).

419 *cf.,* Revelation 20:4

420 The right of religious liberty becomes increasingly important in the post-modern era for, according to Yuval Levin, "religious liberty is plainly essential for the endurance of our free society and for the protection of the rights and freedoms of the many millions of Americans who dissent from the caustic Gnosticism that increasingly dominates our culture" (Perils, 2016). As is highlighted herein, Identity ideology is founded on sundry articulations of classic Gnosticism.

occurred at times throughout history), there is no alternative as the Church is God's chosen soteriological vehicle, powered by His Divine Spirit (1 Cor. 4:20).

It is incumbent upon each right-thinking person to confront perverse societal forces in whatever disguise they are presented. In the current iteration of CRT, the initial source of resistance in the USA can be directly attributed to one man, Christopher Rufo, who identified the cultural Marxist roots of CRT. Rufo allocated the nomenclature of CRT, stating that, "we needed a new language for these issues". He added that CRT ideologues "seek to re-engineer the foundation of human psychology and social institutions through a new politics of race" and, furthermore, that "it is an existential threat to the US" (Rufo, CRT, 2021). Correlating Rufo's efforts to expose endemic CRT, the 'New Yorker' publication commented in June 2021, that the entire movement "came from him" (Wallace-Wells, 2021). Such is the power and influence of a single, prescient, individual. His persistence is a lesson and an encouragement for the Church at large. Probably the gravest danger to applied CRT ideology will take place when the 'silent white majority' push back against the nefarious aims and influences of CRT ideologues. The result will be the demise of Identity politics based on race. The agnostic scholar and author of a 2021 text[421] dealing with this issue, Charles Murray, predicts that should the race issue not be resolved then "it leads to thinking that the only legitimate evidence of a nonracist society is equal outcomes" and, therefore, "once the State is given the power to legislate equal outcomes by dispensing opportunities preferentially and freedoms selectively, it will be one group against another" (2021, Ch. 7). Equal outcomes (the CRT term is 'equity') will have to be legislated and enforced legally as it will not be willingly complied with by the majority of the population given its blatant racial bias, unfairness, lack of application, and lack of economic or financial costs in attaining such outcome. The resistance by the majority of the population will be immense and social instability will persist.

CRT ideology maintains that racism exists systemically in society. An incorporeal and substantially agent-centred theory, like CRT, has a life of its own and blatant accusations are difficult to deny, the burden to do so always upon the accused. Unfortunately, the Administration of President Biden supports this ethereal ideology. In 2021 Biden's Secretary of State invited the left-leaning United Nations Human Rights Council to impartially investigate the issue of racism in the USA. The Secretary appointed a CRT supporting professor from the University of Los Angeles law school to head the 'impartial' investigation. To paraphrase the aforegoing: the US Government requested the biased UN to undertake an unbiased inquiry into alleged systemic racism in the US, but appointed a dedicated and biased US racial

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421 Murray, Charles, 'Facing Reality: Two Truths About Race in America'.

ideologue to head an impartial inquiry on behalf of the left-wing Human Rights Council. The irrationality and clear partisanship of such a decision seems to escape the Biden administration. A right-thinking legal action firm, America First Legal, investigated the situation and their spokesman, Stephen Miller, stated that it is necessary to "expose how this administration has truly formed an alliance with Critical Race Theorists and with some of the most extreme ideologues in our political and academic systems". Miller further suggested that the process is designed to justify the need for legal enforcement of the progressive doctrine of equity due to the alleged systemic racism in US society (FOIA, 2021; *cf.,* Downs, Legal, 2021).

6.3.5 Corporate

The official enforcement of cultural Marxist principles continues to infiltrate democratic liberal institutions and policies of the USA. Social commentator Bruce Abramson remarks that "Progressives are moving quickly to cement their transformation of the country's beliefs, attitudes, values, social structures, economic models and government organisations" (2021, p. ii), to accord with their ideological agenda. Abramson is accurate for CRT has become a *cause célèbre* not only within Biden's Democrat Party policies and the public sector, but also among leading private sector Corporations keen to adopt a narrow social justice program, no doubt to preserve their profits. Examples include the following major US and International corporations:

- American Express Company, a multi-Billion Dollar financial conglomerate, is training their employees to, "deconstruct their own intersectional identities, mapping their race, sexual orientation, body type, religion, disability status, age, gender identity" (Rufo, Lie, 2021). The purpose of the "deconstruction" is to ascertain whether or not they have a privileged status or are part of a marginalised category so that remedial action can accordingly be enforced. Predictably, it is the category of white heterosexual race group individuals who are accused of being privileged 'oppressors', while the racial and sexual minorities are classified as 'oppressed' - a standard cultural Marxist dichotomy';
- The Bank of America corporation instructs its "white employees in particular to 'decolonize their minds'" and to "'cede power to people of color'" (Rufo, Bank, 2021);
- Google has instituted compulsory staff antiracist re-education CRT programs, claiming that "all Americans are raised to be racist" and that "American is a system of white supremacy" (Rufo. Evil, 2021);

- The largest retailer in the USA, Walmart, has implemented CRT principles, as reported in October 2021, by denouncing US society as a "white supremacy system" harbouring an "internalized racial superiority" (Rufo, Walmart, 2021);
- Both the largest US Defence contractor, Lockheed Martin, and the second largest contractor, Raytheon, instructed their executives to ''deconstruct their white male privilege" (Rufo, Woke, 2021).

Major corporate leaders regard themselves as the "morally conscious business elite" and have polymorphed into dictatorial "CEO lawmakers" (Stuttaford, 2022). Averring a motive of distributive social justice, the corporate oligarchs claim the moral 'high-ground'. This expression of social justice is promoted politically and legally by progressive Administrations like that of President Biden, and prior thereto, of Bill Clinton and, particularly, Barak Obama. The enormous wealth of capitalist elites directing high-technology companies (the 'tech-giants') like Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, Google, Microsoft, Apple, Shopify and many others, has catapulted them into powerful and unassailable positions. The prominent positions enable them to direct political and social affairs,[422] outside of a strict corporate[423] agenda which is simply to make a profit for the benefit of shareholders, as is the objective of all commercial enterprises. It is trite knowledge[424] that, for instance, in 2021, Facebook and Twitter both 'de-platformed'[425] erstwhile president Donald Trump due to his conservative views contrary to the leftist ideology adopted by the corporate cabal. The practical significance of this situation is revealed in the far-reaching and manipulative ideological influence Corporate elites[426] have on National and State elections deciding which politicians to support financially, and to promote, through their ubiquitous media outreach. The emergence of a technological, financial, and unimaginatively wealthy oligarchy generally based in 'Silicon Valley', California, or on Wall Street, New York, in ideological rapport with the radical leftist political theories of Western

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422 Steven Millar exposed the "unacceptable collusion between Facebook, Google and the CDC to suppress any information that contradicted the Biden Administration's political line on Covid-19 and vaccine safety" (CDC, 2022).

423 Trueman affirms that, "Big business is firmly on the side of progressivism, as the ubiquity of the LGBQT+ rainbow flag in store windows and corporate websites during 'pride month', now testifies" (Plastic, 2022).

424 Reporter Merrill Pearlman writes that, "Trump's banishment from social media led to an explosion of uses of the term 'de-platform'" (Pearlman, 2021).

425 The Oxford Dictionary defines 'De-platform' as follows, "To prevent a person holding views regarded as unacceptable or offensive from contributing to a forum or debate, especially by blocking them on a particular website" (Pearlman, 2021).

426 Professor Peter Turchin attributes the "socio-political instability" to an "elite overproduction" emanating from progressive educational institutions (Turchin, 2016, Discord, Part 1, pp. 11, 14, 23ff).

Government Administrations, portends ill[427] for a society founded on the individual freedoms and rights of a classic democratic liberal tradition. Mark Tooley refers to the agenda of leftist politicians, integrated with sizeable corporate influence, as a form of "liberal imperialism" which he describes as an "aggressive push to impose progressive values, often joined to corporate power, contriving to spread the same order (of liberal imperialism) to the ends of the earth".[428] The danger of such alliance, in the view of Professor of Government Mark Mitchell, is that "big government and big business arise in tandem, feed off each other and perpetuate each other", the end result of which is a "concentration of political power".[429]

Concrete evidence of corporate support for the Biden Administration's progressive aims was exposed in July 2022 when certain documents, according to Stephen Miller of America First legal, "conclusively demonstrated that Big Tech unlawfully colluded with the Federal government to silence, censor, and suppress American's free speech and violate their First Amendments rights".[430] The attempts of 'Big Tech' media conglomerates to censor broadcast of contrary views on their public platform falls foul of constitutional free speech provisions. Although it has taken some time for such disputes to work their way through the Court system, in September 2022 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld a Texas State social media law (H.B. 20), which sought to prohibit Big Tech from censoring viewpoints contrary to their ideological standpoint. As a sanction, the law "enables censored users to seek declaratory and injunctive relief in Court". The presiding Judge ruled that the "First Amendment protects every person's right to the freedom of speech".[431] The advantages of a Federalised political dispensation is manifest in matters like this.

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427 With tenuous associations drawn from Plato's Republic (Plato, 1878, The Republic), philosophy professor Jacob Howland summates the contemporary western cultural quagmire - a consequence of endemic Identity ideologies and pervasive secular humanism - as follows, "The radicalisation of the children of the elites; the repudiation of ancestral customs, political traditions, parental and educational authority, and the very idea of the sacred order; the normalisation of previously illicit pleasures; and the weakening of civil rights - are all features of contemporary American life. So are the vehement shaming and scapegoating of political opponents; clemency towards criminals amid a surge in lawlessness; the enrichment of the ruling class, destruction of the middle class, and increasing dependency of the poor; the fragility and unwonted aggressiveness of the young; and the fatuousness and cowardliness of the old" (2022).

428 Tooley, M., Integralism, 2022.

429 Mitchell, M. T., Marx, 2022.

430 Miller, S., Collusion, 2022.

431 Morell, C., Big Tech, 2022.

6.3.6 Summation

CRT and BLM ideologues aim for conformity, indoctrination, sublation of fundamental human rights like speech and dissent, replacement of religion in favour of self-veneration[432] and elitist despotism. A tenet of classical liberal democratic republicanism is that a majority of law-abiding citizens should not be forced to comply with, or agree to, or to tolerate extreme ideologies with which they disagree and against which constitutional safeguards exist. CRT ideology is anti-democratic and therefore repressive in application. Marxist tyranny does not tolerate more than a single ideology, specifically a State sanctioned ideology, which ideology permeates and controls all aspects of society. In this way, leftist promoters attempt to engineer the capitulation of society through politicising private and public iterations of sexuality, gender, and ethnicity in all arenas of society, such as education,[433] sports, government, military, public institutions and the business sector. The holistic level of capitulation required by sectarian ideologues encompasses all facets of society, whether moral, legal, behavioural, political or intellectual. No dissent is tolerated.[434] The upshot is that where laws are enacted with which the majority[435] disagree, resistance soon follows and this scenario is what is driving the societal disturbance. The newspaper, 'The Washington Times', opined in October 2021, that social conflict has arisen through President Biden's "Socialism, and the radical left's warped vision to fundamentally transform our country, confronted with our Constitutional republican principles, and the American people themselves who cherish limited government and freedom" (Bossie, Woke, 2021). It is patently obvious that should the alleged experts, whether medical, psychological, philosophical, theists, political or legal, continue to ignore the resistance of a vociferous majority populace, "they risk falling even further into disrepute and facing an even greater political backlash" (Bayse, Backlash, 2021).

Needless to say, CRT has become endemic in Anglo-American society but significant 'grass-roots' resistance is growing as the majority of the populace becomes more aware of the adverse implications of CRT ideology. Significant victories are occurring at School level where

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[432] Anderson refers to the concept of self-veneration as a "song of myself", a term he adopted from Walt Whitman (Imperial, 1971, p. 94).

[433] As a consequence of the politicization of education, some 66% of students agree that, "it is acceptable to shout down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus and 23% say that it is acceptable to use violence to stop a campus speech". Additionally, more than 80% of students "report censoring their viewpoints at college" (Foundation, College, 2022), out of fear of saying the wrong thing.

[434] As Professor Joshua Mitchell emphasizes, "There is no forgiveness of (perceived) transgression in the world of Identity politics, because the arena in which transgression and innocence plays out is political not religious" (Mitchell, J. Identity, 2019).

[435] A January 2022 poll of young American registered voters (18-34 years old), revealed that 52% opposed abortion after detection of a fetal heartbeat. Furthermore 65% believed that Doctors should be obliged to "search for a heartbeat before offering abortion services" (Vinea, 2022).

enraged parents are confronting CRT inclined School Boards, while applying legal measures to protect their children from indoctrination. The U.S. Attorney General's dictum designed to prevent parents from opposing School Boards' CRT policies is being legally challenged on solid Constitutional grounds by parents in the States of Michigan and Virginia, with many other groups acting likewise (Zalaznick, 2021).

The action arm of CRT proponents, the Black Lives Matter supporters, are ideological successors to the Combahee River Collective group of black feminist socialists, who were effective in the USA from 1974-1980. Cultural scholar, Mary Eberstadt, perceptively points out that both movements, "signify that political identity has become a substitute for familial and communal bonds. Both are rooted in a fury at creation itself – anger at the disruption of the natural order which the creature now claims the right to re-order" (Eberstadt, War, 2022). Eberstadt has focused on the core of the matter, which is express *ressentiment* towards the Creator for the perceived inferior role in society allocated to blacks generally, and females in particular. This attitude is what animated Eve (and Adam) towards a declaration of independence claiming *eritus sicut Deus,* an autonomous self-creative right, rather than accepting the divine *status quo ante* of *imago Dei.* Personal identity should therefore be an auto-construction project, legitimized in society through politically and financially empowered Identity acolytes who desire to be categorized tribally, according to homonormative and nonconformant sexual preferences.

6.4 Critical Theory and Feminism

6.4.1 Introduction

Contemporary feminism has its antecedents in the objectives of the women's liberation movement of the last two centuries, much of which was commendable[436] and necessary for the eradication of status inequality between the binary genders in society.[437] Once a level of emancipation in the field of social justice, notably in equality of roles,[438] had been attained

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436 At its formative stage, feminism was understood as the "belief that men and women are politically and morally equal and should be treated as such", for they "possess the same natural rights" (McElroy, 2008).

437 For instance, the issue of women's rights, specifically, for "civil and political freedom and equality as such", was demonstrated by the 1913 March of the "Woman's Suffrage procession" (Bachiochi, 2021, p. 6).

438 The 18th century feminist Mary Wollstonecraft's struggle for equality was based on a commendable moral vision for women (Wollstonecraft, 1833, p. 196ff.). A moral and virtuous vision appears to have been discarded by post-modern radical feminists in their hegemonic desire to impose aberrant amoral secular humanist identity ideologies upon society.

through efforts of the designated 'first wave'[439] feminists, the focus of traditional[440] feminism shifted to the primacy of individualism, particularly on the autonomy of the woman's body. The advent of the mid 20th century sexual revolution was a stimulating factor towards individualism, the "central event" of modern feminism (Harrington, Feminism, 2021). Mary Harrington argues that the focus on body autonomy of modern period feminism is a radicalism that does not seek nor promote the true features of feminism. These features include uniform societal roles, political gender equality and equal financial compensation for the same work as males. In contrast, the post-modern feminist agenda amounts to what Harrington terms "bio-libertarianism", understood as an extreme radical gender leftism. She explains that the term describes a "worldview that for 50 years has claimed to act in women's interests but is increasing at odds with those interests" for it now believes that "human freedom necessitates a radical unmooring from the givens of our bodies" (Feminism, 2021). In other words, a view detached from the realism of biological binary sex evident at birth. To justify the feminist proposed sex-gender dichotomy, post-modern radicals adopt[441] a philosophical neo-Marxist Critical Gender Theory to underpin their sex-gender fabrication.

Quite like Critical Race Theory ("CRT"), arising as it does from the theorems of socio-philosophical Critical Theory through Critical Social Justice Theory, Critical Gender Theory ("CGT") which is also indicated as 'Feminist Standpoint Theory' (Anderson, E., Feminist, 2020), maintains that gender discrepancy is a social construal. This construal, in the view of feminists, is generated for the sole purpose of enforcing and maintaining the patriarchal subjugation, disadvantages, and inferior status of women just as race distinctions are enduringly purposed for the disadvantages of the Black race cohort. Social commentator, Mark Levin, while referring to CRT, remarked that it is not about race itself but rather about, "destroying existing society using race, using gender, using climate…all developed by

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439 First wave feminism arose in the 18th century predominantly through publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's two works in 1790 and 1792, in which she contended, *inter alia,* that "women are the equal of men and only appear inferior due to their poor education" (McElroy, 2008). Her 1792 book, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', is widely considered as the "first proto-feminist text of the modern age" (Harrington, Abortion, 2021) and can be considered as indicative of mainstream advent of 'first wave feminism' (McElroy, 2008). Notice should also be taken of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention of 'first wave feminists' where, in essence, abortion rights were not widely endorsed (Hilu, C., Pro-Life, 2022).

440 Traditional or early feminism, much of which was laudable in seeking equality with men in all facets of society, is to be distinguished from extreme or post-modern feminism, also referred to herein as radical feminism, the stimulating agenda behind current Identity Politics. The context will reveal the usage of each term.

441 This is not to overlook the important contribution of theories developed along similar lines by psychologists such as John W. Money (1921 – 2006) who posited that, "a gender identity (different from a biological gender) could be impressed upon a child" (McCarthy, M. H., Binary, 2022).

Marxists in Berlin… some of whom became tenured professors" in the USA.[442] The cultural Marxist creeds driving CRT and CGT arise from a Critical Theory seeking a reconstituting of Anglo-American society into an authoritarian ideological and communist utopia under the guise of partisan distributive 'social justice'.

Critical Gender theory is a classic Marxist concept seeking to eradicate the alleged division of labour according to class - in this case, the two classes evident in the difference between female and male binary genders. Therefore, it seeks the abolishment of natural born binary sex classification through the creation of an egalitarian and somewhat androgenous setting wherein all claimed genders, irrespective of biological realities, have equal rights and privileges. Shulamith Firestone, a prominent 'second wave' feminist, in her notable work, 'The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution', posits that "just as the end goal of socialist revolution was elimination of… the economic class distinction itself, so the end goal of feminist revolution must be not only the elimination of male privilege but of sex distinction itself: genital differences between humans would no longer matter culturally – (being) a reversion to an unobstructed pansexuality" (1970, pp. 11-12). Firestone concludes that the foremost agenda of radical feminism in striving for "an alternative system", must be "the freeing of women from the tyranny of their reproductive biology by every means available" (1970, p. 233). She adds that this agenda would enable "the freedom of all women and children to do whatever they wish sexually" (1970, p. 236). In this Marxian manner, sexual class distinctions in society would be eradicated. And, just as the CRT ideologues ignore impartial Statistics disproving their allegations, so do feminists dispense with available facts which disprove their allegation of societal inequality or disadvantages of women, dismissing such purported facts as ahistorical. The feminist epistemological standpoint is that of "situated knowledge" - knowledge that reflects the particular perspectives of the knower (Anderson, E., Feminist, 2020), and also referred to as 'sited knowledge'. The reliance on an esoteric, hermeticist (in the broad sense), and secular humanist viewpoint predominates in the extremist feminism of the post-truth era.

Radical feminism is a demonstration of secular humanism, avowedly materialist and nihilistic. Feminism is central to the advent of acute political and legal measures centred on gender self-

[442] Baker, 2021.

identification,[443] abortion, same-sex marriage[444] and the attempted eradication of Judeo-Christian morals, norms, and the *imago Dei* of humankind in contemporary Western society. As an example, during 2021, 'Humanists UK', proudly recounted instances of their "successful campaigns" as follows:

- Assisting to "abolish blasphemy laws in England and Wales in 2008";
- Becoming "one of the most influential voices to campaign for marriage equality which led to same-sex marriages being legalised" in the UK, 2013-2020;
- Helping to "bring about legal and safe access to abortions in Northern Ireland", 2020;
- Promoting the "Teach 'Evolution not Creationism' campaign in 2014" which had the result that "every State school in England is required to teach evolution and that there is a ban on creationism or intelligent design being taught as scientifically valid";
- Being a "major influence in forcing the Government to introduce compulsory 'Relationships and Sex Education' in all English schools from 2020";
- Winning a High Court case in 2015 which means that "Non-religious worldviews must be treated equally to major religions in Religious Education" in schools (Humanists UK, 2021).

In their 2020 Annual report, Humanists International – the 'Global Representative Body of the Humanist Movement' - disclose that their total, 'ratified,' membership amounted to 119 international organisations (Humanists Int., 2021, p. 24), which indicates the fertile receptivity of their concepts in the post-Christian, post-modern, society. In describing their values, Humanists UK claim to desire a "tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail" in order to create a "better society" (2021). It is difficult to imagine a more malevolent understanding of 'kindness', 'tolerance' and 'rational thinking' when the systemic termination of pre-born humans is promoted on a wholesale scale. The International Body of Humanists similarly aver that they seek for everyone, "a life of dignity where universal human rights are

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443 Margaret McCarthy points out that the "*provenance* of gender has expanded". It can originate from society or it can come from "one's feelings (gender core) or one's choices (self-identification)". The latter two derivatives indicate that "one is one's own master". This is the point of the whole matter surrounding gender for it indicates the supreme authority of the autonomous self, free of the constraints of binary sex imposed by the Creator. Therefore, sex is fundamentally different from gender for sex is "biological reality" and gender a "social or cultural role" (Binary, 2022).

444 In practical application, same-sex marriage is an element of secular orthodoxy which, "rejects the Judeo-Christian understanding of marriage as a bodily, emotional and spiritual union of one man and one woman" (George, R., Clash, 1999), which traditional marriage is for the purpose of, *inter alia*, the heterosexual procreation of children, naturally conceived and born.

protected and respected" (Humanists Int., 2021). Here exists a severe cognitive disconnect, for does an innocent, defenceless, unborn child not have a right to life?

6.4.2 Feminism and the Fatherhood of God

Widely accepted as the 'mother of feminism' at that time, Betty Friedan (1921), referred to as a 'second wave'[445] feminist, authored the controversial best-selling work, 'The Feminine Mystique' (1953), wherein she disparaged the domestication of women. Friedan considered women victims of society, particularly of domesticity, and of "being forced to find fulfilment and identity through husbands and children" (Crouse, 2021). Friedan's work was followed by that of Gloria Steinem (1934) advocating "sexual freedom"; and thereafter by Germaine Greer[446] (1939) promoting sexual liberation as the "path to freedom" (Crouse, 2021). However, more fervent feminists, particularly of the third[447] and fourth[448] 'wave' movement (with each 'wave' becoming more extreme in their propositions), became motivated to advance feminist ideology from a narrow application into a mainstream destigmatisation and legal enforcement. In her 2021 work, 'A Decolonial Feminism', author Françoise Vergès refers to a strategy of 'civilisational feminism', the aim of which is "first and foremost to place 'women's rights' at the centre of global politics". And, by so doing, to "anchor decolonial feminism in the desire to smash sexism, racism, capitalism and imperialism and to 'change everything'". The primary motivation is to "construct a post-racist, post-capitalist and post-imperialist, thus post-hetero-patriarchal, world" (2021, pp. 6-8). In other words, to re-fabricate society in accordance with a narrow post-modern feminist Identity ideology.

The assertion of feminist-focused Identity ideology results in the simultaneous sublation of the Judeo-Christian creed of the Fatherhood of God identity. That is, the Creator as a personal father, and resultantly,[449] sublation of the *imago Dei* of humankind. In substitution therefor

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445 'Second wave' feminism, emerging in the 1960's, focused on "reform rather than revolution; women demanded equal representation and fair treatment within the existing system" (McElroy, 2008), in an individualist approach.

446 Greer published two international best-selling books, 'The Female Eunuch' (1970) and 'The Whole Woman' (1999).

447 'Third wave' feminism initiated the classification of "radical feminism" which became the dominant ideological form of feminism in the early 1980's. Also known as "post-Marxist" feminism due to its "reliance on class or gender analysis and anti-capitalist approach" (McElroy, 2008).

448 'Fourth wave' feminism is based on a claimed necessity of political correctness in order to remedy the ills of society. Political correctness runs counter to the "natural law rights of classical liberal and 19th century American (individualist) feminism. This expression of feminism "divides society into distinct classes defined by characteristics such as gender and race. The classes are deemed to have different and antagonistic political interests". Hence the necessity of Statist intervention to enforce equality (equity) of "power and wealth throughout society" (McElroy, 2008), resulting in an ideological class conflict due to an enforced imbalance of natural and constitutional rights.

449 Chad Pecknold explains the humanist strategy of detaching *imago Dei* from the Fatherhood of God concept as follows: "The secularized concept of dignity (*imago Dei)* is really a political concept

Identitarians affirm, *inter alia*, the pseudo-scientific theories of the Unitarian Charles Darwin's evolutionary materialism particularly in connection with ethics and morality – a core tenet of Unitarian creed. Once free of any moral order and the *imago Dei* label humans are, in the feminist idea of philosophical anthropology, able to determine their own identity in areas of sexuality and gender. Furthermore, humans can then, in the practical application of their idea of unrestrained sybaritic desires, concoct behaviours in accordance with their sited aspirations. In the 'Handbook of Humanism,' Andrew Copson writes that, "the origin of morality owes nothing to outside interference and has its genesis solely in our character as social animals". He continues, "Individual humanists trying to think about right and wrong do so…without any single moral authority to which they can turn for absolute answers" (2015, pp. 19-20). The irrational belief in a materialist origin of a non-materialist and incorporeal concept of morality is lost on humanists. Adoption of situational ethical behaviour, very much a malleable principle and coupled with the nihilism of humanism, inexorably leads individuals to strive for meaning and identity in prevailing identity ideologies, particularly those of race, sexual practice and gender, as the only alternative avenue, but one which lacks transcendentalism.[450] There exists in feminism ideology a duality in the form of Gnostic oscillation between the body and the spirit, for, as Pauline Johnson reveals in her study, 'Feminism and Radical Humanism', "a humanist feminist" believes in the "persistent truth of a timeless, eternal human essence" (2018, p. vii). In the view of feminists there is no other option but to make the human life, as exemplified through the ethereal spirit, the totality of existence resulting in a corporeal body to be reformed, should they so desire, into a model of their choice. On the other hand, the innate and immutable 'essence' of their humanness, their self-identifying gender, remains 'eternal'. This is referred to in feminist theory as 'essentialism' and amounts to the secular sanctification of the feminist mind (spirit) over a reductive theory of the body. It is unsurprising that feminists adopt sex and gender ideology as their gateway to meaning and identity for, as Johnson reveals, "Feminist theory…attempts to style itself as a radical alternative to a phallocentric logic seen to homogenise all discursive practices in the modern world" (2018, p. xii). Feminists vociferously assert the autonomous right to create their own destiny, and insist on wide acceptance of their values relating to eccentric versions of

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which is designed to give us an anthropology detachable from God" (*Imago*, 2021). Prevailing Identity ideology is designed to reformulate *imago Dei* into an auto-fabricated *imago hominis.* Pecknold adds that for as long as, "our political communities rely on this anthropology, we will continually arrive at ever more tragic disfigurements of the image of God, and thus to even more unstable political arrangements" (*Imago*, 2021). Pecknold's emphasis on *imago Dei* as a "political concept", is the crux issue of the current Identity political morass.

450 A consequence of negating the transcendent value of human life is that, concomitantly, the concept of sin is likewise denied. In the result, "All that is left is political correctness enforced by self-righteous establishment elites whose legalism is as restrictive as the religions they hate" (Henley, W., Culture, 2022).

diversity, equality, inclusion, and plurality. They claim that, after all, feminism "needs to recognise itself as a major interpreter of the cultural ideals of modern humanism" (2018, p. xi). Needless to say, these terms have weighted meanings differing from conventional applications. Feminist nihilist humanism is consequently the animation, the driving force, behind fashionable gender ideology set upon atheistic cultural Marxist Critical Theory philosophy, as derived from heretical Gnostic dualism. The search for identity outside the conferred *imago Dei* identity of humankind continues through the vagaries of feminism's sex and gender construals. Prominent activist Judith Butler quotes Monique Wittig as claiming that "the category of sex is the political category that founds society as heterosexual" (2017, p. 1). Therefore, in an indirect assault on the Fatherhood of God doctrine, the feminists' intensifying demand for societal compliance with gender self-identifiers' preferred pronouns constitute a practical tactic to attenuate established biological binary gender categorisation. The tactic extends to challenging the heterosexual *imago Dei* of humankind in favour of humanist fabricated, synthetic, genders. Hans Boersma points out, with respect to "Paul's notion of union with Christ", the "obstinate fact that the apostle Paul uses masculine terms for a patriarchal reality; it is a man who includes all, both men and women", in his salvific imperative. The pronoun agenda thus amounts to a "linguistic rebellion against the creation and redemption of all mankind in Christ".[451]

This tactic is particularly evident in the advance of transgender ideology which has as its aim the total destruction of biological sex-gender societal distinction between natural-born male and female (*cf.,* Gen. 1:27). Extended further, it promises total personal freedom from confines of conferred biological sex. As Professor Reno points out, "transgenderism has tremendous metaphysical significance as a symbol of successful rebellion. Its open warfare on the body promises total victory" (Limits, 2022). In so acting, the gender self-identifiers endorse the neo-Gnostic dualistic theory of an ethereal spirit and the material body. Glenn Sunshine elucidates that "transgenderism is an explicit neo-Gnostic rejection of the human body, treating it as largely irrelevant to our Identities. Instead, who we really are is determined by some non-observable, non-objective, non-empirical, secret knowledge known only to ourselves, but to which everyone else, and reality itself, must adapt" (2022). Stated another way, an esoteric form of homunculus resides within every person's physical body and constitutes the real, true, self which awaits expression.

The autotheistic creative authority, *eritus sicut Deus,* sought by the archetypical Eve is emulated by her contemporary ideological successors who are no doubt cognisant of

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451 Boersma, H., Mankind, 2022.

Nietzsche's words in the 'Twilight of the Idols' (1998) when he says, "I am afraid we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar" (1998, p. 19). The feminist agenda is to create a new sex-gender normality, commencing with new grammar and especially pronouns for everyday use. Theologian Carl Trueman points out that the feminist linguistic strategy highlights the humanist desire for autonomy and sovereignty and so "asserts that God and all that he created, from male and female to notions of right and wrong, are simply linguistic constructs, mere con tricks that capture the imagination of the unthinking herd" (Grammar, 2021). Trueman is accurate for the pivotal contest over vocabulary, in a scholastic sense, is the conforming of reality to radical identity ideology in the minds of the populace. The abrupt diachronical and eliding redefining of language and grammar is indicative of agent-centred relativist and deconstructionist tenets of postmodern thought.[452] Gene Veith concludes that "Postmodern theories begin with the assumption that language cannot render truths about the world in an objective way. By its very nature, language shapes what we think. Since language is a cultural creation, meaning is ultimately a social construction" (1994, p. 51), and therefore susceptible to deconstruction.[453] Consequently, in postmodern thought, adds Veith "all reality is virtual reality" (1994, p. 61), an acceptable alternative construal without the necessity of dealing with uncomfortable objective, rational, empirical or transcendent validation.

Through feminist appropriation of the sex-gender lexicon, as customarily understood, a universal humanist identity can then emerge, detached from the realism of *imago Dei* and, instead, giving authority and credence to Eve's *eritus sicut Deus* desires of Genesis 3:5. The allegorical nature of the feminist hermeneutic concerning sex-gender, being unattached to a context of reality and biological science, leads without restraint to anthropological fantasies of their own penchant and making the self the sole point of reference. By a manipulation of the media ecosystem,[454] politics, corporates, academia, language, and the legal institution, society

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452 Prof. R. R. Reno describes the deconstruction, that is the destruction, of language as "magical thinking". Reason being that, in the case of misuse of personal pronouns, ideologues "seek to evade the reality of our primeval distinction as male and female". He concludes that "no one is permitted to defend reality" (Gnostic, 2021), in the new political and ideological dispensation.

453 Theology professor, Randall Smith, of the University of St. Thomas, concludes that, "Deconstructionism – unmasking the real author (and his words) by reducing him to his cultural, relativistic and psychological influences - is all the rage in the academy". In other words, refuting transcendence - very much a post-modern phenomenon. Smith adds that, "The approach to deconstructionism is very Freudian: an author writes something thinking he has one intention, but the deconstruction psychiatrist unmasks subconscious motivations that the author is hiding from himself" (2021). The focus on the inner-self, a secular humanist Freudian principle, is indicative of the search for a personal identity in the post-Christian era.

454 'Brandolini's Law' is pertinent in this setting for unless the false, 'fake', misleading news and ideological postulates are countered with truth and reason, then such falsehoods will become ingrained in the corporate consciousness of society. 'Brandolini's Law' (known colloquially as the

is compelled[455] to comply with a new ideological 'normality'. To exemplify, the University of Maryland's 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity Center', publishes a guide to 'Good Practices: Names and Pronouns', whereby students are encouraged to choose their unique pronouns. The given reason is that "Pronouns can be a way to affirm someone's gender identity, but they can also be unrelated to a person's identity". Furthermore, students can stipulate how they "identify in terms of gender, race, class, sexuality, religion" (Equity Center, 2021), a subjective and solipsistic construal, making the individual the sole referent while clearly distaining science and reality. The final indignity fostered upon vulnerable youth is proposed through the San Francisco School Board's Guidebook wherein teachers are authorizing to permit children to adopt the "It" pronoun as a form of self-identity, should they wish to do so.[456] Darwin's materialist actors no doubt celebrate the direct link to the animal kingdom and the ensuing complete erasure of *imago Dei*.

Pathological misandry towards the male gender and animosity towards the Creator of life as Father, and his ethical-moral-gender-binary sex-heterosexual marriage boundaries,[457] is the stimulating ideology behind not only feminism but all atheistic and secular humanistic construction. Once the Father figure identity of God is defenestrated, deconstructed, neutered, androgenised or feminised, and the ensuing *imago Dei* of humankind is dispensed with, individuals are free to identify with either sex as they chose and to ignore - through purposed cognitive dissonance - their biological binary sex. In sum, the novation of the Fatherhood of

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'Bullshit Asymmetry Principle') posits that, "The amount of energy needed to refute bullshit is an order of magnitude bigger than that needed to produce it" (Williamson, Misinformation, 2016). The question then arises as to whether or not it is worthwhile to expend the "time and effort" needed in order to "challenge, correct and clarify articles that claim to be about science but in most cases seem to represent a political ideology?". Professor Williamson concludes that it is worthwhile for although, "A lie may be able to travel around the world before the truth 'has its shoes on', an unchallenged truth will never stop circulating". Correction of false media is not aimed at the "peddler of nonsense, but at the readers who have an open mind" (Misinformation, 2016).

455 Prominent lawyer, William Barr, summates the assault upon established religious freedom as follows: "First is the force, fervour and comprehensiveness of the assault on religion we experience today. This is not decay, it is organized destruction. Secularists and their allies among the progressives have established all the force of mass communication, popular culture, the entertainment industry, and academia in an unremitting assault on religion and traditional values" (Notre Dame, 2019).

456 Rufo, C., Pronouns, 2022.

457 Political and legal theorist Robert George refers to this situation as "moral paternalism" and endorses the view that despite its theistic origins, "moral paternalism' can be "morally legitimate" though the State may "sometimes justly limit legal liberty in order to protect the moral ecology of the political community it serves". The question then arises as to what extent State intervention in the area of public moral order is desirable, for as George concludes, "Laws cannot make moral" but they can "command outward conformity to moral rules but cannot compel the internal acts of reason which make an act of external conformity" (Moral, 1993, pp. xii -1), become an internal or voluntary moral action.

the Divine, as justified through Gnostic dualistic concepts,[458] supports the ensuing ideology enabling disparate iterations of claimed identity contrary to biological binary sex evident at birth. *Ressentiment* towards the Fatherhood[459] concept manifests itself through the anarcho-social actions of radical groups such as BLM and extreme feminists who, at their core, "resent and envy their fellows born to an ordered paternity, those with secure attachments to family and faith and country" (Eberstadt, Fathers, 2020). Lack of ontological station derived from an annulled *imago Dei* identity[460] is the rationale behind the devastating, multi-pronged, assault on the fatherhood concept itself.

Additionally, the purported purging of the Creator as father, coupled with a dispensing of the literal and historical nature of the Genesis narrative by dismissing such interpretation on fragile pretexts, is purposed by devoted feminists towards a concomitant repudiation of the sanctified *sui generis* genre of the individual. Employing a subjective fabrication to accord with their humanist ideology, feminist strategy is premised on three main components: firstly, the adoption of an evolutionary materialist philosophy. Secondly, an endorsement of the autotheistic creative right inaugurated by the first secular humanist, Eve. Thirdly, the sublation of a transcendent identity of God as Father in favour of a culturally and contextually deconstructed[461] identity, arrived at through assessing the Freudian "subconscious motivations" (Smith, R. 2021) of God as Father. In this manner, feminists, being a typological manifestation of their antinomian ancestors, can promote the manufacture of a humanist version of a *sui generis* individual - a creature with an identity entirely different from the heterosexual binary gender *sui generis* version. Such an individual, through the rebuttal of an *imago Dei* nature, would comprise an epicene gender evidencing a self-claimed identity of their own humanist fiction. Radical feminists,[462] Eve's ideological descendants, thus endorse

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458 Political Philosopher, Prof. Eric Voegelin, states that, "in Gnosticism, the non-recognition of reality is a matter of principle". He refers to Gnostic theories as the "Gnostic dream world" which is exactly what they are, albeit masquerading behind philosophical postulates (1952, pp. 168-9).

459 *Ressentiment* against the Fatherhood concept is further explained in Herbert Marcuse's examination of Freudian sociology when he opines that, "as the father is multiplied, supplemented, and replaced by the authorities of society, as prohibitions and inhibitions spread, so do the aggressive impulses (i.e., *ressentiment*) and its objects" (Marcuse, Eros, 1966, pp. 79-80).

460 Prof. Siedentop affirms that, "the Christian concept of God provides an ontological foundation for the individual", enabling him to have a moral reference point and a "primary family role" (2014, p. 353), in society.

461 A shortcoming with the deconstructionist approach is that the practitioners claim to have revealed the core truth through an eisegesis methodology, lacking objectivity, whereas, "they should turn their critical eye on themselves and inform their readers of their own cultural biases, such as their esteem for Freud, Derrida, and other post-modern thinkers" (Smith, R., 2021). Prof. Smith has a valid point, revealing the psychological cognitive disconnect from identity realism of post-modern ideologues.

462 The central approach of radical feminists is that, "women as a biological class are globally oppressed by men as a biological class". Attributing blame to a dominant patriarchal culture,

her secular humanist and auto-creative authority free of the sacred strictures of the Divine. In so doing, they confirm Philip Rieff's conclusion that "Identity changes constitute the new idolatry" (2006, p. 10), specifically, the idolatry of the imperial-self as distinct in sundry gender formulations, free of Judeo-Christian anthropological realism.

To elucidate further, transgenderism, transsexualism, and epicene genders find extensions in the concept of 'transhumanism' – perhaps the terms, 'post-humanism' or 'conmantra-human reductionism' are more suitable. The 'Transhumanist Declaration' (1998), endorsed by the international 'World Transhumanist Association' ("Humanity+"), advocates nanotechnology (including artificial intelligence), through scientism.[463] The effect would broaden "human potential by overcoming aging, cognitive shortcomings, involuntary suffering and confinement to planet earth" (Humanity+, 2021). Indeed lofty aspirations by the ideological elite, comprised of prominent humanist scholars, scientists, bioengineers and academics to by-pass the confines of *imago Dei* and to re-create[464] humankind in their own fantasy, in the very fashion of sex-gender advocates, all emulating Eve's *eritus sicut Deus* of Genesis 3:5. Transhumanism,[465] like its derivative gender ideology, reflects the pseudo-scientific evolutionary[466] views of its proponents for, in typical Darwinian theory, humankind is a product of an evolutionary process and so continues to evolve. In this way, identity and morality should likewise evolve unconstrained by present biological factors. The atheistic component of transhumanism is exposed by Brendon Foht in his lecture on 'Evolution and Transhumanism' in 2013, when he expressed the view that "we transhumanists have every reason to be dissatisfied with our nature, since it was poorly and irrationally designed – the mere product of history not reason" (2013, p. 1). Therefore, it is incumbent upon the identity ideologues,

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feminists insist that gender is a "socially constructed hierarchy which functions to repress female autonomy" (Favale, 2021).

463 Scientism can be described as, "the view that well-grounded knowledge can only be acquired by applying methods of the natural sciences rather than the humanities, like theology, and moral reasoning" (Thunder, D., Scientism, 2022).

464 Longenecker avers that "medical, chemical and scientific technology is bring about the literal abolition of man and woman" (Longenecker, D. Abolition, 2022). Through hormones and surgery reconstruction, a new gender can be created to accord with an individual's desire.

465 Transhumanism is a facet of scientism which can be described as, "a political ideology based on the worship of technology, not the love of science *per se*. It is the enthronement of cleverness and the abandonment of wisdom" (Pearce, J., History, 2022). The term 'wisdom' is understood here in its theistic sense, namely, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10), thus underscoring the secular humanist element of scientism.

466 Marion Montgomery concludes that, "the faith - "of the secular intellectual community" - rests in a new deterministic evolutionism whose mystery is the gene and the whose method is Artificial Intelligence, in concert leading to an 'Artificial Life' (Montgomery, Metaphysical, 1993); devoid of metaphysical concerns such as transcendence and morality.

after a deconstruction[467] process, to reconstruct,[468] both scientifically, technologically, and philosophically, humankind in their own autotheistic identity.[469] Humanists no doubt seek to immanentize Nietzsche's idealistic *Übermenschen*, a type of *imago hominis*, or, rather, a *homo superbus.* Endorsement of evolutionary origins of transhumanism is found in the foundational text of Oxford Professor Nick Bostrom's work, 'Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies', where he bases his propositions on the presumed premise that "A few million years ago our ancestors were still swinging from branches in the African canopy" (2014, p. 1). In this context, not only secular humanists engage in transhumanist theory but certain Christians also. A group of so-named Christians created an association in 2014 titled, 'The Christian Transhumanist Association', which is "actively dedicated to promoting transhumanism as a means of participating with God in the redemption, reconciliation, and renewal of the world" (Smith, W. J., Transhumanism, 2022). The terms, 'Christian' and 'Transhumanism', are diametric opposites, quite incompatible, for Transhumanists insist that, "immortality is attainable in the corporeal world through applied technology" (Smith, W. J., Transhumanism, 2022). Essentially, transhumanism is a form of materialistic determination negating the fundamental theistic precepts of Judeo-Christian creationism. The objectives of agent-centred transhumanism amount to a spiritual and moral relativism, much in accordance with post-Christian secular humanist theory and the ancient *eritus sicut Deus* heresy of Genesis 3:5.

Advances in technology and science, conducted through a process of scientific rationalism, leading to sundry discoveries of natural truths which contribute towards the betterment of

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467 Nietzsche termed the process 'demolition', similar in application to Heidegger's '*Destruktion'* which led to Derrida's use of the French term, '*déconstruction'* (Wood & Bernasconi [eds.],1988, pp. 1-3). 'Demolition' is precisely what Nietzsche attempted to achieve with the concept of the monotheistic God of Judeo-Christianity and his Fatherhood identity, as do post-modern identity ideologues through application of the '*déconstruction'* technique.

468 Albeit fraught with bio-ethical complexities, as is the concept of transhumanism itself, a xenotransplantation took place on January 7, 2022, when a "gene-edited pig's heart" was successfully inserted into a terminal 57-year-old man, for the first time in history. In a similar procedure during October 2021, a pig's kidney was successfully transplanted into a human patient (Jee, 2022). The advance of nanotechnology is increasingly developing post-human fabrications despite complex bio-ethical, theological, and philosophical considerations. This development is indicative of the ideological search for a value-free self-identity to replace a rejected *imago Dei* with all its accompanying ethical and moral imperatives.

469 Cultural theorist, Deion Kathawa, brings attention to the reality that "technology's exponential advancement (in the field of transhumanism) poses an existential threat to humanity itself and, therefore, to human dignity". He continues, "transhumanism is the first step on the road to a miserable posthuman future". Kathawa clarifies that transhumanism is a derivative of post-humanist philosophy of which transgenderism is a demonstration. The danger of transgenderism, now entrenched in Western society, is that it not only "rejects human sexual nature but it amounts to a rejection of human nature itself. It teaches people that the use of technology for the purpose of radically altering their own perceived humanity is a legitimate goal" (Part 1, 2022).

humankind, are to be lauded.[470] However, epistemological scientism, through applied rationalism and with its necessary stance of scepticism and doubt, cannot address or resolve metaphysical issues surrounding transcendence, morality,[471] ethics, values, meaning, identity, natural justice and the common good. An epistemological inquiry into the nature of ultimate reality, the search for eternal and universal truths, does require rationality in the form of reason but exercised through a philosophical and theological lens, not one of applied science.[472] Despite the convincing rationality and moral legitimacy of Judeo-Christian tenets, the universal truths therein contained predominantly remain issues of personal faith for they relate to supernatural, spiritual, transcendent matters, impossible to authenticate experimentally. Humanists' proposals for a post-human order like transhumanism,[473] are based on scientific[474] empiricism alone, so a substantive coherent and rational moral and ethical paradigm becomes their nemesis. The inevitable default position is the adoption of a situational[475] ethics ideology, free of transcendence and objective[476] validity. Such position signifies the relativist position of

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470 Prof. Michael Polanyi refers to the fact that "throughout the 19th century, scientific rationalism inspired social and moral changes that have improved almost every human relationship – both private and public – throughout Western civilization" and has continued "even up to our own day" (1970, pp. 909-910). However, the inability of conducting metaphysical inquiry in respect of eternal values, limits scientific enquiry to empirical and temporal issues.

471 An adverse effect of technology on morality was the invention of the contraception pill for, as Eberstadt opines, "the technological revolution has fueled the sexual revolution, destigmatizing all varieties of non-marital sexual activity, accompanied by a sharp rise in such sexual activity in diverse societies around the world" (Adam, 2012, Ch. 1, p. 3).

472 Within the Science fraternity, reservations have been expressed that "technological singularity (when man-made machines become more advanced and knowing than those who created them)", through artificial intelligence, may result in the "obliteration of virtue, conscience and morality" (Waters, 2022). This caution is well-founded for questions of human values such as virtue, morality, and transcendence are metaphysical concerns, unable to be resolved through scientism.

473 Transhumanism can be considered a form of "attributive anthropomorphism refined as genetic ideology" (Montgomery, Metaphysics, 1993).

474 Eric Voegelin cautions against scientism as a means of seeking transcendence, identity and ultimate meaning, via a disconnect between the "realm of intellectual life" and the "temporal orders", as follows: "Scientism has remained to this day one of the strongest Gnostic movements in Western society. The immanentist pride in science is so strong that even the special sciences have left a distinguishable sediment in the variants of salvation through physics, economics, sociology, biology and psychology" (1952, p. 127). The latter five disciples are addressed herein, for instance, through the effect on Identity and meaning of transhumanism (physics), dualistic neo-Marxism and BLM (economics), Identity tribal and group affiliation (sociology), sex-gender dichotomy (biology) and Freudian and Jung psychology construals.

475 Feminist activists refer to this ethical construal as "standpoint theory" (Harding, 2004, p. 3).

476 Philosopher Sandra Harding highlights the feminist "standpoint theory" which she describes as, "a kind of organic epistemology, methodology, philosophy of science, and social theory that can arise whenever oppressed peoples gain public voice" (2004, p. 3). Arising from the matrix of cultural Marxist class dichotomy ("a critical theory about the relations between the production of knowledge and practices of power"; *cf.,* 2004, p. 1), feminist engendered standpoint theory emphasis that "women movements needed knowledge that was for women", so that women could apply a women-orientated sited perspective of the scenario faced (2004, p. 4). For feminists, an ostensible neutral standpoint is false as the "more value-neutral a conceptual framework appears, the more likely it is to advance the hegemonic interests of dominant groups" (2004, p. 6). To counter this, a unique standpoint from the perspective of the oppressed was justified. Consequently, to advance

the creative sovereign-agent, that is, the subjective-self as the arbiter of values such as morality, virtue, identity, meaning, and social justice. The intersection of ideology with technology results in technocrats and vested interests holding significant sway over political regimes to the detriment of the liberal democratic theory in Western cultures. The political, and ultimately legal, effect leads to a compromise[477] of Constitutional rights guaranteeing personal freedoms, especially those appertaining to religion and speech.[478]

It becomes evident, therefore, that, once the Fatherhood concept of God has been culturally and philosophically eviscerated, and any possible bilateral relationship with, or accountability to, the Divine Father disconnected, human qualities reflecting transcendence – those essential elements of human nature intrinsic to an *imago Dei* – are dismissed in favour of a ideologically contrived *imago hominis.* The combination of leftist political policies and scientism with considerable media control and unlimited corporate resources, is contraindicative of a healthy classical liberal democratic dispensation so necessary for a balanced social justice and natural law principles of the common good,[479] of Western society.

Dispensing with God as a Father identity has concerning implications for fathers in society generally, as they are denigrated by feminists for being responsible for 'systemic male toxicity' and patriarchal dominance. In a survey of US college students, Professor Riley points out that the stereotyping of male students results in them being "compelled to acquiesce to fundamentally anti-male social justice doctrines". This especially applies to white heterosexual males who, "are universally assumed to benefit from 'privilege' and to harbor racist sentiment" (Riley, Sons, 2021). Disparaging the Fatherhood of God principle also inevitably leads to the

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the existentialist theory of situational ethics further, a feminist sited situational ethic is warranted. Referred to by feminists as the "logic of a standpoint" (2004, p. 3), they thereby claim rationality. However, standpoint theory simply amounts to a futile feminist attempt to impart a veneer of objectivity (2004, p. 127) to their irrational relativist moral paradigms, in the classic manner of Identity ideologues.

477 Philosophy professor Jacob Howland refers to the combination of politically enforced ideologies combined with technocrat oligarchs as leading to a "new form of oppression called administrative despotism". For instance, he alludes to "public speech being substantially mediated by digital technology… which has amplified and accelerated the politicization of almost everything including scientific enquiry" (2022).

478 Howland, perceives the situation as follows, "The United States remains a constitutional republic but technocratic progressivism threatens its future as a representative democracy. It is telling that in the mouths of the governing elites, the word 'democracy' no longer refers to government of, by, and for the people, but to progressive policies that are endorsed by credentialled experts yet have little popular support." Therefore, there exists, he argues, "a monstrous union of science and politics that lames and deforms both" (2022).

479 Political science professor, Ryan Anderson, highlights the history and import of the common good concept for the liberal democratic tradition underlying Western society. He emphasizes that, "no community political should ignore the common good nor the concept thereof. The common good plays a central role for thinkers as profound as Aristotle and Aquinas, and for the Western tradition ever since" (Promise, 2022).

calumnious feminist attitude towards the importance of having fathers in the common home, so giving rise to significant numbers of single parent homes run by the mother in the absence of an unwanted father. Fathers are then unable to represent a male role model to their children and to mentor their children, with adverse consequences as is shown in statistics indicating mounting criminal actions by fatherless children. The leading cause of Black youth criminality is the absence of a father in the home for, as sociologist David Popenoe reveals, "American fathers are today more removed from family life than ever before".[480] The factor of fatherlessness "predisposes children, especially boys, to academic failure,[481] criminal behaviour and economic hardship, not to mention an intergenerational repeating of handicaps" (Williams, 2020). Racism is not to blame for, as Williams points out, many generations of black slaves in the US were raised in homes with both parents present, so "if today's weak family structure is a legacy of slavery, then the people who make such a claim must tell us how it has managed to skip nearly five generations to have an effect" (2020).

Using the year 2019 as an example, 34% of children in the USA came from a single-parent home and 25% grew up without any category of a father in the home (Green, 2021). A combination of feminist misandry towards males, *ressentiment* towards the Fatherhood[482] idea of God, the denigration of the father's role in the home, the high rate of divorce, and escalating societal reluctance to engage in custom marriage, coupled with freely available pornography, has effeminised and culturally emasculated men. The ominous words of Henry James find context here, "The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world. It's a feminine, nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age" which will "usher in the reign of mediocrity".[483] Understandably, the continued assault on fathers leads many males to eschew environments where they are not appreciated or wanted.[484] The social effect on children and future generations is devastating.[485] A further example is the increase in US mass school shootings by teenage shooters, a situation which John Horvat explains can largely be

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480 Popenoe, D., Life, 1996, p. 1.

481 Kay Hymovitz reveals that "66% of black college-degree recipients are women; they earn 70% of black Master's degrees and more than 60% of doctorates" (Boys, 2022).

482 Theologian Margaret McCarthy elaborates that it is "Feminism's hatred of the family, motherhood, fatherhood, and the dependency of birth (that has) put us on the trajectory towards the elimination of sex distinction" (Feminists, 2022).

483 James, Henry, The Bostonians, 1886, p. 293.

484 John Horvat claims that, "across the country thousands of confused young men are a potential danger to their communities" (Shootings, 2022).

485 Nina Power posits that, according to Statistics of the US Census Bureau, "one in four children live without a father figure of any kind, a situation that the 'National Fatherhood Initiative' concludes is a factor in 'nearly all social ills'". Power adds that, "men are no longer encouraged to be protective of themselves, of women, or children, or their communities", (Patriarchy, 2022) - a situation initiated by Adam's pusillanimous actions in the Garden, coupled with Eve's desire for headship.

attributed to the lack of fathers in the home. Horvat's analysis is that "In almost every shooter case a true Christian father is missing from the home".[486]

The domestic situation has been exacerbated through the rampant advent of a form of emotional and psychological child abuse, legally designated in many jurisdictions as 'parental alienation'. Parental alienation occurs when a custodian parent parts company with the other parent and then proceeds to disparage and denigrate the ostracised parent, generally through unwarranted allegations, to such an level that the children refuse to have any form of relationship with him or her. The children's love for their ostracised parent is practically deleted. Largely the mother retains custody, and so the alienating parent is invariably the mother which results in fathers ceasing to have meaningful contact with or access to their children. Parental alienation is difficult to prove in a Court of law and has severe effects upon the relationship of children and their fathers. Both children and fathers are victims in the demise of their relationship. Some jurisdictions do not have a specific legal classification for parental alienation under existing child protection laws as it is a *sui generis* situation, despite being a major domestic abuse[487] problem. Parental alienation is recognised as an "endemic world-wide health problem" and constitutes a further and serious offensive upon the cohesiveness and psychological well-being of the nuclear family unit. Wilfred Von Boch-Galhou, a leading International researcher in the field, concludes that "although about 1,300 professional articles and empirical studies exist from all over the world, there is still not enough awareness of Parental Alienation in professional practise" (2020). Von Boch-Galhou is referring to professionals in the fields of psychology, sociology, and psychiatry but the same sentiments equally apply to legal practitioners and the judiciary.

Related to the feminist position on the Fatherhood of God and coupled with humanist secularism is the rise of occultist based, syncretic, New Age neo-paganism as an feasible replacement of Judeo-Christian codes in a post-structuralist and pluralist society. With neo-paganism being a hybrid of animist, heathen, heterodoxic and henotheistic faith systems, an emergence is evident of feminine, gender-vague, and androgenous deities in replacement of the morally and theologically definitive patriarchal doctrinal codes of the Judeo-Christian Creator.[488] The Alphabet tribal actors, for instance, expectedly find comfort in a neo-paganist

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486 Horvat, J., Shootings, 2022.

487 *Cf.,* Children's Act, 38 of 2005.

488 Attention needs to be brought to the work of Sallie McFague whose text, 'Models of God', won the Academy of Religion's prestigious 1988 Award of Excellence. McFague criticizes Western tradition's model for God as "triumphalist, sovereign, and patriarchal", which "contributes towards a sense of distance between God and the world". She suggests a more inclusive model of God as "mother (*agape*), lover (*eros*) and friend (*philia*)", for an "ecological, nuclear age" (McFague, 1987,

formation which is ostensibly a non-threatening, conveniently nebulous, accommodating, morally sited, relativist and spiritually flexible religion with assorted articulations such as non-binary, transsexual deities, appealing to a wide section of a gender pluralist tribes. For instance, Naomi Goldenberg advocates an androgyne god in replacement of the "fallen patriarchal God" of Judeo-Christianity who is dismissed as a tyrannical figure. Presumably, an androgyne figure is "beyond being a woman". This god was historically "used as a popular symbol of salvation in late Hellenism" (1978, pp. 78-9). Goldenberg's view is representative of a wide movement endorsing deities with assorted genders alternative to the male, patriarchal, monotheistic God. The move towards impugning the Fatherhood claim of the Divine finds mounting popularity within certain sectors of Christianity itself. Focusing on passages from Jeremiah 44:17-18 concerning the "Queen of Heaven", and unashamedly aligning with the antinomian Israelite cohort, an extant feminist teaching course called, 'Cakes for the Queen of Heaven' is extensively available in Churches. This course, with dogma contrary to canonical precepts,[489] has been used over the years by an assembly of Congregationalist, Methodist, Episcopalian and Unitarian groups (*cf.,* Levenson, 1991).

The ancient Hellenist god, Dionysus was much favoured for his fluid moral attributes by significant modern thinkers such as Nietzsche, Freud, Jung and Marx. These are among the most influential philosophers of the 20th century who have been instrumental in popularising counter-traditional concepts of sexuality and gender while accelerating the advent of neo-paganism. Dionysus, with the appellation of *Dimporphos* (God of two forms), integrated the origins of these philosophers' dualistic comprehensions of the cosmos, sexuality, and humanity, upon which they instituted their theories. Dionysus is also attributed with the nomenclature of *Polymorphos*, the god of many forms, while concerning the issue of gender, is titled *Erikipeos* - the androgenous god. Dionysus remains acknowledged in, *inter alia,* an annual Dionysian *Komos* ritual, a festival specifically for non-binary gender identifiers of varied sexual permutations. At such festival, 'channelling' with Dionysus through an 'ecstatic union' takes place, celebrating his androgenous sexuality (*cf.,* Kalinay, 2014). Nietzsche influenced feminists with his visceral and incongruous claim that 'God is dead' which leads directly to the validation of unrestrained moral freedoms (for antinomianism as such does not exist in the absence of acknowledged restrictions), in which "nothing at all can be taken for granted – and absolutely everything is permitted" (Linker, 2002). That feminism embraced this concept is clear from the writings of prominent activists such as Butler, Mead, and Daly. Unfettered

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pp. 84-85ff.). A typical attempt to erase the Fatherhood concept of God and replacement by a feminist fabrication.

489 *cf.,* Levenson, J., God, 1991.

freedoms[490] give advent to the autonomous-self theories driving the feminist agenda based on a form of self-deification – an Edenic concept further promoted by influential thinkers such as Nietzsche for, "he came to believe in his madness that he had attained the self-divination he longed for" (Linker, 2002). Jung, too, failed to "understand the moral dangers inherent in the pagan revolution his psychological theories fostered". In Jeffrey Satinover's view, paganism "arouses the instincts, especially sexuality and aggression, to the keenest possible pitch" (Jungian, 1994), with all the ensuing emotional and psychological damage. The finale to all attempts at self-veneration undeniably ends in disaster for God will not share his glory with another, "I am the Lord that is my name; my glory I give to no other" (Isaiah 42:8).

The potent intersection between ancient Gnostic dualistic iterations, through cultural Marxist theories[491] justifying the sex-gender disconnect, and a neo-pagan religious outlook supports humanist ideologies in the areas of, firstly, abortion and, secondly, the adoption of gender, irrespective of biological binary sex, as a pathway to personal identity and meaning. With the embrace of New Age neo-pagan, dualistic and occultist spirituality, coupled to secular humanism, the absolutist claims of the Judeo-Christian Divine in the crucial areas of Fatherhood identity, created binary sex, and marriage limited to a heterosexual couple of opposite binary genders, can be dispensed with.[492] In a similar vein, Kristin Du Mez, the feminist Historian at Calvin College, USA, hitherto a fount of Reformed Christianity, alleges that the 80% of evangelicals who voted for President Trump acted out of a background of "militant masculinity" arising from the promotion of family values that connects the Gospel to ideologies of "patriarchal authority, gender difference and Christian nationalism which in turn are intertwined with white racial identity" (Wolfe, 2021). Du Mez's claims are a novel challenge to the Fatherhood of God concept through Critical Race and Gender theory. She assaults not the historicity or literalism of the scriptures but the personhood of the Creator now accused of

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490 Prof. Jacob Howland, while drawing inspiration from Plato's masterpiece, 'The Republic' (Plato, Republic, 1878), predicts that, "the desire for limitless freedom eventually becomes insatiable, especially among the young who attach customary restraints with sacred fervour. Rulers who resist are accused of being religiously polluted". Just as Plato anticipated, contemporary Western society reflects the "radicalization of the children of the elite; the repudiation of ancestral customs, political traditions, parental and educational authority, and the very idea of the sacred order; the normalization of previously illicit pleasures; and the weakening of civil rights" (Howland, 2022). The aforegoing describes the end result of the 'unfettered freedoms' sought by radical feminist identity ideologues and their cohort.

491 Del Noce perceives that the "total revolution" proposed through active Marxism promises "a new situation of mankind in which the problem of God will no longer arise" (2014, p. xii).

492 Cultural analyst Mary Harrington, infers that a "neo-liberal deregulation of human nature is already at work today". She continues, "Marriages may be dissolved if they are merely boring; bodies may be remodeled at will; and parents have no specialty duty or authority over their children. Underpinning all this is a vision of human biology as radically plastic, where all of us are hybridized blends of human and machines" (Cyborgs, 2022), subject to reconstruction in accordance with prevailing idiosyncratic identity ideologies.

being a militant, racist, white, heterosexual male. Her inference is that the Creator's status as a Father figure should be dispensed with due to the lack of credibility in an egalitarian society seeking social justice. An *argumentum ad hominem* indeed.

Phillip Rieff's "Deathworks" theory finds application in the attempted abolition (an "all-out assault") of the "vital" Fatherhood identity doctrine, for such doctrine is the source of the theistic personal identity of humankind. Accordingly, both the Fatherhood of God concept and that of *imago Dei,* are deemed "sacred symbols" and to be removed from the present culture (*cf.,* Rieff, 2006, pp. 7-8). Rieff explains that "sacred symbols" are "coordinators of moral demand systems" (2006, p. 43), the constrictions of which are unacceptable in a setting of fluid morality. And so, the crisis of the current *kulturkampf* is "unique because it is not between sacred orders *per se* but between great abolitionist movements directed against all sacred orders in any of their historical or theoretical manifestations" (2006, p. 14). The question of recognizing and honouring, through statue and memorial, notable individuals due to their laudable achievements, noble character, morality, virtue and values is passé in the present narcissistic and self-venerating climate. On this issue G. K. Chesterton writes that, "The mission of a great spire or statue should be to strike the spirit with a sudden sense of pride as with a thunderbolt. It should lift us with it into the empty and ennobling air" (The Defendant, 1901). Nobility, morality, and integrity of character - qualities reflected in persons which historian Mark Malvasi describes as "great men of the West" - are virtues no longer deemed worthy of honour. Any public reference to such persons is to be abolished, referred to as 'cancelled' in colloquial terms. The end result, says Malvasi, is that, "critics may succeed in expunging from the traditions and history of the West those aspects to which they take umbrage but they have yet to explain what they recommend as a substitute" (2022). This is especially the case with the sacred concepts of the Fatherhood of God and *image Dei* for which there can be no possible replacement.

The loss of the Apostolic tradition underpinning Western cultures might very well result in a reversion to post-diluvian paganist culture of sited morality and barbarianism for, "where there is nothing sacred, there is nothing" (Rieff, 2006, p. 12). Rieff's words are similar in concept to those of Pope Francis when he concludes that, "If there is no transcendent truth in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people". The reason being that "the transcendent dignity of the human person" derives from him being the "visible image of the invisible God" (Fratelli Tutti, 2020,

para. 273), that is, an *imago Dei*.[493] Lacking recognition of the sacredness of human life, Identity ideologues view themselves as morally autonomous, without objective or absolutist thresholds to moderate their actions. And so radical feminists, particularly, reveal their utopian worldview which is one based on relativist sex-gender, freeing them from the patriarchy concept and heteronormativity generally, thus exhibiting their desire for exclusive power and auto-creativity. For these feminists, "marriage and prudence, all things historically valued by liberal democracy, have no place in the feminism of the 21st century" (Schultz, Political, 2022).

Perhaps the concluding words here should be those of cultural theorist, Mary Eberstadt. In a journal article on the societal crisis surrounding the absence of fathers in the nuclear family and the assault on the Fatherhood of God concept by feminist agitators, Eberstadt explains that the pervasive civil riots of 2020 in the USA, "exposed the three-fold crisis of filial attachment that has beset the Western world for more than half a century". In consequence, says Eberstadt, "Deprived of father, Father, and *patria*, a critical mass of humanity has become socially dysfunctional on a scale not seen before" (Fathers, 2020). Undeniably sombre words for the visible civil unrest is indicative of the systemic "invisible crisis of Western paternity where, particularly, some "65 percent of children" in an African-American home grow up without a present father as do 25% of children generally (Fathers, 2020). The migration towards a tribal and political identity by fatherless persons indicates an enduring search for personal identity consequent upon the Marxist inspired BLM and radical feminist zealots' sublation of the fatherhood concept. It is fitting to reveal, in no uncertain terms, the nefarious motive and neo-Marxian dichotomous class strategy of radical identity actors which has devasted personal ontological status hitherto centred on the cultural Christian concept of *imago Dei* in Western society. In a now deleted (September 2020) manifesto on their website, BLM proponents vow to, "disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family requirement by supporting each other as extended families and 'villages' that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable" (Eberstadt, Fathers, 2020). The Identitarianists are clearly oblivious to their cognitive detachment from the reality of requiring a father to propagate a child. The patent lack of rationality, and detachment from Christian tenets, makes the issue one of a malignant spiritual delusion having its origin with the First Couple's declaration of *eritus sicut Deus* in Genesis 3. Eberstadt's above pronouncement on the social dysfunctionality of a fatherless humanity, were exemplified in the May 2022 desecration of Churches by abortion activists upon

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493 It is prudent to be reminded of the created sacredness of persons. King David in Psalm 8 records that persons, made in the image of God, have been accorded a divine status only "a little lower than the heavenly beings" but "crowned" with "glory and honour" (Ps. 8:5 ff.).

disclosure of the Supreme Court's anticipated overruling of Roe v. Wade abortion rights, with such latter event occurring on June 24, 2022, after some 50 years. In a clear act of *ressentiment* towards the Creator as Father of Life, abortion activists "target Churches because they wish to profane the sacred" (Trueman, C., Desecrate, 2022). The activists not only wish to desecrate the Churches, representative of the Creator and his offspring, but also to desecrate new life itself – the defenceless fetal human beings. The age-old clash between the sacred and the profane, between life and death, between the forces of good and those of evil which commenced in the Edenic Garden now continue unabated into the post-truth era.

6.4.3 Feminism, Sex and Gender

Originating from a combination of Freudian sex theories; the pseudo-scientific Kinsley Reports[494] of 1948 and 1953; the arrival of the liberating Birth control pill;[495] the sexual reformation in the decade of 1960; and the juridical legalisation of pornography commencing with the Supreme Court decision in 1973 with Miller v. California (413 U.S. 15, 1973), feminists directed their struggle for emancipation and identity in the direction of sexuality. Demonstrating the Marxist class-struggle philosophy, the 'oppressed' women in society arose against patriarchal dominated society to assert their individual sexual identity,[496] factional authenticity, equality and freedom. Over the last few decades, and initially having a narrow focus, the issue of sexuality became increasingly evident in mainstream society and is firmly established as the main focus of feminist liberation.

Psychologists Freud[497] and Jung have been particularly influential in the areas of sexuality and identity as the key prisms of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, an intense therapeutic method instigated by Freud and Jung, has been widely practised since its inception and has as its' aim the "salvation of the suffering self" (Paul, 2020). Patient regressive introspection was introduced in order to ascertain previously unrevealed and suppressed "sources of psychic suffering" which often led to a purported inference of sexual repression. Freud postulated that both males and females are "bisexual in nature and direct their sexual drives towards divers

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494 Alfred C. Kinsley was founder of the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University.

495 Eberstadt comments that, "no single event since Eve took the apple has been as consequential for relations between the sexes as the arrival of modern contraception" (Eberstadt, Adam, 2012). Eberstadt's view accords with that of Walter Lippmann when he stated in 1929 that "birth control" is the "most revolutionary practice in the history of sexual morals" (1929, Morals, p. 291).

496 Carl Trueman avers that the Alphabet group while, "taking pride in one's sexual identity, even consider sexual desire (of whatever manifestation) to be an identity". He adds that this, "is a deep perversion of what it means to be human" (Pride Month, 2022). The primary exemplar of pride-sin is the fallen archangel, Lucifer, and further exhibited by the typological, federal, First Couple of Adam and Eve.

497 Jung claimed that, "Freud's god was *eros*" (Satinover, Jungian, 1994), that is, physical, sexual love and attraction.

objects for the sexual drive was the “engine of the personality”. In this manner Freud approved “atypical sexual expressions”, now embraced in society both legally, socially and politically. Yet, it is quite congruous that arising out of Freud’s therapeutic theories, the Alphabet sect’s attitude is that, “the more fantastic a sexual identity, the more it expresses individuality” (Paul, 2020), to which statement can be added: expressions of liberation, authenticity, meaning and identity. The Alphabet tribe would agree wholeheartedly with such a supposition. Freud’s sexual theories are not unexpected given his devotion to the androgenous (*Erikipeo)* and dissolute Greek god, Dionysus, whose dichotomous character is represented in the nomenclature of *Dimporphos* - a god of two-forms. To accord with his gender-vague theories of deity, and anticipating the demise of the exclusivity claims of the patriarchy of God, Freud proposed that his concept of psychoanalyses would “eliminate father-gods through scientific reasoning”. But, as Naomi Goldenberg submits, “feminism may prove to be more effective” (1979, p. 36). Dedicated feminists, not least Judith Butler (considered the promotor of gender theory) and her circle of ‘third wave feminists’ centred their sex-gender hypotheses on Freudian sexual theories, coupled with the philosophy of cultural Marxist Critical Gender Theory dualism to give practical effect thereto. Attendant upon the popularisation of psychotherapy is the emergence of the ‘therapeutic self’ – a narcissistic[498] focus on an inner psychological condition, which has “created a world driven by subjective emotions” (Trueman, Dogma, 2021). In Trueman’s view, this leads to the “collapse of traditional, external, anchors of identity – those of religion, nation and family”.[499] The obsession with subjective, esoteric, and neo-Gnostic determinations of self and the messianic authority of the creative-self free of patriarchal limitations, is a fresh application, a recapitulation, of Eve’s articulation of *eritus sicut Deus*, in Genesis 3:5. The consequence of practically denigrating the Divine’s external rubric of *imago Dei* inevitably leads to the denial of individual transcendence and the sacred order of humankind. As a result, having rejected the conferred *imago Dei,* narcissists “turn inward” for identity when in reality, “they desperately need external validation to maintain their precarious sense of themselves” (Smith, B., Narcissism, 2022). Whilst Identitarianists seek guidance within for meaning, the Conservative individual, on the other hand, values nobility of character. Russell Kirk explains that “the Conservative is concerned, first of all, for the

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498 Psychiatrist Jeffrey Satinover, states that the “cost exacted by the usurpation of faith by psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry has been great, both in private lives and in the public order”. Here, he is referring to the emotional cost to individuals by the deprivation of ontological security through secular disciplines rather than through faith-based constructs, in the area of personal meaning (Meaning, 1994).

499 Trueman, C., Plastic, 2022.

regeneration of spirit and character – with the perennial problem of the inner order of the soul" (Mind, 1953, p. 472). The same objective can be posited for an authentic Judeo-Christian life.

Feminists consider established structuralist sexual ethics hateful, outdated, insulting, restrictive, a demonstration of toxic masculinity, phallocentric and misogynistic - all resulting from the patriarchal influence and dogmas of orthodox Judeo-Christianity. Orthodox dogmas are believed to perpetuate entrenchment of the societal power of domineering male clusters. The purported freedom from alleged societal sexual bondage, as evident in cultural Marxist Critical Theory, gives rise to women's empowerment through the adjunctive Critical Gender Theory in order to abolish customary sexual norms of restrictive factors in favour of a contextual humanist reconstruction of sexuality. Refusal of moral and ethical accountability to their Creator, the Judeo-Christian God, underlies the feminist rebellion against absolutist norms and tenets, very much in the approach of the Edenic First Couple. The adoption of a creatorship mindset is strongly reminiscent of the Gnostic concept of the anthropomorphic feminine '*Sophia*" who is loosely comparable to the biblical *logos* in creative purpose. *Sophia*'s unilateral creative desire is seen in the Nag Hammadi text, the 'Apocryphon of John' (Pleše, 2014, pp. 113-5). Social commentator Noelle Mering concludes that the US (and by extension Western civilization) has become a "society of mini-gods each in pursuit of its own power" for being able to "speak into existence your identity in defiance of any bodily reality…must feel godlike" (2021). The result is that, apart from race, sexuality and gender remain the most exigent social and public policy issue.

Affiliated to the CGT ideologues' claim to sexual freedom is the oppressive sublation of freedoms within which traditionalists maintain cultural Christian sexual ethics. As an adjunct, the freedom to resist Identity ideology socially, culturally, and corporately, is disparaged.[500]Activists demand subjugation, through societal, political and legal enforcement,

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[500] In a consideration of the differences between libertarian feminism and other utterances of feminism, Dr. Sharon Presley emphasises that all mainstream feminists hold the view that women should be treated as equal and free, autonomous, human beings and therefore "reject gender role stereotypes". The problem arises in the understanding and practical application of the terms 'equal' and 'free'. Positive freedoms may result in a negative freedom for others adversely affected by applied positivism, and libertarian feminists reject such course of action. Stated differently, Dr. Presley clarifies that in seeking objectives of "personal autonomy and individual freedom", with equality, then such objectives cannot be achieved by "taking away individual's rights to choose for themselves". She adds, that "if we (feminists) pass laws that forces our values on others, then we are no better than men who have forced their values on us through legislation" (2015). A situation of negative freedom therefore defeats feminists' prime objectives. Unfortunately, radical leftist feminists employ exactly those tactics, resulting in suppression of natural justice and equal constitutional rights for all. Radical feminist desire for ideological power and Statist coercion, irrespective of once laudable feminist claims, is what drives the contemporary social disarray in Western society.

of their unconstrained sexual freedoms. Hence growing public support for sex-gender activists, identified through the inchoate appellation, LGBTQ+. Revealed in a 2021 Gallup poll, a "record-high 70% of people in the US support same-sex marriage" (McCarthy, Gallup, 2021). With such a wide public acceptance of aberrant sexual immorality, activists[501] seek to enforce a cultural reorientation[502] of sexuality through promotion of every permutation of sexual appetite. And so, each acolyte demands their own alphabetical recognisance, their own unique shibboleth – not unlike the Dewey Decimal Classification method - to affirm their claimed distinct identity. The striving by adherents to obtain alphabet recognition for their narrow instance of gender dysphoria emphasises the terminal nature of identity loss for, as Judith Butler perceives identity, "I think that gaining recognition for one's status as a sexual minority is a difficult task…but I would consider it necessary for survival" (2007, p. xxvii-viii). Societal recognition is achieved by inclusion in the LGBTQ+ adage which in no manner indicates a unified movement. It is in the very flexibility of subjective gender that enables all who seek identity to find a home for, as Butler proposes, "a variable construction of identity is both a methodological and normative prerequisite, if not a political goal" (2007, p. 8). Political and legal support is the aim, and necessary, in order to establish the hitherto marginalised Alphabet devotees' mainstream acceptability, and through such avenues compel societal compliance with their predilections. Viewpoints that diverge from Butler's sex-gender theories are dismissed as "anti-feminist, homophobic, and transphobic", while she claims further that, "anti-gender ideology is one of the dominant strains of fascism in our times" (Rusk, 2021). No dissention is tolerated by the feminist troop, and so, coupled with legal and political validation, a form of "authoritarian popularism" emerges (*cf.,* Müller, Democracy, 2021, p. 6).[503]

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501 There are many activist groups, for instance the GSA Network (Genders and Sexualities Alliances) which comprise, "student-run organizations that unite LGBT+ and allied youth to build community and organize around issues impacting them" (GSA Network, 2022).

502 A 2021 Gallup survey indicated that "5.6% of American adults identity as LGBT – compared to 4.5% in 2017. Furthermore, nearly 17% of Gen Z adults (born between 1997 – 2002) claim to be LGBT (Gallup, LGBT, 2021).

503 Princeton University professor, Jan-Werner Müller, explains that "populists" are those who "claim that they, and only they, represent what they often refer to as the 'real people' or, also, the 'silent majority'" (Democracy, 2021, p. 6). With such attitude, it is unsurprising that a form of authoritarianism soon emerges in compliant power structures. This contention is endorsed by Muller when he elaborates that, "once populists assert that only they represent the people, they also charge that all other contenders for public office are fundamentally illegitimate" (2021, p. 7).

These are but sad examples of lost identity[504] in a confusing[505] world and the endeavour to find meaning and cultural authenticity through sex-gender dogmata in the post-structuralist, contextual, and plastic Alphabet sectarian ideology. It appears that to attain an atomized individual identity, gender ideologues evidence ever expanding bizarre variations of sexual desires. Social norms are challenged to the limit and Identitarians proudly demonstrate their perceived emancipation, their unique identity and their enigmatic concept of authenticity. Unaware of impending severe psychological damage, they reject their birth physicality, which is an essential component of *imago Dei,* and are left with a nihilistic worldview, personal *angst*, no hope, no future, but only confusion, suicidal tendencies, and precariously relying on a narrow tribal identity centred around the Alphabet cluster's Rainbow ('Pride') flag for meaning. Struggling to achieve individual identity through sectarian, anomalous, modes of gender, Alphabet agents find social identity through like-minded groups, a clan concept.[506] Yet, ontological security is foremost based on individual identity but those of co-mingled or self-chosen gender disconcertedly tend to oscillate between the "psychological and the social" (Relojo-Howell, 2021) components of identity. This fluctuation results in the further alienation and polarisation of the self for the zealots' claim to a specific tribal identity narrows further with each extreme articulation of gender and increasingly leads to mental health complications (Relojo-Howell, 2021). Propounding a neo-Gnostic esoteric knowledge of creative purpose coupled with moral and intellectual elitism, the Alphabet assembly believe that they alone harbour the true dualistic identity of human beings - an identity based on a re-assembled body and atypical sexual inclination.[507] The sectarians are estranged from pragmatic moral codes or extrinsic ethical metrics but remain convinced of the validity of their ideology through a

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504 The striving for self-identity, apart from the sex-gender self-identifiers, finds a new demonstration under Mexican law. In 2021, Mexico's 'Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation' ruled that, effectively, citizens could amend their Birth certificates to reflect an age of their own choosing. The Court held that, "If a person had anchored their identity in a later date of birth for a significant period of time, then their Birth Certificate could be altered to match this social reality". The Court added that an "Identity is built throughout life and any socially constructed date of birth… transcends biological truth" (Mendoza-Torres, 2021). The era of a self-identified date of birth contrary to biological reality has arrived.

505 In March 2022, the U.K. Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, Anneliese Dodds, was questioned on the BBC program, 'Women's Hour', as to "what is a woman?". She could only answer to the effect that, "It does depend what the context is surely", thereby displaying her own confusion on the topic. As the reporter, Madelaine Kearns, comments, "unfortunately this incoherence carries real-life consequences. In legislation, policies and rulebooks throughout the Western world, the objective definition of sex is being replaced with the elusive fiction of gender identity" (Kearns, Women, 2022).

506 Anthony Mills perceives that, "the politics of identity is driven by the desire for recognition on the part of those minority groups whose identities have been shaped by a history of marginalization by the majority" (Common Good, 2020).

507 Psychologist James Forgas points out that ideological tribal groups, "consider their own ideology to be morally absolute" - a clear subjective construction (Populism, p. 7, 2021).

narcissistic and solipsistic neo-Gnostic sophianic elitism. They are therefore detached from authenticity, subscribing instead to a parallel reality as indicated by Plato in his simile of the Cave where it is conceded (through protagonists Socrates and Glaucon), that the "truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images" (Plato, 1878, Book VII, p. 215). The shadows are manipulated by those in authority behind the scenes, as is the situation with Identitarians in Anglo-American societies.

The Supreme Court of the United States approved same-sex marriage through the pivotal case of Obergefell versus Hodges in 2015. In 2020, the same Court in the matter of Bostock versus Clayton County[508] prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual identity (including homosexual and transgender identifiers) in any public sphere. On the basis of juridical warrant for these controversial decisions, the Alphabet tribe adopted the Pride flag as symbolic of the new 'civic religion' of the USA. By so doing, the Identity adherents indicated their primary allegiance to a parochial ideology rather than their loyalty to the US national flag, the 'Stars and Stripes'. The Biden administration has ordered that US Embassies throughout the world fly the Pride flag alongside the US national flag.[509] The Pride flag proudly "proclaims to the world our new genital dogmas and pelvic creed" says Mering (2021), thereby advertising the lofty international social and moral[510] priorities of the Biden Administration. For instance, on the 1st June 2022, the US Embassy at the Vatican displayed the 'Pride' flag "in celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community" (Pecknold, C., Two Cities, 2022), right in the heartland of staunch conservative Catholicism which holds Biblical views of sexuality. The 'Pride' flag in such an environment is a direct challenge to, and attempted subversion of, the Vatican flag with its implication of a long-standing commitment to contrary values. Still, the situation has deeper connotations for while the 'Pride' flag celebrates the Alphabet community for the whole month of June, referred to as 'Pride' month, so too does the Vatican celebrate the month of June as

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508 Harvard law professor, Adrian Vermeule, concludes that, in the Bostock matter, the Supreme Court, "having gone far beyond just same-sex marriage, read Federal law to protect rights of gender identity" (Imagination, 2021). Despite Constitutional constraints, the ideological interbranch actions of the current U.S. Administration, namely, the executive, legislation and judicial, raise concerns.

509 Respected scholar, Yoram Hazony refers to this action by the Biden Administration as, "the establishment of an liberal international order" which has been the "principal project of European and American elites for decades". Comparison with such agenda can be found with "Napoleonic France: an ideologically antireligious, anti-traditionalist, universalist power seeking to bring its version of the enlightenment to the nations of the world, if necessary by force" (Democracy, 2019).

510 Greg Weiner, professor of Politics, orates that "political rhetoric in increasingly moralistic while the actual ability of governing systems to achieve moral ends is in decline" (Morals, 2019). However, the question to be considered is, if it is at all the task of the State to "achieve moral ends?". Biden Administration's determination to entrench their idiosyncratic variety of moral construals amounts to an abolition of the traditional freedoms incapsulated in liberal democratic republican polity, hitherto traditional in Western culture.

one dedicated to the “Most Sacred Heart of Jesus”. This is a “devotion which goes to the very heart of Christianity” (Pecknold, C., Two Cities, 2022). Sociologist Philip Rieff refers to the subversion of “sacred symbols” of a ruling culture as “Deathwork”, for the net effect is the desecration of such sacred symbols,[511] their societal influence and objectives (Rieff, 2006, p. 4). The display of the emblematic US national flag alongside an idiosyncratic rainbow coloured ‘Pride’ flag in equal hierarchical importance, advertises the priority of the Biden Administration’s ideological agenda over national interest and unity. Legally such action amounts to an act of sedition and finds direct confrontation with established Judeo-Christian tradition founding Western culture. Carl Trueman points out that the ubiquitous display of the ‘Pride Flag’ throughout society, especially during the ‘Pride’ month of June, “should be particularly egregious to Christians for it is the primary instrument by which the LGBTQ+ movement asserts its ownership of the culture” (Pride, 2022).

The catalyst for emergence of this new ‘religion’ has been the work of feminist activists spanning many years promoting their extreme ideology in the mainstream media, but which has led to unexpected adverse consequences. Feminists are challenged by the focus on, and political advantages of, those persons both male and female who identity as transgender[512] or transsexual[513] or any combination or variation thereof and distinct from the traditional feminists who largely identify as lesbian or bisexual. The political, legal, and social advantages afforded transgenders[514] supersede erstwhile women’s rights and protections, resulting in many feminists viewing the legal primacy of transgender persons as an “erasure of women” (Hartline, 2022). An example is seen in competitive sport where a biological male who identifies as a female (a transgender) can legitimately participate in women’s only events. The consequence of this loophole is that biological men are succeeding in sports previously reserved for biological women only. This anomaly is sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee for at the 2020/2021 Tokyo Olympic games, biological men participated in

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511 The Alphabet group’s misappropriation of the rainbow to be emblematic of their ideology can be considered “Deathworks”, that is the profanation of a sacred symbol. The reason being that the rainbow is considered in the Judeo-Christian tradition to be “a sign of God’s love and faithfulness” (Trueman, C., Pride, 2022).

512 Transgenderism, an iteration of gender identity dysphoria, can be described (with some consequences) as follows, “transgender is often associated with gender dysphoria, a potentially disabling condition in which the discordance between a person’s natal sex (that assigned to them at birth) and (desired) gender identity results in distress, high associated rates of self-harm, suicidality and function impairment” (Joseph, Cliffe et al, Transgender, 2017, p. 144).

513 Transsexualism, likewise a manifestation of gender dysphoria, is “considered at the extreme end of the spectrum of gender identity disorders, characterized by, *inter alia,* a pursuit of sex reassignment surgery” (Cohen-Kettenis & Gooren, 1999, p. 315).

514 It can rightly be claimed that, through the fiction of transgenderism, men can now appropriate all the social, legal, and political gains women have achieved over decades. Feminists are understandably outraged at this strategy.

women's only events much to the outrage of feminists. Further, in Florida during September 2021 an ex-Special Forces military male who transitioned to a transgender woman while still biologically male, competed against a female in a high-profile MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) female-only event. The transgender subdued his female opponent with a potentially mortal choke-hold in the second round due to his superior masculine strength. Needless to say, feminists were outraged, calling the transgender person variably a "cheat, coward, abuser, pathetic, a man with no shame or ethics" (Murphy, M., Alana, 2021). Even in prisons, sports, and shelters for women survivors of domestic violence, biological men identifying as women are permitted participation and access. Further, in June 2021 in the Nevada State Beauty contest, a transgender woman was voted Miss Nevada USA ahead of 21 natural born female contestants. The man claimed eligibility to enter the Miss USA Beauty pageant (Young, 2021). After a legal process, in November 2022, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit denied eligibility to transgender persons. Also, in a private, female only, California Spa, July 2021, a biological man, identifying as a woman, paraded naked in front of the women, many of which were mothers with young girls present. When reported to the Press, the Los Angeles Times editorial board defended the man (Brown, Radical, 2021), as did the management of the Spa, averring that the man was legally entitled to be there as he identified as a woman. The seriousness of the refusal to face gender realism is also evident in the UK where Scottish Police, "will record alleged rapes by offenders with male genitalia as being committed by a woman if the attacker identifies as female". Justification is given by reference to the 'Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act of 2009', where rape is defined as "non-consensual penetration by a penis". Therefore, the official reasoning goes, it cannot be committed by someone without a penis (Moir, 2021), like a transgender woman, and so rape could not be possible. This deduction is arrived at despite the fact that the transgender perpetrator could be a biological man with all the male genitals. This absurd fiction, a *reductio ad absurdum*[515] and an artifice devoid of rationality, is criticised by Ken MacAskill, an erstwhile Justice Secretary, who states that "I have seen some legal absurdities but this tops it all and is dangerous… it is all about dogma overriding common sense. Women prisoners are being harmed by this" (Moir, 2021). The fact is that transgender women, by their very definition, generally do have biological male genitalia. Nonetheless, Police and Prosecutors refuse[516] to face reality, being caught up in pervasive and purposed cognitive dissonance from reality. There are many such practical iterations of transgender ideology in Western society.

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515 A proposition leading to absurdity.

516 The Scottish Police do not require evidence or "certification of proof of biological sex or gender identity other than a person's self-identification" (Moir, 2021).

Feminists have succeeded in all their aims, in areas of political, social, and economic equality but have lost their hard-won gains to transgender women in the areas of sports, female only facilities whether private or public, and the political and legal arena which gives patent advantage to transgender women over natural born females. The situation has led to indignation among feminists who view society as systemically patriarchal in any event and now find confirmation of their viewpoint when a male claims identity as a transgender woman.[517] According to feminists, such person must be considered, and identified as a biological male for, "a male who could opt into a female identity is just another iteration of male entitlement and supremacy" (Favale, 2021). A not unreasonable supposition. To counter the growing political and legal endorsement of transgenderism, the 'Women's Human Rights Campaign' of the UK, have launched an international campaign with co-ordinators in over thirty countries. The activists adhere to a multilingual Declaration of a 'Bill of Rights for Women Based on Biological Sex'. The Declaration includes statements like, "men whose gender identity is female should not be categorised as female in the context of women's rights" (WHRC, 2021). Many feminists[518] have clearly realized the threat to women's hard-won gains now being appropriated by natural born men, in miscellaneous disguises.

Transgender women have some philosophical advantage in academic circles for justifying their position. The reason being that their ideology is focused upon a coherent and Gnostic initiated wisdom of duality of mind-body, coupled with a claim of autotheism. On the other hand, those bearing the label 'first wave' feminists have often been simply relying on a promotion of suffrage, societal equality, and non-discrimination between binary genders to achieve "liberation from traditional cultural constraints" (Reno, R., Limits, 2022). The ideology of radical feminists on the other hand, those of the 'third wave' of feminism advocating acceptance of transgenderism which can be traced to a Marxist dichotomy which itself is derived from Gnostic mind-body duality, has as its objective "a metaphysical rebellion" (Reno, R., Limits, 2022), against the physical construction of the body as conferred at birth. Being a spiritual construal, irrespective of materialism, scientism or objectivity, success is assured. The transgender affirming feminists ("trans-inclusive") define a woman's gender identity as, "her innermost concept of being female" (Favale, 2021). This claim, being a subjective identification, leads to the absurd reasoning that a biological male, "who becomes a woman

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517 Carl Trueman concludes that, "transgender theory is arguably one of the most effective male confidence tricks in recent history: nothing that women can lay claim to as women is now off-limits to men" (Liturgy, 2022). All the societal gains that women have strived for are under existential threat from men masquerading as women.

518 Feminists who deny the claimed equal rights of transgender women to women's rights are termed 'trans-exclusionary radical feminists' ("Terfs"), by their detractors.

was never truly male in the first place, but always female" (Favale, 2021), and hence can rightly identify as a woman while remaining biological male. Statutory endorsement is observed, for example, in the UK Gender Recognition Act of 2004, which states that an adult who identifies with a gender different from their birth sex may apply for a 'Gender Recognition Certificate' to legally reflect their new self-identity (Gender Recognition, 2004). The detachment from reality continues with endorsement by the 'University and College Union', UK, of self-identification in areas of gender, race ('trans-racialism'), and disability (UCU, Position, 2019). The implication of this stance is that support is advanced for anyone claiming to be of a certain ethnic origin or disabled or of a particular gender when in reality, whether biologically, ethnically, physically or mentally, that is not the case. This situation leads to complexities relating to exclusive access, minority rights, financial claims and assistance, and special dispensations for self-identifiers who might make such demands. The Union represents over 130,000 University and College staff. The Union's position is unsurprising as a survey estimates that some 80% of British Academics are leftists (Turner, 2017). The scene in Germany is similar with both the proposal of a 'self-declaration' law permitting self-gender simply upon declaration, and the public health system funding of chosen gender reassignment surgery (Hoyer, 2021).

President Biden's tweet on January 25, 2020, to the effect that "transgender equality is the civil rights issue of our time" (Biden Tweet, 2020), signals his narrow ideological priorities which have a devastating and perilous effect on society.[519] Likewise, the trans-feminist related claim that gender self-identification is "this generations civil rights battle" (Joyce, 2021) is unsurprising, finding support in the presidency. The issue is far more complex[520] than simply a civil rights matter for it reveals a lethal threat to vulnerable persons struggling to find personal identity in a post-modern, post-Christian, society beset with deeply flawed, atheistic and

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519 US Attorney-General William Barr, in his 2022 Memoir, refutes Biden's view and counters that, rather, the 'most pressing civil rights issue of our time is that of religious liberty' (Holdenried, Rights, 2022).

520 A further complexity arising from self-identified sex-gender is the adverse psychological effect upon the youth, faced with a crisis of identity and susceptible to prevailing populist ideology. Social Policy analyst, Dr. Sharon James, points out that the proposed UK Government ban on 'Conversion Therapy' offered by religious organizations to assist troubled and confused youth in the area of their sexuality could "result in the criminalizing the ordinary work of Churches "which includes prayer, preaching and pastoral care". There are legitimate concerns that the 'Conversion Therapy' ban, "could violate the rights of women, parents and children, particularly the increasing number of adolescent girls seeking help with gender dysphoria" (James, 2021). Here arises two main issues. First, the prohibition of Christian organizations assisting persons with sex-gender confusion, which amounts to a secular enforcement of removing Christianity from the public and private arena. Second, the denial of fundamental civil and other human rights, including rights of freedom of religion, for persons in seeking assistance wherever they choose. The ideologues' penchant for totalitarianism is patent.

irrational ideologies. The issue of a civil rights struggle emanates from the demand that gender self-identification devotees be recognised, and their chosen identity equally endorsed, by mainstream society. In this aspect, such actions can be understood as having authoritarian overtones, which is evident in political and legal enforcement despite objections from those with differing value systems, such as Judeo-Christians, who recognise the reality of natural born binary sex irrespective of gender self-identification. The articulation of claimed rights by any group, paradoxically requires extrinsic inhibitions of some sort to protect the coexistent rights of others, necessary for the purposes of social harmony and to avoid the disorder of unmitigated freedom. The dichotomy relating to disparate rights of freedom is the source of much litigation.

Despite the wide acceptance[521] of autogynephilia in the Anglo-American education system, there is a developing resistance among academics. In June, 2021 a Professor of Law, Jo Phoenix, was invited to address students at Essex University, UK, about the placing of transgender women in women-only prisons. The background to the topic reveals that similar situation had occurred during early 2021 in California when 255 biological male prisoners suddenly decided to identify as women and sought transfer into a women's prison facility, upon promulgation of the relevant civil code authorising such transfers.[522] Again, in this context, during May 2021, in Mexico, a situation took place when, to meet the new constitutional gender quota, 18 biological male political candidates registered as transgender women.[523] Likewise in the US State of New Jersey in July 2021, the Court, in the case of Sonia Doe v New Jersey Department of Corrections, ruled that transgender, intersex and non-binary prisoners were to be housed, "in prisons that correspond with the opposite biological sex".[524] To revert, the invitation extended to Professor Jo Phoenix was summarily rescinded after protests from students accusing her of being a "transphobe" and a "trans-exclusionary radical feminist" (Economist, Backlash, 2021). Apparently, the students did not wish to hear truth about the insanity of placing transgender 'women' into women designated prison facilities. A report was later compiled exonerating Prof. Phoenix while castigating Essex University for their exclusionary behaviour. The Professor was allowed to proceed with her address thereafter. There are many such reported cases and it seems that some slight semblance of sanity is returning to the Western academic field (Economist, Backlash, 2021). The pivotal question

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521 This situation is to be expected when, for instance, liberal (Democrat Party) law professors "outnumber Republicans (conservatives) by a ratio of about 50 to one". Therefore, continues law professor Theresa Manning, "faculty publications tend to reflect ideology more than scholarship" (Politics, 2022).

522 Olohan, M., Men, 2021.

523 Smith, C., Mexico, 2021.

524 Showalter, B., NJ, 2021.

raised in the Economist article was, “How did an ideology that brooks no dissent became so entrenched in institutions supposedly dedicated to fostering independent thinking?”. The Phoenix matter, as with many related examples, indicate a catastrophic failure of cherished academic freedom in Western tertiary education.

A miniscule sect of transgender activists dominates the crucial narrative encompassing sex and gender. In a criticism of the current political[525] and legal focus on transgender identifiers, Butler states “feminism ought to be careful not to idealize certain expressions of gender that in turn produce new forms of hierarchy and exclusion” (2007, p. viii). The purpose of her remark is to ensure that no gender classification is to be preferential to another. Even so, Butler does support the sex-gender dichotomy for she avers that despite the “intractability” of biological sex, “gender is culturally constructed” and there exists a “multiple interpretation of sex” (2007, p. 8). Butler adds that, consequently, there is no restriction as to why genders “ought to remain as two” (2007, p. 9).[526] In this respect Butler is influenced by the atheistic and morally turpitudinous[527] French philosopher Michel Foucault,[528] an important proponent of Queer theory (which rejects binary birth sex as normative), followed by most feminists, who opined that there is no true, realistic, biological sex that naturally leads to a defined gender (Gutting, 2019). Acceptance of this theory is evident in the multiplication of the Alphabet cluster’s ever-expanding acronyms relating to ‘LGBTQ+’. Butler raises the question as to whether or not a person’s gender is the “essential attribute that a person is said to be” (2007, p. 10). This question is answered by the articulated duality of the feminist biological sex-gender narrative which is none other than a repetition of the ancient Gnostic mind (spirit) – body (matter) disconnect. In post-modern feminist theory, derived from Critical Gender Theory, biological binary sex assigned at birth is mere reductive matter, an ‘embodiment,’ whilst the true ‘self,’ arising out of self-consciousness, is manifest in one’s gender which can be

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525 America’s widest circulating national news publication, USA TODAY, in March 2022, published a list of the nation’s most elite and respected, ‘Women of the Year’. Among the list of women was Rachel Levine – a biological man (previously known as Richard), identifying as a woman, a transgender woman, who is the assistant Secretary of Health and leads the US Public Health Service as a four-star Admiral, appointed by President Biden. Upon Levine’s appointment, House of Congress member Jim Banks, pointed out that, “calling someone, that was born and lived as a man for 54 years, the first female four-star officer is an insult to every little girl who dreams of breaking glass ceilings one day” (Foley, Rachel, 2022). USA TODAY refers to Levine, listed as a ‘Woman of the Year’, a “National Honoree” (USA Today, Women, 2022), while totally capitulating to political transgender ideology.

526 Portland Public Schools, USA, promote the “infinite gender spectrum”, thereby adding to the confusion of school children (Rufo, C., Portland, 2022).

527 Professor Angela Franks reveals that Foucault was an enthusiast of sadomasochism sex, coupled with illegal drugs, and frequenting the “gay S & M clubs in California and New York” (Franks, 2021).

528 At the time of his death in 1984, at the age of 57, Foucault was regarded as “perhaps the single most famous philosopher in the world – at least in American universities” (Kimball, 2022).

fashioned, defined and articulated according to a subjective penchant without restrictions. This concept accords with the philosophical dichotomy of power differential fundamental to cultural Marxist theory but results, not in a societal class-struggle (*cf.,* Hegel's "Master-Slave"; *cf.,* Butler, 2007, p. 201, Note 21), as much as a gender-struggle, a search for meaning necessitated through the loss of a personal *imago Dei*. Political atomizing of gender finds support through the concepts of extreme feminism, formed *inter alia* by the Foucauldian post-structuralism of socio-philosopher Michel Foucault, whose adherents are themselves searching for a fused socio-psychological identity and meaning. For instance, feminist Donna Haraway proposes that to attain a 'core identity' it is necessary to have a "concept of a coherent inner self" that can be "achieved culturally" outside of a biological binary sex - in other words, through a chosen gender. The "proper state for a Western person" she says, is to have "ownership of the self, to have and to hold a core identity as if it were a personal possession…. Gender identity is such a possession" (1991, p. 135). In Haraway's view, personal identity and meaning in life is generated through a solipsistic and dualistic composition of one's self through a self-chosen gender. There are many articulations and assemblies associated with each facet of gender, thereby providing members with a vestige of clan identity, hence insistence on being identified by the inclusion of a letter of the alphabet in the inchoate LGBTQ+ acronym. From a socio-psychological perspective, "contemporary Identity theory posits an interplay between cognitive processes and social or cultural influences" (Monroe, 2000, p. 422). The consequence of this deduction is that while personal identity is ascertained through the appropriation of a gender irrespective of biological sex, membership of an assembly of similar gender identifying individuals is equally important. Both structures are an instance of secular humanism seeking individual authenticity, but sadly condemned to failure. The perpetuation of individual loss of meaning through alienation from a theistically conferred identity, coupled with the adverse emotional effects of a psychological dissonance between a person's natural born sex and assumed, presented, gender, cannot confer the ontological position sought. The result being what sociologist Peter Berger describes as modern mans' "permanent identity crisis" (1974, p. 78).

Radical feminism is at the forefront of the sex-gender issue for, as Donna Haraway observes, feminists have long "argued for the primacy of culture-gender over biology-sex." Haraway concedes that the feminist illustrations of "sex-gender theory and politics came through the appropriation of Marx and Freud" (1992, pp. 136-7). Freud's dichotomy of the self is seen through his theory of the multiplication of identity, the multiple self, through a division of "the id, ego and superego" (Munroe, 2000, p. 420). Marxist duality is addressed *infra*, but it can be emphasised that although feminists substitute gender for Marxist and Hegelian 'class' they, "utilize a similar logic" (Monroe, 2000, p. 422). Once again, the prototype exhibited through

the First Couple claiming creative ability is evident in the case of transgender actors who, likewise, claim to create their own self-created gender identity, in accordance with their fantasies despite scientific, practical, verifiable, biological binary sex, to the contrary. This construal is justified through the body-mind disconnect with the emphasis on the mind (spirit) as the true self, and their physicality merely a container for the true self, thus unimportant for the assertion of true identity. In this manner, binary, biological sex assigned at birth can conveniently be ignored as nonreflective of the true self - the exact mode of feminist justification for abortion. Concerning the latter theory, justification is premised on the basis that the developing human organism is merely a facet, a prospective material body, but that the real persona, the true essence of identity, only manifests on the emergence of self-consciousness through a cognitive mind-spirit upon birth, thereby exhibiting the ethereal spirit and eternal consciousness of Cartesian dualist theory.

In the arena of sex-gender, Christianity's influence on society is being relegated to the wasteland of irrelevance. This consequence can hardly be unexpected as the 'rabble' will unfailingly choose Barabbas (*cf.,* Matt. 27:21). The crisis in society is matched by a crisis of orthodoxy, particularly in denominational Churches.[529] Social commentator Francis Mair avers that, "many religious voices have simply defected to the surrounding culture" thereby totally losing credibility. Alleged Christians present as *"*progressive while dismantling human dignity[530] on issues ranging from abortion and physician-assisted suicide to sexual ethics and human identity" (2021). An example of capitulating to the demands of cultural conformity within the Protestant Church, and permitting mésalliance marriages, is that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("ELCA") which in 2009, *"*voted to ordain practising homosexuals", a blasphemous act contrary to orthodox dogma. During June 2021, the leader of the ELCA, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, unsurprisingly appeared in a "gay pride video to celebrate pride month"[531] (Brock, 2021). In other Protestant circles, the situation is equally dire for in 2017, the Church of England issued a guidance recommending that the 5,000 schools under its oversight allow students to *"*play with the many cloaks of identity" (Klett, 2019). Here, the Church of England supports the UK Government in educating students in gender fluidity irrespective of biological sex, while totally ignoring gender realism. The Church of England has accordingly lost its testimony ("lampstand," *cf.,* Rev. 2:5b), adopting the ways of the world

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529 Richard John Neuhaus correctly observed that, "where orthodoxy becomes optional, orthodoxy will soon be prohibited. Patrons of inclusion quickly become policemen of the new political correctness" (Reno, Reich, 2022).

530 Chad Pecknold perceives that, "as a political concept, 'dignity' has failed to safeguard the human person precisely because it is a secularization of the *Imago Dei"* (*Imago*, 2021).

531 'Pride Month' is described by theologian, Kevin De Young, as, "a government-promoted, corporate-sponsored, 30 day celebration of LGBTQ acceptance and achievement" (Conscience, 2022).

instead of maintaining the Apostolic tradition. As at October 2022, the Church of England has not yet consented to same-sex marriage ceremonies, but it is apparent that this is only a matter of time before they concede in this area.[532] Unfortunately, the once staunch Scottish Episcopal Church ruled, in 2017, that it approves of homosexual marriage solemnised in their Churches and have amended their Canon law to accommodate such marriage. It is anticipated that homosexual Anglicans will *"*now ask to be married in a Scottish Episcopal Church" (BBC, June, 2017). In 2016, the US Episcopal Church decided to allow same-sex marriage. Again, in June 2021, the Methodist Church, as the 4th largest denomination in the UK, also ruled to allow same-sex marriages. Equally, same-sex marriages are now allowed in the United Reformed Church and the Quakers in Britain (Farley, 2021). In the US, a 2021 survey established that of 364,000 Churches, some 72% (264,000) are doctrinally diluted, *"*meaning, they don't care about the Bible", and only between 6,000 – 15,000 Churches have a "bona fide Biblical worldview" (Idleman, 2021). While there are many Church forums, particularly evangelical, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and ultra-orthodox, orthodox, and conservative Jewish faithful that still adhere to customary doctrinal views, there are even more Churches and religious groups that can now be deemed 'LGBT Affirming'. The latter label is a newly created shibboleth and a demarcation distinguishing progressive 'believers' from orthodox affirming sets. In the circumstances, it is unsurprising that the Church's internal conflict has "created moral confusion"[533] within society at large. If the Church can no longer be relied upon to provide stability in the public arena, and guidance on what behaviour is moral or not, then society will be left to the whims of populist ideological propaganda.

Equally perturbing is the 2020 attempt in the UK by an eminent juridical authority, the London Court of Appeal, in an instance of intrusive judicial overreach and denigration of the long-established principle of separation of powers of State organs, to redefine the term 'evangelical' in a manner to accord with the Court's leftist leanings. In the UK, the evangelical Christian organization, 'Cornerstone Adoption and Fostering Service', which denies availability of their adoption services to same-sex couples, was legally challenged for their discriminatory actions by Ofsted (an Adoption Regulating authority). In the end, the Court upheld Cornerstone's rights to practise in accordance with its Christian principles. In the Court's judgement of July 7, 2020, it, however, drew an exception to Cornerstone's core employment requirement that its carers must hold conventional evangelical Christian views on marriage. In other words, the Court held that carers can endorse or engage in same-sex intimate relationships or marriages while

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532 An indication of the prevailing attitude among senior Anglican clergy is exemplified by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams' (now Lord Williams) statement in April 2022 that, "becoming transgender is a sacred journey of becoming whole" (Swerling, Sacred, 2022).

533 Horvat, J., Problems, 2022.

employed with Cornerstone. The Court stated that "Cornerstone cannot require carers to abide by its Christian beliefs on appropriate sexual conduct". The reason given was that such conduct does not exclude a person from being defined as 'evangelical', a conviction required of all employees. Cornerstone intends to appeal to the Supreme Court in connection with this aspect of the ruling of the Court *a quo.*[534] The situation may be understood as that of a secular juridical authority dictating what the meaning and practical implication of the term 'evangelical' should be to a committed evangelical Christian forum. The secular Court did not consider first enquiring of appropriate Christian authorities as to the accepted definition of the term. A distinct intrusive overreach by an organ of State into the private religious affairs of society.

The Roman Catholic Church appears to be among the most vocal in opposition to political acceptance of the Alphabet clutch's pernicious attempts to control and transformation society through political and legal endorsement of their agenda. To exemplify, on June 22, 2021, as reported by France 24 news service, the Vatican lodged a diplomatic protest, a *note verbal,* against Italy's proposed law which would, "punish acts of discrimination and incitement to violence against gay, lesbian, transgender and disabled people" as such a law would in practise effectively, "curtail catholic freedoms of belief and expression" (June 2021). The proposed law is a veneer to safeguard Alphabet members against contrary public opinions, Christian prayer, Biblical preaching denouncing homosexual and salacious practices, counselling and reversion therapy, and to deter the members from continuing in their licentious lifestyle. In other words, the law would force all members of society to endorse, and not criticise, the activists' immoral choices. In 2019, the Vatican criticised gender ideology as 'not being based on truth' but instead on "nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants" (Klett, 2019). The Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education issued a lengthy document titled, 'Male and Female He Created Them' decrying the influence of gender ideology in education, and its destabilising effect on families and, instead, asserting the Biblical view of created binary gender and orthodox marriage (2019). Irrespective, progressive Catholicism remains a real threat to orthodoxy for, as Catholic commentator Hitchens reports, impetus is located, "in the Oval office (where) a pro-abortion US president sits with a photograph of the Holy Father proudly displayed". Hitchens adds that in Germany numerous appeasing Bishops are reassessing orthodox principles; Catholic schools are appointing 'diversity' consultants; Catholic colleges are *"*announcing their fealty to socially liberal causes" (Hitchens, 2021), and so on. Probably the most parlous tactic of the leftist

534 Cornerstone, July 2020.

political class will be the revoking of the institutional Church's tax exemption status.[535] Financial donations to Churches in the USA constitute a tax deduction against income and it is probable that such financial benefit will be revoked unless the organisations, "capitulate to the spirit of the age" (Trueman, 2014). By capitulation is meant the endorsing[536] of secular humanist ideologies, particularly the utterances of peculiar sex and gender, which will in turn extirpate the sacred testimony and purpose of the Church.[537] As it is, donations to Churches in the USA have continually declined since survey commenced in 2001. Gallup Polls reported that 44% of surveyed Americans donated to Churches in 2021, the lowest figure since 2001 (Donations, 2022). The concern surrounding the potential demise of tax exemption status of churches and other religious-based organizations and charities, came a step closer to reality in September 2022 with the Democrats' proposed legislation deceptively titled, the "Respect for Marriage Act". If approved by Congress and Senate, the Act would effectively:

- deprive "non-profit, faith-based organizations of their tax-exempt status" if they continue to enforce their "religious beliefs of marriage";
- open churches and religious organizations to litigation and severe financial penalties should they persist in maintaining their beliefs;
- enable the Federal government to "recognize any State's definition of marriage no matter how far-fetched".[538]

The secularist's assault on Marriage and the family continues on all fronts. In 2021, The Vatican's Holy See Press Office issued a statement to the effect that the Church does not have a divine mandate to bless same-sex unions thereby officially blocking attempts by certain seditious Priests to publicly endorse mésalliance unions. A great pity such commendable efforts by the Catholic Church in resisting ideological attempts to pollute dogma have not universally been imitated by Protestant Church leaders. All the same, there are evangelicals who resist the "woke" agenda, for, on 15 June 2021, the largest US evangelical Christian organisation, the Southern Baptist Convention ("SBC"), passed an important resolution. The resolution reads as follows, "We state unequivocally that abortion is murder and we reject any

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535 The 1954 Johnson Amendment to the Internal Revenue Code (501.c.3), states that charitable organizations such as Churches are exempt from "income taxes and other taxes", under certain conditions (Vile, J., Johnson, 2020).

536 As Mary Eberstadt frames it, the demand is to "Put down the Bible and pick up the Rainbow flag" (War, 2022). The 'Rainbow' flag being the "Pride' flag of the Alphabet cohort.

537 A cogent example of this possibility is the proposed passing by the Biden Administration of the 2022 "Respect for Marriage Act". The Act is federal legislation designed to redefine marriage contrary to established norms and contrary to the natural law. In other words, to entrench in national law the legality of same-sex marriage (Shackleford K., Marriage, 2022).

538 Shackelford, K., Marriage Act, 2022.

position that allows for any exceptions to the legal protection of our preborn neighbours, that compromises God's holy standards of justice or promotes any God-hating partiality" (Wingfield, 2021; *cf.,* Ps. 94:6; Isa. 10:1-2; Prov. 24:11; Ps. 82;1-4). The SBC represents some 50,000 Churches, comprising nearly 15 million members. Resistance to US policies adversely affecting society is expanding in momentum through right-thinking followers[539] of the Messiah, for the Lord always maintains a faithful remnant (*cf.,* 1 Kings 19:18, *cf.,* Rom. 11:5). A concerning state of affairs, and an indictment of Church leadership,[540] Seminaries, and Theological education generally. The post-millennial theists will have some time to wait before such a compromised Church can evangelise the world to prepare for the second advent of the Redeemer-Messiah, and the inauguration of the millennium. Perhaps the pre-millennialists are more justified in their position as it is the power, authority, and sovereignty of God that determines the circumstances of the second advent and not the success or otherwise of a frail and compromised Church.

The final arbiter of US citizens' Constitutional freedoms, such as religion, is the Supreme Court of the United States ("SCOTUS"). It is thus perturbing that in July 2021, it was reported SCOTUS refused to hear the appeal by an elderly Christian florist, one Barronelle Sturzman, against her earlier conviction for sexual discrimination for refusing to compile a floral ensemble for the wedding of a same-sex couple. Endorsing a same-sex marriage contradicted Sturzman's religious convictions (Wood, SC, 2021). Sturzman's conviction stands and so does the State law which denied her freedom of religion. So much for the 'tolerance', 'diversity' and 'inclusivity' lauded by the Alphabet ideologues, all driven by the certitude of their pliable morality in repudiating dissent against their cherished convictions. On the other hand, the matter of a Christian Baker, Jack Phillips of Colorado, was heard by SCOTUS and his refusal to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding was validated. The pivotal issue was not his religious beliefs *per se,* but the fact that when the Colorado Civil Rights Commission ('CCRC') initially considered the case it did not do so, "with the religious neutrality that the Constitution requires" (SCOTUS, June 4, 2018). The issue of *animus* exhibited by the CCRC was the core issue. SCOTUS has still not made a definitive ruling on the conflict of rights, specifically of individual religious beliefs when practically articulated contrary to prevailing State or Federal laws. There are many such cases pending a definitive ruling (*cf.,* Smith, S., Supreme Court, 2018), but the

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539 The French philosopher, Voltaire (Francois-Marie Arouet; 1694 – 1778), perceived that, "every man is a creature of the age in which he lives and few are able to raise themselves above the ideas of the time" (Voltaire, Quotes, 2022).

540 The endemic failing of many Christian leaders to confront, rather than capitulate to, populist Identity ideologies is an indictment of their moral and theological frailty.

situation does not portend favourably for religious freedom.[541] It seems certain that the relativism of Identitarians leads directly to a new form of absolutism where no dissent is tolerated, despite claims to the contrary. There is an attempt by some professing theists to dismantle traditional comprehensions of socio-moral norms and replace them with a form of culturally contextual, post-structuralist morality, also known as moralistic therapeutic deism. In such way, allegedly moral and ethical 'equality' is flexibly defined according to the changing whims of post-Christian[542] and 'diverse' (actual meaning: 'absolutist'), fluid, culture proclaiming 'tolerance' - a euphemism for intolerance. The changing nuances of the vernacular lexicon is a deceitful ploy to gain mainstream acceptance of the promoted ideologies.

In their purported struggle for distributive 'social justice' – a label through which they demand, as moral imperatives, legal and political acquiescence to their ideology - the Alphabet tribe is, in practice, intolerant[543] of any cultural, political, and religious dissent. The sect avers tolerance, diversity, and equality but such jargons are misnomers and in demonstration apply instead to their antonyms. Identitarians deny others the freedom to articulate contrasting views yet insist on their own rights to do so. Elias Canetti describes such phenomena as 'pack mentality' due to the uncomfortable realization that "they are not a multitude, they are a few and have to make up in intensity what they lack in actual numbers".[544] The Identitarians demand total societal acceptance of, and capitulation to, their articulations of identity without extrinsic constraints and in this strategy, the clan has largely succeeded.

Their intolerant attitude is epitomised in an insight into a similar situation in Lithuania during the very early 19th century, as evocatively described by a Polish writer in his 1917 biographical

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541 John Witte defines religious freedom as "the freedom of individuals and groups to make their own determinations about religious beliefs, and to act upon those beliefs peaceably without incurring civil or criminal liabilities" (Liberty, 2022, p. 8).

542 Despite avowing tolerance, Identity activists widely express *animus* towards Christians and others of monotheistic faiths. Sociology professor George Yancy refers to this phenomenon as 'Christianophobia' which is defined as, "an irrational animosity towards or hatred of Christians". Yancey's term of "Christianophobia" can be applied to "much of the anti-Christian perspective in America". He adds that, a "clear indicator of "anti-Christian bias" is particularly evident "in academia" (Yancey, Hostile, 2015, p. 14). The current era of contemporary anti-Christian cultural atmosphere in Western society can validly be referred to as a 'post-Christian' milieux.

543 Mary Eberstadt enumerates three prime dangers of the "new tolerance" exhibited by Identity activists. These are, in sum: Firstly, that it "spells self-censorship" even within "the Churches" and is therefore "institutionally destructive". Secondly, it leads to a "revival of anti-Semitism" and anti-Christian acts of aggression. The "shared moral code that joins Judaism and Christianity" leads to a "deep resentment" by Identity radicals that such a "code has ever so much as existed". Thirdly, the new intolerance "claims to command the moral high ground, but in fact it does not and cannot" (Intolerance, 2015). Examples of relativist morality are termination of the unborn, eugenics, and euthanasia, and, of course, 'cancel culture' which itself destroys individuals' lives in many ways. The net result is a deep polarization of society.

544 Canetti, E., Crowds & Power, 1978, p. 93.

work, ‘Pan Tadeusz or The Last Foray in Lithuania – A Story Among Polish Gentlefolk in the Years 1811-1812’. An extract reads:

“*That rabble had a mighty power over minds for when the Lord God sends punishment on a nation, he first deprives its citizens of reason. And so, the wiser heads dared not resist the fops, and the whole nation feared them as some pestilence, for within itself it already felt the germs of disease. They cried out against the dandies but took pattern by them; they changed faith, speech, laws and costumes. That was a masquerade, the licence of the Carnival season, after which was soon to follow the Lent of slavery”* (Mickiewicz, 1917, p. 15*; cf.,* Gen. 18 - 19).

Pursuant to an examination of central tenets of the social alteration, such as the claims that ‘Black lives matter’, ‘Transgender women are women’, and ‘Gay rights are civils rights’, it remains to discuss the claims of the Alphabet lobby that ‘love is love’ and that they were ‘born this way.’ It is on the basis of ‘love is love’, coupled with the seemingly reasonable demands for equality, legality, diversity, and inclusivity, that the aims of the LGBTQ+ actors were presented to society at large. In some jurisdictions referendums were held (e.g., Australia) with such dictums presented in support of the Alphabet sect’s claims, but in others legislation was simply passed without consulting the populace.[545] The common understanding is that ‘love is love’ does not appear to be invalid in a secular context. Through misguided good faith and naivete, society largely endorsed the claim politically, legally and publicly. Popular acceptance of the cliche also occurred in many Christian and Jewish denominations, sundry Judeo-Christian institutions, and among many individual Christians themselves. As it turns out though, the claim of ‘love is love’ is nothing other than an opening gambit for political, legal and moral dominance in society of sexual lifestyles hitherto thought eccentric. Criticism of the lifestyle is received as ‘hate speech’, there being no room for disagreement[546] as adherents claim a moral high ground based on prior discrimination and persecution. In practice, Identity activists are misologistic for their fragile contentions are unable to sustain a vigorous and rational debate.

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545 In South Africa, for example, a survey in 2008 determined that 84% of the populated condemned homosexual behaviour, describing it as “always wrong” (Smith, T. W., Cross-National, 2011). Nonetheless, the Government passed legislation authorising such behaviour and same-sex marriage.

546 For example, a Christian couple who refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex pair, was fined $135,000 (Kumar, A., Bakers, 2022). In the UK, an Anglican School chaplain was “fired for not caving to LGBT indoctrination” and was furthermore, “reported to an anti-terrorism program for preaching Christian doctrine on sexual ethics during a chapel service” (Showalter, B., Anglican, 2022).

546 *cf.,* John 21:15-17.

On the face of it, the claim that 'love is love' makes perfect sense and is supposedly scripturally supportable, for love itself is a Biblical concept. The English lexicon, unfortunately, has severe shortcomings when describing the emotion of love for the term is imprecise insofar as application is concerned. *Koine* Greek, to the contrary, has some seven differing manifestations of love but only one, *agape*, has exclusive relevance to describing love relating to individuals in their relationship with the Redeemer-Messiah. By extension, *agape* also has exclusive relevance to describing love between couples in an ordained marriage of opposite, created, binary genders, the archetype of which marriage is evident in Adam and Eve's relationship. In every scriptural instance where the term 'love' is used to describe interactions between the Messiah and his Church, or interpersonally between his 'new creations', only *agape* is recorded. There is one exception which is the instance when the Apostle Peter could not in good conscience after his humiliating failure bear to claim his reciprocal love for the Messiah was likewise *agape*, replying instead with *philia* (*cf.,* John 21:15-17). A sacrificial, supernatural, and divine love emanating from the transcendent power of the Holy Spirit, *agape* love has scriptural application exclusively to sacred relationships (*cf.,* Barth, 1961, p. 173ff). The demonstration of professed love as between persons of the same-sex or claimed gender can only be identified as *eros,*[547] that is, self-centred love expressed in narcissistic sexual pleasure. In his perceptive chapter on *'Agape and Eros'* (1961, pp. 173-193), Karl Barth describes *eros* love, in contradistinction (p. 175) to *agape,* as a love which "does not have its origin in self-denial, but in a distinctly uncritical intensification and strengthening of natural self-assertion". A love which, "man wants for himself" as a "need to express himself, or, perhaps even more simply, in the desire to find satisfaction in all his unrest" (1961, p. 174). A final point to be made here is that legality and legitimacy are not the same concept. Despite the legal and public endorsement of same-sex marriage, the legitimacy of such marriage is open to refutation. The claim that legality confers legitimacy fails in four main senses. First, is that approval by a public majority[548] cannot in itself impart legitimacy to ethereal theories of morality. Such concepts require validation through a fixed, objective, rational, universal and coherent moral authority, such as that integral to the permanency of Judeo-Christian tenets. Relativist, agent-centred, moral postulates, albeit in the purported majority,[549] cannot be considered as having moral equivalency to objective, eternal, values. Secondly, there is the issue of truth.

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547 Marcuse reveals that in Freudian sexual parlance, *eros* is described as the essential "life instinct" (Marcuse, Eros, 1966, p. viii, pp. 78ff), thereby providing justification of sexual love.

548 Although Identity activists comprise a narrow minority of society, the public endorsement of Identity principles, generally through wide referendums such as in Australia, imply a majority approval of the Identity manifesto, but in principle only. The adverse practical consequences of such approval are strongly disapproved of by the majority populace, hence the polarization of society over this issue.

549 See note 97, above.

Identity ideologues embrace effectual truth as sufficient justification for their precepts. Still, the cognitive dissonance, and neo-Gnostic based dualism, of a relativist, culturally construed truth[550] devoid of realism, absolutism, and lacking a conclusion pursuant to a vigorous process of scientific rationalism, has to be discounted as fanciful. The ignoring of all established biological and empirical principles underlying the binary categories of gender, has likewise to be dismissed as irrational. Thirdly, the prime purpose of a heterosexual marriage, as the fount of nuclear families and so the source of society itself, is conveniently dismissed. Same-sex couples overlook the ironic fact that each of the participants are the product of a heterosexual relationship. Fourthly, all three major pillars founding Western civilization, namely, those of Judeo-Christian tenets, Hellenistic philosophy and rationality together with Roman law (from which emanates the Western concept of Rule of Law), are based on an objective realism, common sense, natural justice and fairness. These founding tenets are contravened in the specious and clichéd claim that same-sex marriage is legitimate, rational, biologically defensible, and, to many, Biblically valid being based on true love. At heart, participants in a same-sex marriage seek a form of validation - an expression of the sacred through the holy character of a marriage concept in a mimicry of conventional marriage. But it cannot be, for there is no essence of transcendence or holiness in a mésalliance contrary to the Creator's precepts.

Materializing from an identity crisis, the Alphabet zealots in searching for a solution to their "unrest" (*ibid*.) embrace *eros* as a universal love language demonstrated through their sexual proclivities. At best, an articulation of love as between same-sex couples might additionally, but not principally, be seen as *philia*, never *agape* despite an attempted mimesis thereof. As

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[550] Professor Marion Montgomery confirms that relativist truth is a Gnostic construal, "whereby truth is conceived as something parceled out relatively from the 'absolute' position of finite intellect itself". Montgomery concludes that, "this position is only possible from an assumption that finite intellect transcends truth itself". This postulate describes exactly the transaction that occurred in the Edenic Garden (Gen. 3:1-6ff.), leading to the advent of Gnostic based heretical construals, now described as Identity ideologies. Montgomery summates that fabrications of the mind should emanate from truth, not truth from the mind (Metaphysical, 1993). This summation describes Gnostic philosophy, in a 'nutshell'.

a secular and humanist derived emotional and physical desire, *eros*[551] is contrary to scripture[552] and hence a contravention of the Divine's precepts, as are all sensual same-sex relationships (*cf.,* Lev. 20:13; 1 Tim. 1:10). The universal veracity of the aphorism, 'love is love', *eros*, is accordingly to be rejected by right-thinking disciples of the Redeemer-Messiah (*cf.,* Rom. 1:24-27). The result is that not all love is love, and the claims of the Alphabet sect and their supporters to the contrary are rejected in the light of scripture. In sum, the specious adage, 'love is love', is simply a reductionist construal of a rather complex matter.

In similar fashion, the Alphabet tribes' additional claim to societal condonation and acceptance of their sexual choices is based on the adage that they were 'born this way,' thereby averring an anthropomorphic intent beyond their control. This specious aphorism is designed to enable the acolytes to eschew even a scintilla of responsibility for their sexual and gender preferences. The view is that just as binary heterosexual members of society claim to be congenitally normal, so too are those of same-sex sexual inclinations, with neither having a choice in the matter. No committed followers of the Messiah, or those embracing Judeo-Christian tenets, can agree with such justification. The chief reason being that with the creation of the first human beings in the image of the Creator, namely, two members of opposite binary genders consecrated in marriage and as archetypes of future marriages, families, and society - the Creator affirmed that his creation was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). There exists no scriptural justification for gender self-identification outside of the binary biological genders. Although the Messiah stated that "There are eunuchs who have been so from birth" (Matt. 19:12), this statement is made in the context of marriage and refers to those individuals who are unable

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551 Physical love and beauty are attributes of the mythical Greek deity, Aphrodite (the Roman, Venus), the "goddess of attraction and sexual love" (Plato, Symposium, 1994, p. 98). Aphrodite was the mother of *Eros*, the god of love, passion. *Eros* was adopted as the Greek word for "passionate love", specifically, "sexual desire" (Plato, 1994, p. 13), and particularly the "irrational love" of homoeroticism (Plato, 1994, p. xv - xx). Aphrodite is a reiteration of the licentious goddess, Astarte (the feminine Assyrian Ishtar; Canaanite Asherah), of 1 Kings 11 (c*f.,* Jer. 44:17; 2 Kings 23; Jer. 23:13; 1 Sam. 1:33), whose devotee was Queen Jezebel, the so-called "Queen of Heaven" of Jeremiah 44:25. The pagan Jezebel induced Israel's King Ahab to lead the Israelites into idolatry (1 Kings 16:31; Ch. 18). These pagan personages arise through the rebellion of Nimrod (Gen. 11), originating from the antinomianism recorded in Genesis 3.

552 In Plato's 'Symposium', his protagonist Phaedrus in a speech lauding *eros*, claimed that *eros* is a "primordial god" (Plato, 1994, Para. 178a, p. 10). Certainly, the Alphabet group is to be identified with this statement as the main focus of their 'love' and relationship is primarily, if not exclusively, founded on pagan, homoerotic and/or pederastic practice associated with Aphrodite. Such activity denotes the original and ancient application of the term *eros*, itself originating from a postlapsarian love of self, an iteration of *eritus sicut Deus* (Gen. 3). Pederasty was prevalent and acceptable in ancient Greek society (Leithart, Athens, 1993), hence Phaedrus specifically applying *eros* to a man and his boyfriend lover (Para. 178a), p. 10), particularly to "young boys" (Para. 181-182 ff., pp. 14-15 ff.). Furthermore, Phaedrus explains that "*eros* and Aphrodite are inseparable" (Para. 180a, p. 13), thereby revealing the distinct pagan origins of the sexual, humanist, *eros* love concept, in contradistinction to the pivotal Judeo-Christian tenet (1. Jn 3:16; Ps. 103:17; Jer. 31:3), of *agape* love.

to marry and procreate due to a congenital defect affecting their reproductive organs. The statement of Jesus does not apply to those who subjectively claim a gender of their own making, such as transgender self-identifiers, and especially not those who ignore established morality derived from the natural law and Christian principles. Instead, sectarians seek warrant for their same-sex attraction on the basis that they 'were born this way.' There exists no alternative grammatical, literary or theological interpretation to the stated position other than to disregard the inerrancy, veracity, and historicity of the creation scenario. This strategy has been attempted through the ages, not only by non-theists, but also among certain supposed theists, generally those of the progressive or leftist camp. And so, the onslaught against the fundamental identity, the *imago Dei,* of humankind continues unabated giving continuation to the immense disorder in the areas of personal identity, meaning in life, soteriological transcendence, and individual eschatology. These heretical secular humanist tenets are not dissimilar to those proposed by Pelagius (Elwell, 1998, p. 833ff), in by-passing the omnipotence and salvific imperatives of the Divine. Additionally, these tenets attest to the primordial origins of the *eritus sicut Deus* heresy, with the focus on the individual as the sole point of reference, as revealed in Genesis 3:5.

To counter proscriptive religious and faith-based reproach of their sexual choices, same-sex proponents seek scientific and biological genetic verification of their claim that they were 'born this way'. A 2019 research article in the prestigious 'Science' Journal involving a comprehensive scientific investigation of nearly 500,000 individuals, indicated that "all tested genetic variants… do not allow meaningful prediction of an individual's sexual behaviour". Additionally, the results "suggest that there is no single continuum from opposite-sex to same-sex sexual behaviour". The report states, in conclusion, that their findings, "underscore the complexity of sexuality" for "many uncertainties remain to be explored, including how socio-cultural influences on sexual preference might interact with genetic influences" (Ganna & Verweij, 2019, p. 7693ff.). The research clarifies that there are no dominant or identifiable genes predicting or validating same-sex proclivity despite some minor but remote genetic components. A prominent American sociologist comments on the Science Journal findings that, "the GWAS (Genome-wide Association Study) evidence shows pretty conclusively that, firstly, the genetic basis for homosexuality is small compared to environmental contributions; secondly, that what genetic association there is, is diffuse and unrelated to any particular discoverable cause" (Cook, Gene, 2022). From a theological viewpoint, the culprit is the doctrine of original sin and, as a consequence, humankind's penchant towards licentious

behaviour,[553] typified by the sodomite inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1-29). However, the socio-psychological influences exacerbating same-sex proclivity are not to be underestimated. The denigration of the fatherhood concept in society, coupled with Freud and Kinsley's sexual theories, are both prime catalysts in the search for identity and meaning by alienated individuals of both genders.

Although this chapter is categorised under the heading of 'Radical Feminism', the same ideological considerations raised herein apply equally to the militant male homosexual lobby. The male same-sex activists likewise find their search for personal identity and meaning within a sectarian, Alphabet, context. In their search for the authentic self, there will also be those persons who "hope to blend in", thereby expressing a "desire to avoid isolation as a recalcitrant, non-conforming individual".[554] In any event, the issues of sex and gender whether pertinent to males or females, are so co-mingled that they cannot be considered separately. To exemplify, the Alphabetical classes include persons claiming identity variably described as transsexual, transgender, bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, asexual, intersex, demisexual, cisgender, straight, gay, genderqueer, circumgender, isoneutrois, quiverdemigender, non-binary, and allied permutations. The male homosexual lobby is certainly as zealous in the affirmation of their alleged rights as that of the devoted feminists. Reminiscent of the actions of the sodomite fanatics as recounted in passages relating to Lot and his family in the town of Sodom (Gen. 19:4-5), are the actions of members of the San Francisco Gay Men's Choir. In July 2021 the choir published a video wherein they sang, 'We are coming for your Children', which verse includes the refrain, "We will convert your children – it happens bit by bit, quietly and subtly and you will barely notice it…we'll convert your children: we'll make them tolerant and fair" (Brown, Response, 2021).[555] The prophetic characteristic of this event, as initially

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553 Cultural historian and Columbia University professor, Quintin Anderson, in his 1974 Introduction to the works of poet Walt Whitman, contends that an innate guilt, from which freedom is sought by identity activists, originates from the Judeo-Christian precept of original sin. He states as follows, "Christianity offers its account of internalized power long before Freud, founding duty upon a divinely planted conscience" (cf., Whitman, Leaves, 1974, p. 19). The aim of foundational psycho-analysists like Freud and Carl Jung was, essentially, to liberate repressed sexual guilt by a focus on the inner, therapeutic, self as the prime concern. Commenting on Anderson's submissions many years later, M.D. Aeschliman says that "The sexual anarchists hated this tradition (i.e., of innate awareness) and today they hate it still. Our hyper-sexualized society continually celebrates novel 'liberations' from all forms of sublimation, reticence, inhibition, restraint, and modesty" (2022). Freud would heartily approve of such 'liberation'.

554 Reed, L., Thesis, 2022.

555 A disquieting revelation is that the hitherto trusted family-oriented media company, Disney, has had an agenda for many years to subtly introduce homosexuality to children. In an article dated 30 March 2022, social commentator Rod Dreher reported that "Senior Disney programming executive, Latoya Raveneau, in a secret company video, admits to queering child programming for years". Her words were as follows, "I was just, wherever I could, adding queerness". Additionally, Disney corporate president Karey Burke, states that she supports having, "many, many, LGBTQIA

recorded in Genesis 18-19, has a 'fresh" application, a reiteration, in a current setting as has periodically occurred during the millennia past, and will find ultimate fulfilment in the eschaton with the destruction of the licentious Babylon spirit (*cf.,* Rev. 18). It is concerning that criticism of the Choir would be viewed as scurrilous whereas their own words containing destructive intent are deemed acceptable. The deviant praxis of the gay activists highlights the immoralism of these individuals, declaring themselves free of any restraint in the areas of sexuality while claiming an authentic personal and group identity,[556] in the spirit of *eritus sicut Deus*. Disciples of the Redeemer-Messiah cannot acquiesce to the Alphabet's lobby's demands for 'diversity,' tolerance' and 'equity', for the principles of Kingdom culture are based on the exclusive and absolutist claims of the Redeemer-Messiah to the effect that he is "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6). There is no other 'way', no path to identity, meaning, morality, ontological security and sanctity of life; and, no other 'truth' aside from the objective, absolute truth and moral legitimacy of Judeo-Christian dogma with its patent sexual ethics and template for marriage. There is no other 'life' giving purpose, pathway to transcendence, soteriological security and eschatology of hope exterior to the Judeo-Christian canons. It is for this reason that adherents to orthodox canonical dogma will continue to be considered opprobrious in the current political and social environment. In particular, Judeo-Christian sexual ethics, canonical marriage, binary gender precepts, the sanctity of life, including the life of fetal human beings, and, generally, fundamental doctrines especially the Fatherhood of God, remain under acute threat of eradication, or at minimum, becoming irrelevant in the prevailing atheistic secular humanist environment.

6.4.4 Feminism and Abortion

Feminist claims to rights of abortion[557] are articulated through aphorisms like, 'Woman's rights are human rights'; 'my body, my choice'; and 'abortion rights are woman's rights'. In a just and

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characters in our stories, with a minimum 50% of our characters to be LGBTQIA and racial minorities" (Dreher, Disney, 2022).

556 The idea of a Group identity owes stimulus in the modern era to Martin Heidegger who, in his work, Being and Time, initiated a "definitive philosophical attack on the foundations of individual identity", instead promoting a philosophical justification for the "idea of a collective identity" (Izenberg, 2016, p. 446). The actualization of Heidegger's proposal finds utterance in the contemporary Alphabet group, and likeminded identity cohorts, with their instinct for a tribal identity. However, Heidegger's ideological descendants like Sartre, De Beauvoir and other existentialists focused almost exclusively on the paradox of a personal identity in light of a chaotic universe *sans* meaning. In fact, while Sartre acknowledged the reality of group identity, he "subordinated it theoretically to the ontological primacy of individual consciousness" (Izenberg, 29016, p. 145).

557 Italian philosopher Augusto del Noce considers violence a consequence of "modern Gnosticism". Specifically, when the Marxist "revolutionary dream fades away, secularized Gnosticism takes a libertine form which is accompanied by a different form of violence: the self is experienced as a commodity… the reduction of people to objects becomes universal" and thus violence remains "absolutely dominant" (2014, p. xviii; *cf.,* p. 23). The veracity of this conclusion is evident in the

equitable society, particularly one established on Judeo-Christian norms and values emanating from a natural law background, the right to life is paramount with innocent human life protected in law. These elementary ethical values are enunciated in every significant Christian Creed and Confession of Faith through the ages. The values are set out in the Preamble to the American Declaration of Independence ("Declaration") of 1776, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (Declaration, 2021). The principles contained in the Declaration were integrated a few years later into the Constitution of the US and the Bill of Rights which heavily influenced the Constitutions, Bills of Rights or similar core political documents of other Western nations. The founding documents creating the USA primarily reflect Judeo-Christian principles, with most founding members being Protestant Puritans, initially of the 1620 Mayflower arrival.

The Judeo-Christian positions affirms the equality and right to 'life and liberty' of children whether born or in utero. Personhood was attributed even while a child remained unborn, during the gestation period, as follows:

- All persons are created in the image of God ('*imago Dei'*) and have equal value (*cf.,* Gen. 1:26);
- The child in Hagar's womb was understood as being a person (*cf.,* Gen. 16:11);
- In the Book of Jeremiah, the prophet recorded the words of the Creator, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5);
- In Psalm 139:15-16, the same principle applies as in Jeremiah, "Your eyes saw my unframed substance";
- The Messianic verses of Isaiah confirm the aforegoing, "The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name" (Isa. 49:1, 5);
- The unborn John the Baptist 'leaped for joy' upon his mother, Elizabeth, hearing Mary's greeting *(cf.,* Luke 1:41; 1:31-35);
- St. Paul was destined for Kingdom work before he was born (*cf.,* Gal. 1:15);
- Genesis 25:21-22 records that the unborn are designated 'children', within the pregnant mother, "The children struggled together within her" (Rebekah).

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ongoing violence perpetrated against individuals (the bodies of whom are considered inconsequential "objects" in Gnostic dualistic theory) through abortion, eugenics and euthanasia.

The aforegoing Biblical doctrine is supported by established science that confirms life commences at conception and that the unborn infant is fully human. This fact is enunciated in the authoritative medical text, 'The Developing Human', which states that, "Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialised totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual" (Moore, 1998, p. 18). In support, Dr. Matthews-Roth of the prestigious Harvard University Medical School affirms that, "It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception…and this developing human always is a member of our species in all stages of its life" (Stark, Biology, 2019). As with the mother and father, a fetus has equal human rights. In sum, the termination of an unborn child is both a religious and a human rights issue, both of which principles are disdained by Identitarians despite constitutional, ethical and moral validity.

Through a purposed cognitive dichotomy of the scientific fact that a child acquires identity at conception, pro-abortion epigones aver that identity as a human being is only conferred upon a child at birth. Despite all empirical evidence to the contrary, the abortion activists pathologically deny life commences at fertilisation. Such evidence inculcates the fetal person as having a unique, different, identity and chromosomes to the mother and father; possessing an early heartbeat (prior to six weeks) and a human form with all functioning organs. The situation is even more egregious as there exists prevalent full-term abortion, which in actuality entails legal euthanasia at birth. Even in earlier term abortion, should an aborted fetal infant remain alive, such child is left to die without medical intervention or offered basic palliative care. Equally concerning, there is a widespread and profitable trade in aborted children's body parts sanctioned by the US Federal Government and conducted by the major abortion provider in the USA, Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is a source of doner funds to the Democratic Party (Weigel, Democrats, 2021), the current administration in the US and who are the leading instigators of leftist, malignant, policies such as abortion until full term, and the refusal to legislate medical care for those children surviving an abortion attempt. The Democrat Party's[558] view is that abortion is essential to ensure equal rights for women and so promote the claim that 'women's rights are civil and human rights'. The polarity in the issue of right to life, in the case of abortion, between the two major political parties is stark with 70% of Republicans approving the June 2022 Supreme Court decision in the Dobbs trial overruling

[558] It is to be noted that of the United States House of Representatives' 435 voting members, there exists only a single pro-life Democrat Party Representative, viz., Henry Cuellar of Texas. All other pro-life members are Republican Party members (Murdock, Last, 2022).

Roe v. Wade. On the other hand, 82% of Democrats favour abortion and thus disapprove of the Dobbs decision.[559]

Policy approving abortion manifests in part from a visceral *ressentiment* against the perceived patriarchal system dominating women's rights – a policy reflecting the Marxist class-struggle but adapted for gender equality – coupled with the ancient dichotomy between spirit and body.[560] The policy has been refreshed in a post-modern, post-Christian and post-structuralist era by feminists and secular humanist philosophers. The position, it seems, of feminism is that although a fetal organism exists during gestation, it is 'piecemeal,' undergoing gradual formation like a building project and cannot be classified a human being during the gestational process. A real, distinct, extrinsic person, the true self and true persona, albeit associated with the physical body, only comes into existence upon the advent of self-consciousness after birth (Stark, Unborn, 2021). Elissa Stark, in an article replete with extra-contextual 'proof texts' and applications of a *non sequitur* dialectic, writes that "women see the path to personhood as a gradual one". She adds that Janet Crepps, Lawyer for the US Centre of Reproductive Rights, is aware that certain religious assemblies hold life commences at conception. And so, the proponents' views might infringe upon the freedom of religion of others, whose "traditions tell them otherwise" (Stark, Unborn, 2021). Ignoring all scientific and biological verifications embracing viable fetal humans, and relying on some vagueness in selected scriptural passages surrounding personhood, abortion actors conclude that 'life evolves in stages', the child only viable and complete upon live birth and the advent of self-consciousness (Strauss, 2017). Fetal infants are thus not entitled to the same rights, dignity, or intrinsic worth as purposefully born-alive infants. This fabricated supposition gives purported justification for a woman's right to liquidate the life of a preborn child.[561] Coexistent with the feminist maxim that 'women's rights are civil and human rights' and abortion is 'women's health rights', is an interconnected slogan of 'pro-choice - my body, my choice.' That is, the claim that gestating women alone can make decisions with respect to their physical body. In normal circumstances the adage is understandable, for example, when applied to their personal health care, but not

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559 Pew, Majority, July 2022.

560 Crisply stated by Prof Weiner, "politics of abstraction readily, enthusiastically, sacrifices actual individuals to ethereal goals" (Morals, 2019). Weiner highlights the dangers of acting on theory vis-a-vis the morality and mortality of persons. Nazi ideology was similar, regarding imperfect persons as less than the desired, theoretical, *Übermensch* of Nietzsche, and therefore disposable.

561 Emanating from a moral vacuum through State enforced secularism, the advent of identity ideologies negate the Judeo-Christian principles of the dignity and value of each human being. Prof. George views the situation thus, "Secularism rejects the proposition central to the Judeo-Christian tradition of thought about life and death: that human life is intrinsically, and not merely instrumentally, good and therefore morally inviolable". He adds that secularism, "rejects traditional morality's condemnation of abortion, suicide, infanticide of so-called defective children, and certain other life-depriving acts" (Clash, 1999).

when it infringes upon the rights of a fetal child, who also has unequivocal human rights to life. The 'my body, my choice' demand is utilised by feminists in validating their assaults upon the unborn child, whose rights of existence are sublated. Freedom of choice needs to be balanced with the associated rights of others, namely, the right to life of the fetal human being. Termination of a defenceless life is the most drastic and destructive action imaginable in a humane society but the problem is that there is no entity judicially authorised to represent the unborn child. Fathers are unable to legally prevent the pregnant mother of her choice in terminating the pregnancy. This restriction arises from the pivotal 1973 Supreme Court decision in Roe versus Wade, federally permitting elective abortion.[562] Only upon the overthrow of the Roe decision could *amicus curiae* briefs by interested parties be filed in support of the unborn child. In a controversial decision on June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court overruled the Roe decision on the basis that the Constitution does not provide for abortion rights at national level. However, the issue of a fetus constituting a legal person remains a future decision. In this context, law professor Gerald Bradley comments that, "Dobb's silence about whether the unborn count as constitutional 'persons' deserves criticism. But the only coherent reading of the majority opinion is that abortion kills a living human individual".[563] Unfortunately, the members of the Court will change from time to time with replacements nominated by the ruling party, so the future of this vital question remains uncertain in U.S. law.

According to orthodox theology, the *imago Dei* of a human being is a unity of "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. 5:23), with importance also ascribed to the physical body which is a "Temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19). The body is a container through which disciples of the Messiah are urged to worship him, "so glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20). Once the *imago Dei* is dismissed then a secular creation is required to replace identity lost. The confused world of feminist elision arguments is exposed whereby they separate the component parts of self in order to justify their ideologies. The reality is that neither the dualism of the body-spirit proposition nor its contradiction of the pure materialism of evolution theory are rational, objectively verifiable or coherent. While physical organisms come into being at conception, conferring personhood, there is a pre-existing eternal, ethereal and transcendent facet of personhood, namely, the soul-spirit, which emanates from the Divine in eternity past, in accordance with his salvific purpose (*cf.,* Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:15-16). Feminist abortion theory

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562 Theologian Richard John Neuhaus, commented on Roe v. Wade as follows, "That notorious decision of 1973 is the most consequential moral and political event of the last half century. It has produced a dramatic realignment of moral and political forces". "How we respond to this horror defines us who we are as individuals and as a people". Neuhaus refers to the situation as a "great contest between the culture of life and the culture of death" (Weary, 2008).

563 Bradley, G. V., Downstream, October 2022.

is a lucent iteration of the ancient Gnostic body-spirit dualism adapted to context by cultural Marxism and other philosophical proposals. It therefore defeats the dualistic theories of the feminist and pro-abortion lobby that, in accordance with overwhelming scientific proof, a fully human being comes into existence upon fertilisation and is not only considered a human upon birth and an inestimable advent of self-consciousness. In this respect, abortion proponents engage in a cognitive disconnect from reality for, according to a slew of scientific studies, a distinct human being with unique DNA emerges upon conception. It is the sublation of another human right, that of right to life of an unborn child, that is the parlous cost of feminist assertion of their sovereign-selves. It is also the negation of a father's right to exercise a protective parental role over his child for a prospective father cannot legally veto an abortion decision, which means his unborn child can be destroyed without his consent (Gallagher, 2021). In the 1992 case of Planned Parenthood versus Casey (505 U.S., 833, 1992), the majority opinion of the Court was to the effect that it was not mandatory for women to notify their husbands of a pending abortion. But by 2005, the majority consensus of US public opinion was that fathers should be notified about the prospective mother's planned abortion. The implication is that upon notification, the father of the fetal human being could take legal action to protect his and the child's rights. The advent of DNA testing would remove any reservations relating to the identity of the biological father of the preborn infant (Conley, 2005). A decision by SCOTUS would be necessary to define a father's rights nationally but juridical decisions at State level would initially have to deal with the situation. In the interim, prospective fathers do not have the right of veto over a woman's planned abortion of their anticipated child.

It is clear that there are a number of issues arising from the claimed right to terminate an unborn child:

- firstly, the feminist, secular humanist, narcissistic, and solipsistic assertion of the creative imperial-self and autotheism;
- second, the acquiescence to prevailing feminist contextual stance on morality and ethical concerns;
- third, the Plato and Plotinus' Gnostic dualism theory of the spirit (the true 'self) exhibited by the advent of self-consciousness in a born child, contradistinctive to the corrupted, inconsequential, material fetal body under manufacture during gestation;
- fourth, the cultural Marxist, and related philosophies (such as evolution), underlying the present social and political 'gender-struggle' for the 'equality of women';
- fifth, the nefarious, indefatigable, and diabolical strategies of the serpent to destroy the pinnacle of the Divine's creation, the human beings made in his image, utilising secular humanist, nihilistic, and antitheist ideologies.

The first four issues are reflective of the human search for identity and meaning exterior to the conferred *imago Dei*. The fifth is the underlying evil spiritual force motivating and empowering all human resistance to the Creator and his dynamic soteriological agenda since Edenic events. It cannot be overlooked that, after all, Satan is the "prince of the power of the air"; "the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), who are the "rulers of this age" (1 Cor. 2:8), and who is "the spirit of the world" (1 Cor. 2:12). The evil spirit of Lucifer does not work in a vacuum as is evident in the Garden scenario, but through willing agents such as Judas Iscariot and many other such personages through the ages, including the anti-theistic, secular, often pagan, humanists, the pro-abortion lobby and apostate Judeo-Christian theists.

A question to be addressed is the claim that 'women's rights are civil (and human) rights'. While there is truth in this claim it is simply part of a larger view, for all human beings have, or should have, equal civil rights. While women certainly have rights, so do the unborn humans they might be gestating and so, also, the fathers of the expected children. All representations of human society are entitled to equal civil and human rights, the mother, child and father, but there must be a balance between the articulation of such rights and the coexistent rights of others affected by such proclamation. This is particularly the case with the intentional euthanasia of fetal humans, euphemistically labelled 'abortion'. Feminists claim that their overriding right to abortion is that it constitutes 'women's health care'. The emphasis on the autonomous-self to the exclusion of all other factors or considerations and accountable to no one, arises in this context for there is nary a hint of altruism or self-abnegation in the reasoning or actions of the gestating mother in relation to her unborn baby, despite heartbeat and other scientific factors confirming life. It is difficult to conceive that, other for a rare therapeutic reason where possibly the mother's life could be in danger should the pregnancy go to term, the wholesaler slaughter of innocent preborn infants can be designated 'health care' or, more particularly, 'women's reproductive health care.' In elucidation of the raised claim, it is recorded that during 2019 some 30,000 US Medical Doctors in support of the proposed 'Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act', declared that it was never a necessity to intentionally terminate a fetal human being in order to ensure the life of the mother (Harrison, 2019). The Statement, representing numerous prestigious medical practitioners' organisations such as the American College of Paediatricians comprising Hippocratic oath-adherent Medical Practitioners, clarifies their standpoint by stressing salient information:

- "It is an undisputed scientific fact that a distinct, living, human being exists in the womb of a pregnant mother". From "the moment of fertilization, and after 20 weeks

from fertilization it is never necessary to intentionally kill the fetal human being to save the mother's life although an extremely rare possibility can exist prior thereto";

- "Abortion is not healthcare, much less an essential part of women's health care, and abortion in the third trimester is not done to save a woman's life";
- "No matter the circumstances of their birth, infants who are born alive must be given appropriate medical care";
- "There is no scientific or legal reason to distinguish between human beings born-alive after an attempted abortion and human beings born after a planned live birth" (Harrison, 2019).

In this context, a most crucial development occurred during June 2021 when, on behalf of preborn fetal humans, a lawsuit was launched in the US Rhode Island State Supreme Court, which lawsuit argues that both a 'pre-viable fetus' and a 'post-viable fetus' have *locus standi* – legal standing - the legal right to enforce their rights. Three local women represented the rights of a pre-born fetus, supported by the Catholics for Life and Servants of Christ for Life organisations. While the lawsuit focus is on the constitutionality of the Rhode Island Reproductive Privacy Act, a query does arise as to whether a viable pre-born infant is a person under existing laws (Manno, 2021). These grievous issues remain to be decided and might very well result in a hearing before SCOTUS. The key rationale justifying abortion is that a fetal human is not a person under the law. Once this issue is resolved through a ruling that a fetus is in fact a legal person, and has the inalienable right to life of a person, then legal validation for abortion cannot continue to be countenanced,[564] whether at State or Federal level. The global rationalisation for abortion rights might then consequently collapse or be substantially vitiated.

Ironically, Norma McCorvey, the pseudonymic Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade, herself never underwent an abortion but gave birth to three children, and later became a firm pro-life proponent advocating for a judicial overturn of the Roe matter which she viewed as an incorrect decision (Bilger, Norma, 2021). Just as international justification for abortion was based on Roe v. Wade, so, too, will the international demise of abortion, either partial or whole, be based predominantly on the judgement in Dobbs v. Jackson's Women Health, 2022,[565]

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564 Philosopher Chantel Delsol proposes an obvious solution when she says that, "Convert people to Christianity; to the intrinsic dignity of each embryo, and abortion will be abolished" (Bertoglio, 2022). It is only in the cultural Christian tradition that the "intrinsic dignity" of the unborn child is emphasised. Ultimately the politicians and jurists must become "converted" so that laws honouring the right to life of the fetal child is recognised. Nonetheless, the compelling scientific and biological basis for abolishment of abortion is also a strong factor in support of fetal rights.

565 Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health, #19-1392.

overruling Roe v. Wade. The Biden[566] Administration's vigorous international promotion of abortion, as judicially endorsed by the defunct Roe case, led to a devastating mortal impact on fetal infants (*cf.,* Bilger, 2021). Much of the international pro-life community eagerly awaited a favourable judgement in the Dobbs case so they could legally challenge abortion rights in their home country (*cf.,* Bilger, 2021). A demonstration of this occurred in Spain during late June 2022 when a pro-life rally, attended by over 100,000 people, gathered to hear the Mayor of Madrid say that, "the victory for life in the United States should inspire pro-lifers across the world to be united and active in restoring a culture of life. It is essential to defend the Christian foundations of our society in the face of relentless social disorder".[567]

The often ignored emotional and psychological cost of abortion upon the well-being of pregnant women has been quantified by a US organisation, deceptively labelled, 'Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health' (ANSIRH). The organization is a division of the San Francisco based 'Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health'. The group "exists precisely for the purpose of developing research that can be used to entice or bully governments around the world into expanding abortion services and decreasing population growth, especially among the poor" (Reardon, 2021). Such organisation, together with its active conjunct, Planned Parenthood, certainly gives veracity to Pope John Paul II's description of a prevailing "culture of death" emanating from the USA. According to ANSIRH, 58% of women undergoing an abortion experienced psychological stress, "from some level of attachment to their pregnancies" and that about 64% of aborting women, "feel pressure by others to abort" (Reardon, 2021). It is a natural, physiological, and neurochemical process for women to feel emotional attachment to their unborn child (Harrington, Atomising, 2021), and psychological damage resulting from conscious termination will persist for extended periods. This consequence is highlighted by the claim that 64% of women were concerned about "ending a potential life", and as many as 70% experienced doubt about undergoing an abortion. In short, the vast majority of aborting women, "are at elevated risk of negative emotional reactions after their abortions" including, "regret, grief, loss, depression, sleep disorders, substance abuse and a host of other problems" (Reardon, 2021). The long term psychological and emotional damage to a woman post-abortion is further comprehensible through studies depicting that at a cellular and physiological level, remnants of the child's DNA remain within the mother for

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566 President Biden has clearly adapted his personal beliefs to accommodate prevailing populist, atheistic, Identity ideology. In 1987, the then Senator Biden clarified that, "My rights are not derived from any government…my rights are because I exist. They were given to me and each of our fellow citizens by our Creator, and they represent the essence of human dignity" (Johnson, P.E., Nihilism, 1993). The question then arises as to how Biden's support of abortion accords with his claim that inalienable rights (to life) constitute "the essence of human dignity"?

567 Bilger, M., Pro-Life, 2022.

some years, a factor described as “fetal microchimerism”. These discoveries are concerning when the prevalence of abortion is considered, for some 25% of all American women will have an abortion before the age of 45 years”, according to the world’s leading abortion provider, Planned Parenthood (Becca, Planned Parenthood, 2018). With the demise of Federally sanctioned abortion, the onus is now on individual States to continue the struggle to eliminate the polemical practice of abortion.

Fathers, albeit to a lesser scale than mothers, also experience neurochemical effects, but mainly upon involvement with the birth and caring of their child (Harrington, Atomising, 2021). Studies reveal the significant emotional and psychological cost on the father of a terminated child, for many fathers would obviously be highly distressed at the prospect, and the outcome, of termination together with their powerlessness of legal prevention. The rights[568] and holistic well-being of fathers are completely dismissed in the abortion controversy. The US Supreme Court (in the case of Planned Parenthood of Missouri v. Danforth, 1976: 74-1151), overruled State laws requiring fathers to be notified in the event of a proposed abortion by the prospective mother (Jeffrey, 2019). The situation is the same in the UK (*cf.,* BPAS, 2015). The emotional impact on fathers is deleterious, for even as much as 40 years ago, in 1983, a study was undertaken of the psychological and psychopathological effects on a father of an aborted child. The researchers concluded that as a result of the termination, “persecutory or depressive anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms” may manifest. Furthermore, “fatherhood causes deep personal and social changes and conflicts. It is therefore natural that an interruption of this process, such as through abortion, can inspire feelings of being partially ‘killed’ thus bringing back childhood anxieties and feeling of castration” (Benvenuti, 1983).

The Statistics of abortion are disturbing, for in excess of 63 million unborn children in the USA, for example, have been legally terminated by medical or surgical abortion during the period 1973 - 2018 (Elflein, 2020). Specific figures for chemical abortions are unavailable and indeterminable as many such abortions take place in private with medication ordered online. In the USA, from a high of 1.5 million legal abortions annually in the decade commencing 1990 (Diamant, Data, 2022), a decrease has been noted for in 2020 a figure of some 930,000 abortions occurred.[569] Other Western statistics reflect that, for example, according to the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland, 13,709 unborn humans have been killed

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568 A 2021 U.S. survey indicates that 27% of prospective fathers advocated against their female partners undergoing an abortion of their mutual child. 31% did not offer any advice at all, probably intimidated or valuing their relationship over the rights of the unborn child. In total, 58% were not vocally supportive of the abortion (Earls, 2022).

569 Kamman, S., Abortions, 2022.

through abortion since January 1, 2019 (to June 2021), when abortion was first legalised. Between January and December 2020, 6,577 abortions took place there, the vast majority (6,455) categorised as "early pregnancy" (Dept. Health, 2021), often a euphemism for abortion as a form of contraception. In sum, it is estimated that some 43 million induced abortions occur annually worldwide, some 25% of all pregnancies (Derbyshire, 2020), making abortion "the leading cause of death worldwide for a third year in a row" (Foley, Abortion, 2022). Terminating millions of unborn and unwanted human beings is often used as a convenient form of birth control – an inhumane and diabolical method of disposal of unwanted children. This is particularly so as studies published in the 'Journal of Medical Ethics' indicate that unborn children feel pain during the termination process earlier than at 24 weeks and probably as early as 13 weeks when most terminations occur. The method of fetal death is described by researches as follows, "an injection of potassium chloride directly into the fetal heart or an injection of digoxin directly into the fetus or intra-amniotically". When done surgically via a dilation and evacuation ("D & E") procedure, the "fetus is removed in pieces via several surgical manoeuvres using grasping forceps. Fetal death follows either direct feticide performed before the D & C or the trauma of the D & E results in the death of the fetus" (Derbyshire, 2020, p. 3). Taking into account that life commences at conception and heartbeat can be detected as early as 3-6 weeks after conception, the aforegoing description of fetal termination can only be described as sanctioned torture and murder. The abortion actors direct their actions contrary to the natural law rights of a living, sentient, human being - a child deprived of the right to life without any legal or ethical consequence for the perpetrators. Whereas legislation exists in the UK, and elsewhere, that an animal fetus is entitled to a "humane" destruction (Animals Scientific Procedures Act, 1986, UK), no such requirement exists concerning unborn human beings, the pinnacle of Creation: a devastating indictment of the 'culture of death' prevalent in Western and other societies, stimulated by the leftist activists in the USA and Europe.[570] Pope John Paul II's description of a "culture of death", well describes the "various scientific and commercial currents that in the false name of progress encourage hideous abuses against mankind" (Cotton, 2021). A succinct description of the mortal threat

[570] On May 25, 2021, the European Parliament published a Report on "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Union ("EU"), in the Frame of Women's Health". It was decreed, *Inter alia*, that, "Member States are to ensure universal access to safe and legal abortion, and respect for the right to freedom, privacy and the best attainable healthcare" (European Parliament, A9-0169/2021). Thus all individual member States are compelled to adhere to the abortion dictates of the EU despite possible majority citizens' disapproval thereof. There is no option for dissent by members States. Notwithstanding the freedoms contained within the established classic liberal democratic tradition of Western Europe, the increase in totalitarianism by centralised, unelected, *nomenklatura* is becoming entrenched, thereby altering the political landscape of Europe.

facing so many members of society in a post-Christian context through the lethal practice of abortion, eugenics, and euthanasia.

Allied with abortion generally, and coupled with the eugenical termination of suspected imperfect unborn children, is the egregious trade in harvested body parts. Video evidence exposed by intrepid investigative journalist, David Daleiden, showed the nefarious dealing in body members of aborted infants and proves that even those neonates, those born alive, "are vivisected for their organs" while "abortionists altered procedures to procure more commercially valuable fetal organs and parts". The "altered abortion procedures were even done with the intended result of delivering fully intact fetuses, some of whose hearts were still beating" (Daleiden, 2021).[571] The Thomas More Society, a public interest law firm who represent Daleiden, confirms that through secret video recordings while displaying much fortitude, he "uncovered evidence of infants born alive and vivisected for their organs, illegal partial birth abortions, and a host of financial and ethical violations relating to the illegal trafficking in aborted baby body parts" (2021). And at the University of California San Francisco, a State institution, researchers engaged in the commercial trade of body parts of aborted children, especially parts of children's genitalia, kidneys and bladders (Stonestreet, Abortion, 2021). Apparently in the name of, and for the purpose of, science and finances human dignity is not a consideration. This lack of basic humanity and the ignoring[572] of all moral codes, traditional natural law and justice precepts is especially concerning in a seemingly civilized environment. Documentation proves that abortions undertaken at the University's affiliated 'Women's Options Centers', the "labour induction abortion techniques used in those facilities can often result in live births". In a disturbing admission, the University confirmed that they do not have protocols or procedures for "verifying signs of life or handling live birth scenarios" despite admitting also that, "live births do sometimes occur during abortion procedures" (Gryboski, Callous, 2021). In other words, the University pleads ignorance as to what to do in the case of live births due to a lack of 'protocols or procedures' – this, in a medical facility. The consequence of cognitive conflict in separating a surgical procedure from a living and helpless human being (despite a Hippocratic oath and biomedical ethical boundaries to the contrary), is that neonates are simply left to perish without palliative care or pain suppressants, in a like manner to the Roman era exposure of unwanted babies some 2,000

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571 On October 21, 2022 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Nineth Circuit imposed a fine of $2.4 million on Daleiden and his group for illegal behaviour in obtaining and disclosing confidential information (#20-16068).

572 Philosopher Chantal Delsol elucidates that, "Our societies do not care about natural law, and tend to believe this sort of things does not exist, that we are the inventors of nature. They suspect that under the traditional principles is some desire for power" (End, 2021).

years ago. The commercial trade in an unborn child's body parts is ideologically unsurprising as such trade is an extension of the abortion industry which is itself a commercial enterprise headed by profitable conglomerates. The ideology behind this pernicious trade is an extension of that germane to abortion and eugenics, arising from Eve's heretical assertion of creative license,[573] a structure of hermetic esotericism, and adopted by feminist ideologues claiming priority of women's health care and women's rights over their own bodies irrespective of the fetal baby's rights to life.

The legal origins of abortion in Western societies can be directly attributed to the 1973 SCOTUS decision in the matter of 'Roe versus Wade' (1973) wherein the right to abortion on demand was delineated. The judicial decision in Roe has endured for nearly 50 years despite indirect challenges, but in 2021 a matter arose which eventually led to a judicial reconsideration of the original judgement approving unmitigated abortion. The Attorney General of Mississippi,[574] filed suit with SCOTUS in which the issue of State avoidance of applicable Federal abortion law would be considered. SCOTUS was requested to adjudicate upon the question as to "Whether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional".[575] A favourable result would mean that individual States have authorisation to prohibit or limit abortion, overriding federal legislation. At the time, legal scholar Michael Paulsen, opined that the decision will be the "most important abortion case in thirty years" and that the Roe decision is morally, legally, and constitutionally indefensible.[576] A significant question to surface was whether or not the court is legally required to follow precedence where the judicial ruling they are required to adhere to is legally indefensible, based on fallacious logic, and in direct contravention of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, namely, the right not to be deprived of "life, liberty and property without due process of law".[577] And this is

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573 Consideration needs to be given to the comments of famed middle ages scholar, Rabbi Rashi (c. 1040 – 1105 C. E.), interpreting the Divine's caution against Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit. In Rashi's view, the Divine clearly anticipated Eve's desire for creative authority, "God ate of this Tree and then created the world, and therefore he orders you not to eat from it, so that you cannot create other worlds" (Rashi, Ber. R. 9:4; *cf.,* Gen. 3:3). Eve's antinomianism is recapitulated in the militant feminist creative desires for unique humanist identity fabrications detached from the confines of a conferred *imago Dei,* coupled with the claim of an autotheistic-self resulting in creative empowerment. This perception is validated through the radical feminist desire for control of fetal life and death, and their adoption of aberrant identity construals.

574 Stonestreet, J., Roe, 2021.

575 SCOTUS, (#19-1392.

576 Ethics professor, Andrew Walker, crisply summates the wholistic indefensibility of the Roe decision as follows, "the pro-life cause is built upon natural and moral realities: scientific facts about when new human life begins and sound philosophy about the profound dignity and worth of every member of the human family" He adds, "many religious traditions witness to these same truths" (Roe, 2022).

577 Paulsen, M., Roe, 2021.

exactly what transpired for, in June 2022, SCOTUS overruled Roe and referred the decision of abortion to State level.

6.4.5 Feminism, Eugenics and Euthanasia

Emanating from a repudiation by radical Identity ideologues of the intrinsic dignity (*cf.,* Psalm 8), equality, and value of each human being made in the image of the Creator, human beings are considered in social, economic and philosophical terms, rather than theologically in accordance with core Judeo-Christian precepts. To dismiss the significance of individuals, first the Fatherhood of God concept needs to be eradicated as the ensuing *imago Dei* is thereby also removed. Dualistic hypotheses, leading to moral relativism, are embraced by feminists and other Identity activists to further warrant the inconsequentiality of the body, thus leading to abortion, eugenics and euthanasia, and by extension to assisted suicide. The doctrine of the inborn value of human beings is not a feature of fatalistic religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism which helps explain why such civilizations did not flourish to the same extent as Western civilization with its pillars of Judeo-Christianity (Rowsome, 2021).

In accordance with Godwin's Law,[578] memetical analogies of the aforegoing inhumane practices invariably result in comparisons with the brutal Nazi eugenical performances that transpired during World War 2 in striving for a perfect, select, human species. During Hitler's reign, an attempted mass extermination took place of certain classes of persons deemed unworthy of life such as Jews, Gypsies, imperfect persons, the elderly, and so on. Records show that the Nazis euthanised some 300,000 disabled persons in an eugenical act prior to engaging in their 'final solution' of the Jewish populace. The legion of disabled persons were categorised by the Nazis as "not human", in fact as "animals in the form of humans" (Fries, 2020). Spurred on by an attempt to create a form of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and to implement atheist and secular humanist Darwin's evolutionary policies as advocated by his cousin Sir Francis Galton and his 'survival of the fittest' theory, the Nazi party engaged in widespread eugenical practices applied to all manner of human categories. Furthermore, eugenical outcomes occurred in Communist China with its' one child policy during the 20th and early 21st centuries. In both the Nazi and Communist China context, the eugenical practices were created upon Marxist dualistic theories arising from classic Gnostic purported omniscient

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578 Godwin's Law (Godwin's Law of Nazi Analogies), created by author Michael Godwin in 1991, is a hypothesis that posits, "as the length of a discussion in a social media forum increases, the probability of a reference or comparison to Hitler or the Nazis becomes more and more likely" (Ince, 2019).

construals, that of '*Sophia*', as well as a gross misuse of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* proposals and his nihilistic philosophy.

In the existing setting, an example of prevalent eugenical practice is that affecting unborn children diagnosed with Down's Syndrome, children with an extra chromosome 21. Overwhelmingly, Down's persons lead a content and fulfilled life. A 2011 study in the 'Journal of Medical Genetics' of the self-perceptions of Down's afflicted persons, aged over 12 years of age, indicate that 99% are well satisfied with their lives. In addition, 97% "liked who they are" and 96% "liked how they looked'. Nearly all, 99%, declared a love for their families and 97% loved their siblings. A vast majority (79%) of the parents said that they "had a more positive outlook on life because of their life" (with a Down's child). All parents, 99%, loved their child and 97% were proud of them (Skotko, 2011). Nonetheless, most Western countries promote the termination of a pregnancy that might result in a Down's child. In Denmark, for example, more than 95% of pregnancies that might result in a Down's child are terminated with only 18 Down's children born in Denmark during 2109. In a similar vein, during 2008-2012, Iceland had no babies born with Down's syndrome as all suspected candidates were liquidated prior to birth. The UK has a 90% success rate in eliminating suspected Down's babies (Cotton, 2021). In the USA, some 67% of such pregnancies are terminated (Zhang, 2021). While restrictions on the stage of pregnancy that abortion will be permitted differs from State to State in the USA, in the UK abortion of children suspected of being afflicted with Down's syndrome is authorised at any stage up to the time of birth - a living, fully-fledged and developed child, killed at time of birth. This allowance to birth also applies to unborn babies suspected of any deformity such as club feet and cleft palate (Muroki, 2021), hardly lethal or serious issues under normal circumstances, and easily remediated. Sex selection is a permissible reason for abortion in Canada as the Parliament voted overwhelmingly in June 2021 to allow such practice (Cook, Canada, 2021). If prospective parents do not desire a child of a particular binary gender, they simply destroy the child and try further pregnancies until they obtain a fetal human with the desired gender. The result will be reflected in skewed gender Statistics and societal consequences for years to come just as Communist China realised with the immense shortage of girls, and births generally, a consequence of their 'one child' policy. Such extreme eugenical practices on superficial grounds are a repetition of the Nazi era *Übermensch* agenda with those persons who are deemed less than perfect or desirable destined for liquidation. The difference now being that such practice is legally sanctioned in nearly all Western societies and supposedly morally acceptable through the influence of radical identity ideologies. Eugenical practice is reckoned a 'woman's right to choose' and also as 'women's health' - despite purposefully ignoring the right to life of an unborn child. Genetic testing is advancing at such a rate that a selection of options now await

expectant parents should they desire to terminate their unborn child that might not reflect certain desired characteristics. For instance, during 2018, a US company, Genomic Predictions, offered testing for risk of 'hundreds of conditions' resulting in a 'commercialisation of reproduction' in the desire for a rapidly changing definition of what characteristics constitute a normal child (Zhang, 2021). It is obvious that eugenical abortion is applied to classes of persons deemed by nihilist humanists to be unworthy of life, having no intrinsic value as human beings and so may legally be liquidated. The essential elements and emotions of what can be considered defining the core of a human being, such as care, love, dignity, respect, empathy, and compassion, are being lost in the morally contextual and secular humanist desire for perfection and a problem-free child.

In the modus of Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel, 'Brave New World' (1932), the Netherlands is the world leading proponent of euthanasia and assisted suicide, and while only licensed medical doctors are legally authorised to assist in euthanasia, many pro-euthanasia clusters abound. For instance, the 'Kooperatie Laatste Wil' group comprises some 36,000 members and promotes, "assisted suicide and self-euthanasia without the intervention of doctors" but avers to act within the law (Cook, Euthanasia, 2021). Netherlands' law allows any person older than 12 years to consent to euthanasia but plans are proceeding to allow anyone between 1 and 12 years to be euthanised on the grounds of being terminally ill. Over 6,000 people were euthanised in the Netherlands during 2019 comprising over 4% of all deaths. Western societies seemingly appear favourable towards the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide. For instance, in Australia, all States but one, the Northern Territories, have enacted legislation permitting euthanasia and voluntary suicide (Leeser, 2022). In the UK, Politicians are equally divided as to whether or not to agree to legislation authorising voluntary euthanasia, but on September 14, 2021, the British Medical Association ("BMA"), voted to abstain from opposing legislation enabling legal euthanasia and assisted suicide (BMA, 2021). Understandably, this development has raised concerns among disabled persons, an imperilled fringe group whose organisations have not been consulted on the proposed legislation (Moore, J., 2021). Publicity surrounding proposed laws has also resulted in many elderly becoming anxious. In Scotland, the Scottish Daily Mail of September 15, 2021, revealed a survey that finds "Only one in five older people feel 'valued', while more than a third believe they are a burden" (Foster, 2021). In Canada, assisted suicide and euthanasia was legalised in 2016, while In Belgium the situation is egregious for in 2014 it became legal for persons of all ages be undergo voluntary euthanasia to 'alleviate suffering' - a subjective determination albeit aided by medical indicators. Persons have been euthanised in Belgium for "depression, blindness, deafness, gender-identity crisis and anorexia" (Mildred, 2021). Since euthanasia became legalized there in 2002, over 27,000 individuals have died at their

own request. For instance, in 2021, it was estimated that "nearly one in five people euthanised were not likely to die naturally in the immediate future".[579]

The obvious deviation in the relationship of trust between doctor and patient in a jurisdiction authorising voluntary euthanasia, is that doctors cannot be relied upon to do their utmost in keeping the patient alive, irrespective of an Hippocratic Oath to the contrary. In Switzerland is the anticipated legal approval of a personal gas chamber for self-euthanasia. The weight of this development, according to its creator in the Netherlands, Dr. Phillip Nitschke, is that, "the user does not have to get any permission, they don't need some special doctor to try and get a needle in, and they don't need to get drugs difficult to obtain" (Thompson., A, 2021). Doctors would thus not have to be concerned about violating their Hippocratic Oath as the patient would self-induce their demise without medical intervention.

Dr. Nitschke opines further that "Efforts to suppress rational suicide are a sign of an increasingly sick society" which indicates that "society was not so confident in its reasons for insisting on life" (Cook, Euthanasia, 2021). The nihilistic Nietzsche would concur. Coupled with the budding eugenical penchant for eradicating ever increasing categories of human beings, there is a short transition from voluntary to mandatory euthanasia of persons deemed dispensable or an economic burden to society. The philosophical seeds of such immoral and unethical ideologies already exist. The prevalent practice of selective life is at its core an iteration and a fresh application of Eve's desire for creative dominion, the power of life and death (*eritus sicut Deus*) in Gen. 3:5. It is also an utterance of the inconsequence of the corporeal body in contradistinction to the essence of personhood, the spirit-mind complex which is a fundamental Gnostic and Cartesian duality. The duality theory is particularly noticeable in the grey area of dementia or mental disability where euthanasia is proposed on the understanding that once the mind-spirit ceases to function, the individual's essence of humanness and identity is therefore lost and the body can be disposed of.

Euthanasia and assisted suicide practice is contrary to the well-established doctrines of natural law upon which modern civil and common laws have their foundations. The Edenic heterodox heritage endures in Western society in ever expanding measure through the pernicious and egregious practice of abortion, its eugenical adjunct, and the developing tolerance of legal euthanasia in Western society. The onslaught against the nuclear family[580]

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579 Del Turco, A., Belgium, 2022.

580 A 2021 publication, titled 'Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism Against Family', by feminist Sophie Lewis, advocates "commercial surrogacy" which eschews, through 'outsourcing pregnancy work', all the complications of a "bourgeois" family dynamic, freeing women from gestational burdens (Lewis, S., 2021, p. 4ff.). The effect is a disconnect with the nuclear family while highlighting a Marxian

which originated with the wicked but successful strategy of the serpent to, firstly, destroy the relationship of the First Couple with their Creator; and, secondly, to destroy the matrimonial and filial co-dependent relationship between the First Couple themselves. In such manner, all future societies become ethically corrupted as is palpable in a modernist circumstance despite the presence, albeit diminishing, of Judeo-Christian values upon which most such societies are established.

6.5 Critical Theory and Religion

Critical Theory is a dualistic neo-Marxist political philosophy restated in modern terminology for a post-structuralist climate. Allegedly designed to accomplish distributive justice by remedying injustice and inequality of the past, it conceals concepts like 'equity' – equal outcomes - which have the hallmark of classic socialism, which in turn disguises an underlying economic and cultural Marxist agenda.

In most prominent post-enlightenment and modern social refurbishments, one of the main aims is the replacement of the prevailing religion with a secular humanist or heathen alternative. To exemplify, the French peasant insurrection, commencing 1789, was in this method with the eradication of the state sanctioned Catholic religion and the replacement thereof with a new religion. The new religion was one wherein the faculty of reason was the new doctrine, replete with 'Temples of Reason' (including the Notre Dame cathedral), and the 'Torch of Truth' as the new crucifix (Gelernter, 2021). Borrowing the descriptive terms and concepts of the French uprising, the Leninist-Marxist Bolshevik 1917 overthrow of the prevailing capitalist pro-bourgeoisie government in a class-struggle by the proletariat, urged on by the injustice of the economic class differences in society, focused largely on the eradication of religion to create an atheistic, secular, and socialist state. Perhaps 'religion' is too inexact a term as the Marxist aim was to substitute Christianity for a religion of their own making in which their ideology became the true religion; the State the Deity; and the Marxist elites, the intellectuals, the new 'priests', acting, as priests do, in a divine capacity[581] on behalf of the populace. While Marxism appears on the surface to be a philosophical competitor to capitalism as practised in Western societies, it is appropriate to rather understand Marxism as

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class dichotomy between women and men in familial, gestational, means of reproduction. In order for both genders to enjoy egalitarian focused rights and freedoms by shunning capitalist gestational production, women should not be the familial means of either production or reproduction. Therefore, the Marxian tenet of abolition of the family in favour of a 'classless' means of reproduction, namely, commercial surrogacy ("gestational communism"), should be adopted (*cf.,* Harrington, Cyborgs, 2022).

581 Ex-Marxist, Leszek Kolakowski, testifies that, "the self-deification of mankind to which Marxism gave philosophical expression has ended the same way as all such attempts, whether individual or collective: it has revealed itself as a fatal aspect of human bondage" (Marxism, 1978, p. 530).

a “religious alternative to Christianity” for they are “rival religions,” and so the competing religion of Christianity is to be eradicated. It is accepted in Marxism that many lives would be lost in pursuit of a successful insurgency but that, “human sacrifice is fundamental and even desirable” (Gelernter, 2021), in achieving such aims. Upon these Marxist underpinnings Critical Theory is based, but repackaged to accommodate fashionable terminology.

The divisive constructs of Critical Race Theory and Critical Gender Theory are crucial offshoots of a composite Critical Theory. The former manifests as a Black oppressed victim mentality in conflict with the alleged White economic and social oppressors. The latter theory has been adopted by feminists as their ideological pathway for the restructuring of society in the areas of sex, gender, abortion and eugenical outcomes for certain categories of unborn humans. At the same time dissonantly striving for equality and justice for women alone, in a narrow application of the distributive justice concept. While the philosophical and theological core of these Marxist Critical Theories have been addressed herein, it remains pertinent to quote the Catholic scholar and Priest, Richard Neuhaus, who tersely opines, “we think it true to say that politics is, in largest part, an expression of culture, and at the heart of culture is religion” (Neuhaus, Editorial, 1990).[582] It would be even more elucidatory to specify that the heart of Western culture is Judeo-Christianity[583] which is threatened with eclipse through rising secularism, particularly of the nihilistic humanist category. Endemic secularism is fostered by politicians encouraged by a capricious culture in favour of humanism, pagan New Age religions, and spirituality minus a monotheistic deity with absolutist ethical and moral paradigms.

In its essence, compound Critical Theory is a competing secular religion with orthodox Christianity, for both endeavour to assert their version of personal identity and meaning of life on society. In the case of Critical Theory, identity is proposed mainly through like-minded tribalists categorised according to race, sex and gender but without soteriological or eschatological hope. To the contrary, Christianity is the restoration of the corrupted *imago Dei* of humankind. Ethics, morality, natural law, transcendence, personal identity and ontological well-being can only be obtained in the principles of Christianity as encompassed within the

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582 In support of Neuhaus’s postulate is the claim of theology professor, David B. Hart, to the effect that, “it is culture, not politics, that pronounces the final historical verdict on our transitory ideologies and grand social projects and high ideals” (Hart, Mammon, 2016). Underlying culture is the issue of religion for it is the norms and values emanating therefrom that defeat “transitory ideologies” affecting the culture.

583 Not to overlook Prof. Weigel’s explanation that Western civilization is grounded on three synthesized pillars emanating from Jerusalem (Judeo-Christianity), Athens (democracy, philosophy and rationality) and Rome (Rule of law) (Pope, 2022).

doctrines of the Redeemer-Messiah of Israel and not in the vacuous, emotivist, religion of secularism.

6.6 Conclusion

The meta-proposition of this study is that the hubristic determination by Adam and Eve in the Edenic Garden in aiming to become 'like God' (Gen. 3:5), *eritus sicut Deus,* is the *raison d'être* for declaring their independence and assuming a creative license, with a desire for identity and meaning apart from their *imago Dei*. The affirmation of independence by the First Couple gives rise to the advent of secular humanism, practical atheism, as represented in a current reiteration by identity activists, acting through anarcho-ideologies intertwined with a Gnostic-based dualistic construct justifying abortion and the sex-gender identity dichotomy. The question then arises as to whether or not the proposition is sustainable scripturally, and theologically, from its advent in the archetypical Garden scenario through First and Second Testament recapitulations and prevailing into both an existing and an eschatological setting. Additionally, the proposition requires hermeneutical justification through the application of established exegetical methods, particularly those of early Palestinian Rabbinical Judaism as utilised by the Apostolic redactors. In short, use of ancient midrashic *darash* exegesis should show a continuous prophetic *motif* from inception of the scriptures to eschatological finality for, in Jewish thought, "the pattern of the past is the pattern of the future" (Russell, 1964, p. 231).

It needs mention that while remaining cognisant of the *peshat* meaning of the passages to ensure contextualisation and then applying select Hillel's hermeneutical *middot*, the aim is to, "search' (*darash*) Scripture and tradition…and seeking light from them on new situations – precisely what the prophets, psalmists, and historians did, as well as their heirs who wrote early Jewish literature" (Sanders, J. A., 1993, p. vii). With a view to avoiding prolixity, a limited *darash* of pertinent passages through the canons relating to the thematic *motif* of *eritus sicut Deus,* is expounded chronically as follows:

- The seditious attempt by the Archangel Lucifer to usurp the majesty and creative authority of the Most High God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, "I will make myself like the Most High" - as redacted in Isaiah 14:14 and Ezekiel 28:15. This is the earliest instance of *eritus sicut Deus;*
- The nefarious strategy, in Genesis 3:5, of the Edenic serpent, a *Doppelgänger*, a mimesis of Lucifer, to destroy the pinnacle of God's creation, namely, the first human couple made in his own image and purposed by the Divine to be a prototype of the nuclear family and then a society which would eventually comprise a people of his

own to worship Him through eternity. Again a Lucifarian strategy to be as God, *eritus sicut Deus;*

- The Genesis 3 event whereby the First Couple acceded to the professed esoteric knowledge (in the form of occultist, Gnostic-like elitism) of the deceitful serpent. The deception led the First Couple to anticipate autotheism and unfettered creative rights, *eritus sicut Deus,* and so a new self-identity lacking the restrictions of their conferred *imago Dei*. Coupled with their rejection of the natural law, love, dependence, identity and theistic confines of the Creator, the First Couple gave origin to the heresy of secular humanism;
- The passage of Genesis 11:4 when Nimrod and his acolytes, desiring *eritus sicut Deus,* attempted to construct a tall edifice in order to exalt themselves. This action constitutes a patent reiteration of secular humanist antinomianism by Nimrod and his sycophants, "a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves in asserting his sovereign-self";
- The motif of *eritus sicut Deus* continued in the prophetic passage of Daniel 11:36 wherein it is recounted that, "And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods". An articulation of a desire for self-deification;
- In a Second Testament context (2 Thess. 2:4), the assertion of *eritus sicut Deus* is mentioned in a prophetic recount of Lucifer's desire of self-deification for he, "exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God". Lucifer deceives the nations into desiring the same intent of self-exaltation as he initially did in Eden for he comes, "with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (2 Thess. 2:9-10);
- A demonstration of *eritus sicut Deus,* the desire to be first, to be the most important and have a kingdom of sorts, is evident in 3 John 1 when the Apostle writes about the lawless Diotrephes, a pastor of a certain Church who, "likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority" and who expels Christians who do 'not put him first' (3 Jn. 1:9-11). So, too, did Adam and Eve 'put themselves first' and 'did not acknowledge the authority' of their Creator. Any instance whereby the Creator and, later, the Redeemer-Messiah, is not predominantly exalted and by a self-centred act someone "puts himself first," is but an articulation of a desire for auto-deification;
- It is in the eschaton that the prophetic incident of Genesis 3:5, *eritus sicut Deus,* finds ultimate fulfilment in a recreation of events, for the aim of the *bittereinde*, Lucifer (commencing in Isa. 14:14 and Ezek. 28:15 ff), was always the strategy of exalting

himself to the highest status, of which the like desire of Adam and Eve for self-deification is but an duplication. The Dragon and the Beast of Revelation 13:4-6, worshipped as the highest God, would be summarily destroyed and so too the second Beast of Rev. 13:11-13, as related in Rev. 14:8 ff. The Most High God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, will countenance no challenge to the primacy, glory, and worship due to Him alone, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth" (Rev. 14:7);

- The motivating spirit behind the proclamation of the sovereign-self of humanity, *eritus sicut Deus,* is finally defeated after the millennium, and prior to the advent of the eternal order, when the nations are again deceived by the lies of the infernal Archangel Lucifer, as originally transpired in the antecedent Edenic Garden ("deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth" [Rev. 20:8a]). At such time, the antinomian rebels and the devious serpent are permanently destroyed (*cf.,* Rev. 20:7-10).

An articulation of *eritus sicut Deus* and, ergo, secular humanism in a 'new situation,' an existing setting, is distinctly manifest in the feminist support for the termination of a fetal human being coupled with eugenical and euthanasia practices, all as examples of autotheism as has been explored in this chapter. The thematic advent of *eritus sicut Deus* in early Genesis, with a new and fresh recreation thereof in subsequent scenarios including prevailing societies, has an ultimate eschatological application in the form of early Palestinian Rabbinical midrashic exegesis. Upon such finality, and in the eternal order, the initially disrupted utopian Garden theocracy is restored in an immanentized setting of love, harmony, peace, fellowship, innocence, ontological security of identity and meaning through a recapture of the transcendent *imago Dei.* This eternal setting is a revelation of the glorious infralapsarian, alternatively, supralapsarian and omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign salvific strategy of the Creator, through the sacrificial work of the Redeemer-Messiah (Rev. 21-22).

The multifaceted political, legal and philosophical context enabling the momentum of contemporary societal turbulence negatively affecting Western culture is explored in Chapter 7, next.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CONTEMPORARY STRUGGLE FOR ORTHODOXY

"We think it true to say that politics is, in largest part, an expression of culture and at the heart of culture is religion" (Richard John Neuhaus, 1990).

7.1 Introduction

The essence of cultural turmoil in Anglo-American society can be traced to the narratives surrounding religion. In Roger Scruton's words, "the core of common culture is religion".[584] Specifically, the doctrines and praxis of Judeo-Christian tenets which underpin Western culture and which are engaged in an existential conflict against a combination of secular humanism ideologies, exemplified by rampant Identity politics, and expressions of pluralistic, New Age, polytheistic[585] spirituality.

Secular humanist philosophy, in all its sundry articulations, has as its deepest aim the replacement[586] of orthodox Judeo-Christianity with hypotheses of its own industry offering alternative ideological worldviews.[587] Despite the proliferation of sundry ideologies and faith systems, there remañins no rational, valid, coherent, transcendent or sacerdotal substitution for the eternal soteriological and eschatological truths of Judeo-Christianity with its pragmatic rationality, ethics, morality, and justice.[588] Theologian George Weigel summarised the primary considerations of Judeo-Christianity's influence on Western society along the following lines:

- Prior to the advent of the Messiah-Redeemer, the primary unit of "social and individual identity" was the family through which a form of immortality was attained. Individuals "lived on" through their descendants while acknowledging the existence

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584 Scruton, R., Modern Culture, 2005, p. 5.

585 Describing the multifaceted notion of "new polytheism", law professor Juanma Badenas, avers that it incorporates ecologism, veganism, animalism, transgenderism, pansexualism, blackism, and all those 'isms' that form part of the wokeism that we now know" (Christendom, 2022).

586 Atheist social theorist and Yale professor, William Deresiewicz, concedes that "Secularism cannot reassure us that the universe is governed by a benevolent deity, or that the wicked will be punished and the good rewarded, or that our souls after death will be clasped in the bosom of Abraham. But in leaving us to our devices, it does something better, because it does something truer. It forces us into the search for truth, for beauty, for justice" (Secularism, 2022). Secular humanism is plainly an iteration of the ancient heresy of *eritus sicut Deus,* which, in practical terms, amounts to a search for truth and meaning outside the rubrics of the Divine.

587 Carlo Lancellotti concludes that, according to Italian Marxist Augusto Del Noce, "atheism is a protagonist in the development of modernity" (Lancellotti, Del Noce, 2014, p. xiii). Atheism will remain pertinent until the eternal order.

588 This postulate is endorsed by Wilmoore Kendall when he states that, "it is only the Christian tradition that has made life bearable for man within time" (1963, p. 137). This tradition, what Kendall also refers to as 'orthodoxy', may be recognized by, "those commitments, those notions of good and evil, that survive through all the changes" (Conservative, 1963, p. 124).

of their ancestors. Post the resurrected and immortal Messiah, individuals could attain immortality and dignity as the children of God. The sacred and transcendent nature of humankind was widely recognised;

- In Messiah, the equality of all persons was emphasized (*cf.,* Gal. 3:28). Previously, however, inequality of persons was the norm with birth order, tribal affiliation, hierarchy, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, and wealth all determining levels of status, worth, and dignity. Weigel points out that in Messiah, a new sense of justice was created for "justice must reflect moral equality rather than natural inequality";
- Christianity "desacralized the State" (*cf.,* Matt. 22:15-21), for there is "no 'West', no democratic project, if the State remains sacred and if the State images itself omnicompetent". Christianity "limited the State", giving advent to a civil society with political principles such as separation of State and Church,[589] limited government and "republican forms of self-government";
- Through principles governing notable Councils, such as that at Toledo, Christianity influenced criminal law, justice, jurisprudence and legal practice by insisting on evidence-based verdicts. These principles remain the norm in "21st century democratic societies";
- The first medieval universities were established by the Catholic Church in "Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Krakow, and Prague" where the practice of "disciplined public debate… took root in the civilization soil of the West, with profound implications for Western culture[590] and democratic public life";

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589 The crucial power dichotomy between Church and State was summed up by lawyer David Dudley Field in 1893 as follows: "The greatest achievement ever made in the cause of human progress is the total and final separation of Church and State". The effect dictates that, "relations between man and his Maker is a private concern into which other men have no right to intrude" (Field, Jurisprudence, 1893). However, it needs to be noted that the Constitution does not expressly create a "wall" between Church and State although it can be implied. Nonetheless, "the "American political tradition has always embraced the idea that the State and the Church are separate institutions" (Hall, M., Wall, 2022).

590 The question may well be posed as to the identity of the principles underlying Western culture. Paul Kingsnorth claims that, "For a liberal (Progressive), Western culture incorporates democracy, human rights, individualism, science and reason. For a conservative, it might signal a set of cultural values: traditional attitudes to family life and national identity, and free market capitalism". He concedes that all these components generally exist simultaneously, for together they comprise the characteristics of Western civilization. This is especially so as the West's political traditions incorporate disparate political polities, which together Kingsnorth refers to as, "the binding together of people and peoples across a continent over centuries of time, by a particular religious story" (2021). Kingsnorth's summation identifies with Christopher Dawson's earlier view that, "there has never been any unitary organization of Western culture apart from that of the Christian Church which provides an effective principle of social unity" (Religion, 1991, p. 22). That is to say, the primary uniting commodity in the formation of Europe was the cultural influence of Judeo-Christian principles. Dawson concludes by saying that, "Behind the ever-changing pattern of Western culture there was a living faith which gave Europe a certain sense of spiritual community, in spite of all the

- The Christian conviction that all persons are "responsible moral agents and capable of virtue", through the power of the Messiah, has had great implications for personal responsibility, freedom, and individual accountability.

Weigel infers that while it took many centuries for Judeo-Christian ideas to permeate Western society and politics, the influence is self-evident especially when contrasted to the lack of early development of the "democratic project" in "Hindu, Mogul, Confucian or African cultures". Western society with its "science, economics, and democratic project, was developed in cultural soil enriched by Biblical and Christian ideas, convictions, modes of life and practices" [591] into the sophisticated liberal democracy of the West (Christianity, 2021). And it is this political and moral landscape, these very pillars of the West, that are under threat for, as Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, explains, "we have entered an age of dangers, and the pillars of Western civilization once thought unshakeable, are cracking".[592]

While natural law is the core ethical and moral underlay of cultural Christianity, the antagonistic ideology of secular humanism has as its base an atheistic and often solipsistic, fluid morality and praxis without an eschatology of hope. Natural law emanates from the counsel and purposes of the Divine and reveals the essential characteristics for a 'good', moral, just, and harmonious ordering of public affairs. Acknowledgement of natural law tenets in constitutional, civil, and common law is based on the supposition that there is a "standard of natural justice that exists independently of human contrivance and that acts as a measure for the legitimacy of civil laws and political Institutions" (Ward, 2021). Secular humanism, to the contrary, derives from humankind's antagonism towards natural law precepts while tendering no rational or objective alternative to the moral and ethical practices required for a common good,[593] and justice in society. In this particular context, the secular ideology of legal positivism decries assumed connections between law and morality, especially any *a priori* claim of morality

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conflicts and divisions and social schisms that marked its history" (1991, p. 22). It is thus the extensive diminution of this "living faith" that is responsible for the Identity crisis plaguing Europe.

591 Since the Reformation, leading to the demise of State sponsored religion, no nation can be considered a wholly Christian nation. In any event, the hallmark of a so-called 'Christian nation' cannot be other than a nation legally endorsing and permitting the practice of freedom of religion for all citizens. State coercion cannot make a nation 'Christian'. Cultural scholar David French perceives that for a nation to be regarded as 'Christian', it should "combine both a robust private practice of faith, with a government that is committed to basic elements of justice and mercy". To which needs to be added, a legally endorsed freedom of religion for all citizens. French avers that the political philosophy of classic liberalism, "respects and reflects the inherent God-given dignity of man by protecting his most fundamental human rights" (Christian nation, 2022), that is, of natural law freedoms, particularly the freedom of religion.

592 Roussinos, A., Dangers, 2022.

593 Professor of Political Science, Patrick Deneen, concludes that the "common good is always either served or undermined by a political order – there is no neutrality on the matter" (Common, 2021).

emanating from natural law (Green, 2019). U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas endorsed the view of Founder Thomas Jefferson when the latter wrote in the Declaration of Independence, “All men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration, 1776). Thomas concludes that Jefferson’s statement verifies the natural law foundation of the U.S. Constitution, and hence of all U.S. laws and principles of republican constitutional polity ensuing therefrom. Thomas says of Jefferson’s view, “that is natural law in a nutshell: if all men are created equal then no man can own another man, and we can only be governed by our consent” (2007, p. 188). The theistic tenets of natural law integrate principles of moral permanence and defensible ethical justice patent in U.S. Constitutional law, which tenets are abhorrent to radical Identity Ideologues focused on relativist, sited, morality of their own fiction and a portentous concept of justice.

As an alternative to objective morality and justice, an indefensible, amorphous**,** irrational, emotivist, and unenforceable subjective proposal in the form of contextual, agent-centred morality, generally labelled ‘situation ethics’ by most existential philosophers, is the proposed replacement for the ethical precepts and influence of cultural Christianity on society and its laws. It is preference for an unformulated, tenuous, populist,[594] culturally devised morality that the Christian ethical and moral principles underpinning society are sought to be exchanged. An inclination of this sort by a significant sector of society cannot result in a mutually beneficent moral philosophy or a common good so necessary for the harmonious ordering of society.[595] As it was in the Edenic Garden, hybris is a significant factor in the endemic post-modern cynicism of Western society[596] in all its facets. Mary Eberstadt claims that, “We moderns have bought into a seductive secular story, namely, that we are smarter and more sophisticated than the people who came before us; that we have outgrown antiquities like God, Church and a transcendent code by which to live”. Eberstadt concludes that our hybris may, in fact, blind us to the “possibility that in some critical areas the opposite may be true” (Anderson & Eberstadt, 2021). Originating with the First Couple, *ressentiment* towards Father God and the

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[594] In the view of psychology professor, Joseph Forgas, “populism is a fundamentally collectivist and anti-enlightenment tribal ideology” (Populism, 2021).

[595] There is a significant difference between the leftists’ claim to a moral high ground and that of moral realism. Moralism *per se* cannot be considered the equivalent to moral realism for the former is an idiosyncratic charge *sans* objective, absolutist, justifiable foundations. On the other hand, moral realism is grounded in objective, defensive, rational, scientific, biological and verifiable attestation. In consequence, Ideologues resort to an eccentric, post-truth, moralism.

[596] Philosopher professor Charles Taylor refers to this phenomenon as the “secularization of the modern West”. Taylor concedes that, “secularization extends also partially, and in different ways, beyond this world” (Secular, 2007, p. ix), that is, beyond the Anglo-American nations, which include Europe.

desire for individual sovereignty, and auto-creative license, has led to the rampant focus on secular Identity ideology in a post-structuralist and post-Christian milieux.

The exclusivist claims to divinity by the Redeemer-Messiah of Christianity ("I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me" [Jn. 14:6]), is what makes this faith a crucial target for assailment by secularists, and those professing pluralistic avenues to a theory of transcendence.[597] In exacerbation, criticism of the fluid morality and pseudo-transcendence of the autonomous Identity self-identifiers opposed by those of a more centrist or conservative[598] political framework causes offence in the circumambient post-modern, secular, spiritually eclectic, and pluralist culture.[599] Public utterance of the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), as set out, *inter alia*, in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5), causes complications in an environment where any claim to absolutism resulting in affront may be deemed, in the vernacular, as 'hate speech' irrespective of valid Constitutional freedoms.[600] Publicly uttered dissenting views are deemed contraventions of certain partisan codes defining scurrilous speech. The codes themselves are based on secular humanist ideological construals, purportedly value-free but in practice weighted against objective claims to truth.[601] Consequently, 'hate speech' constitutes an ideological conflict between the assumed

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597 Delsol opines that, "our Western contemporaries no longer believe in a beyond or in a transcendence. The meaning in life (for them) must therefore be found in this life itself, and not above it, where there is nothing. The sacred is found here: in the landscapes, in the life of the earth, and in humans themselves" (End, 2021).

598 Theology professor, R. R. Reno, rightly observes that "conservatism honours, preserves, and renews the natural and sacred sources of authority that holds things together" (Reno, What, 2021). To which may be added: for the benefit of the common good and well-being of society. Notoriously difficult to define precisely, like most political terms, the notion of conservativism is contextually and culturally construed, dependant on factors like historical periods and variegated approaches to political philosophy. As Sir Roger Scruton pointed out, "there is an alternative to revolutionary change, and that is not changing" (Ferguson, Future, 2021), hence the term, 'conservativism' – preserving the traditional *status quo.*

599 Roger Scruton refers to radical leftist polity as "revolutionary socialism", to which the conservatist dispensation is the only "political alternative" (How, 2014, p. 5).

600 Differences in political ideologies, for example, can indicate a healthy democracy. However, differing polities should contain norms that "channel parochial interests into universal benefits. Among those norms are free speech, non-violence, co-operation, cosmopolitanism, human rights and an acknowledgment of human fallibility" (Pinker, Enlightenment, 2019). The relativist category of 'hate speech' by Identity Ideologues negates inalienable and objectively determined human rights of freedom, contributing nothing of "universal benefit", despite avowing an agenda of social justice.

601 The denial of any "structures of reality", that is, of absolute, objective, verifiable truths in favour of a plastic, malleable, culturally contextual 'reality', is the core indicator of post-modern Identity ideology. The purposed detachment from reality, an instance of cognitive dissonance, and "deliberate denial of certain foundational truths of Western civilization", primarily Judeo-Christian tenets, is a major cause of the crisis besetting society. In the ominous words of Prof. George Weigel, "no civilization can flourish if it loses contact with reality ", due to the fact that there are "no stable reference points" (Pope, 2022). This is particularly the case with morality and its co-dependency on religion.

sovereignty of the autonomous-self with its prejudiced, subjective, arrogated morality when confronted with the realism, freedom, rationality, definitiveness, and external authority of Judeo-Christian principles established on natural law, redacted in the Mosaic codes and the law of the Messiah (Gal. 6:2). Not only is the public practice and activism of Judeo-Christianity under threat of extermination or marginalisation but, so too, are the core orthodox doctrines upon which such religion is birthed.

The religious context of Anglo-American culture, up to the late 20th century, could well be described by the following words:

> *"America was once upon a time Methodist, or Baptist, or Presbyterian, or Congregationalist or Episcopalian. A little light Unitarianism on one side, a lot of stern Calvinism on the other…but the average American these days would have trouble recalling the dogmas that once defined all the sects". The author adds that the denominations all had "something in common" for "together they formed a vague but vast unity. Together they formed America"* (Bottum, 2008).

In similar vein, a 2009 address to The Philadelphia Society by the intellectual, John Howard, recounted that, "From the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620, the American experiment in self-government was an embodiment of Christendom". He adds that this factor "designates a society in which the behaviour of the people generally accords with the behavioural standard prescribed by Christianity". In support of his view, Howard quotes the 6th President of the U.S., John Quincy Adams, as stating that the American revolution connected "in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity". Conversely, concludes Howard, "there is today almost no public understanding of the ethos that prevailed in America from 1620 to 1945" (Howard, 2009, p. 3).

Historically, the aforegoing indicates the seminal influence of cultural Christianity upon the social environment through the age of modernity[602] until the advance of the current post-liberal, post-structuralist era. The philosophical, political, social, religious and historical background of this development, that is, the transition from a society reflecting cultural Christian tenets in its moral and political order, and public affairs, to a post-Christian[603] cultural milieux with little

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602 René Guénon perceives the 'defining mistake' of modernity as its "denial of access to traditional forms of wisdom". Therefore, he adds, "modern thought had rendered all knowledge profane" (Rose, Citadel, 2022; *cf.,* Guénon, Crisis, 1942, p. 80). Guénon's concern is valid, for the secularism of modernity indubitably results in certain denials of transcendent wisdom, as implied by his statement.

603 Michele Sciacca perceives that in this age of post-modernity, Nietzsche is the first "great denouncer of the West's death by nihilism". This claim, "manifests the inner truth of the side of modern philosophy that calls itself post-Christian", the era of which reveals a "loss of being" and thus

or no moral equivalency, and now evolved into an anti-Christian society,[604] needs to be examined. The reason being is that the current conflict of ideas did not emanate from a religious, philosophical, social, legal, or political vacuum lacking a historic context, nor from Aristotle or, subsequently, John Locke's idea of a *tabula rasa.*[605] Instead, the contemporary conflict has primordial roots, stemming from both a theistic[606] prelapsarian (*cf.,* Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Ec. 3:11) and a postlapsarian, secular, innatism (*cf.,* Gen. 3:6; Rom. 2:14-15; 5:12; 7:15), caused by the antinomian events recounted in early Genesis, particularly those occurring in the Edenic Garden. For as the Apostle Paul points out:

> *"what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse"* (Rom. 1:19-20).

To simplify, the innate[607] consciousness of licentious behaviour originating from an imputation of the natural law, renders humankind "without excuse".

"nihilism" (Del Noce, 2014, p. 20). It is in such philosophical and heterodoxic milieux that identity political ideologies can flourish.

604 Yoram Harzony, states that "the Western nations are disintegrating before our eyes". The reason for this is that the "most significant institutions that have characterized American and Britain for the last five centuries, giving these countries their internal coherence and stability – the Bible, public religion, the independent nation state, and the traditional family – are not merely under assault, they are in precipitous decline" (Democracy, 2019).

605 *Tabula Rasa* – an "erased tablet" or blank slate.

606 Dr. Petryszak posits that empiricist John Locke "formulated" the concept of *tabula rasa* to "resolve the conflict between the belief in divine determination and the liberal belief in individual freedom" (1981). Although acknowledging certain biological aspects of innatism, Locke's motive was, essentially, to negate the theistic doctrine of original sin and, on the other hand, to refute any individual "innate practical moral principles". Locke's criticism of innate principles is "connected with his "anti-authoritarianism" (Uzgalis, 2020).

607 In an Introduction by Quentin Anderson to a revised edition of iconic American writer Walt Whitman's work, 'Leaves of Grass', Anderson writes that Whitman was "a genius in his understanding that a rejection of Christianity in behalf of an emotional egalitarianism would have to begin with a rejection of the idea that the self was internally structured by conscience" (*cf.,* Whitman, Leaves, 1974, p. 19). To assert the supremacy of the self, therefore, the concept of an innate consciousness of antinomianism has first to be repudiated in order to assuage guilt. Identity Ideologues and sundry atheists accordingly assault the Fatherhood of God concept as their prime target, which concept, it can be argued, is the cornerstone of cultural Christianity and, hence, Western civilization.

7.2 Democracy[608], Liberalism[609] and Modernity

Pure and unqualified democracy can constitute its own enemy and lead to its demise without the checks and balances necessary to protect the rights of minorities.[610] Alexander Hamilton, a founding father of the American Constitution, pointed out, "We are now forming a republican government (as) real liberty is neither found in despotism or the extremes of democracy but in moderate governments" (1787). In support of Hamilton's view, Thomas Jefferson stated that "the republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind" (1780). The dangers of unfettered democracy, that is, rule by a simple, numerical, majority, were further emphasised by constitutionalist John Adams in 1814 when he perceived that, "Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes exhausts and murders itself. There never was a Democracy yet that did not commit suicide. It is in vain to say that Democracy is less vain, less proud, less selfish, less ambitious or less avaricious than Aristocracy or Monarchy" (1814). To guard against adverse effects of unrestrained democracy, the Greek historian Polybius (c. 200 B.C.E. – 118 B.C.E.), insisted that, ideally, a true demonstration of democracy not only had "a numerical value but also a moral or even a spiritual component" (Tuckfield, 2021). That is the ideal,[611] but the reality[612] is that a uniform and endemic moral representation in society would only be possible in a theocracy. Yet, humankind is certainly capable of reflecting certain levels of morality, as St. Paul makes clear in 2 Cor. 5:17. Only the advent of the eternal order, though, would result in a perfect theocracy, one under the auspices of the Creator.

To counter potential tyranny in government by an incumbent political party, the American founders insisted on a representative[613] democracy through a republican constitution. A

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608 The fragile nature of Western democracy is apparent from Putin's 2022 invasion of the democratic nation of Ukraine, in an act designed to overthrow the prevailing liberal democratic order and the replacement thereof with a form of nationalist authoritarianism (*cf.,* Dugin, Slavic, 2022). European Council President, Charles Michel, advises that Russia's assault threatens, "International law, the rules based International order, democracy, and human dignity" (Miranda, Putin, 2022). Russia's actions do not meet a scintilla of traditional 'just war' rubrics.

609 The 'liberalism' referred to herein concerns a political philosophy, unrelated to social and political liberal ('leftist or 'progressive') ideologies which result in much heterodoxy and social unrest.

610 "At the heart of any democratic polity" lies a tension between diversity and unity. A natural occurrence, the balancing of which "becomes a test of liberal democracy itself - of its legitimacy and ability to function" (Donadio, 2021).

611 Polybius is correct in emphasising the moral component of citizens, for, as George Weigel concludes, it is impossible to "imagine the emergence of democracy as the predominant form of government in the West without the Christian conviction that all human beings are responsible moral agents, capable of virtue" (Christianity, 2021).

612 Due to the imputation of Adam's original sin (*cf.,* Romans 5:12).

613 Regarding representative democratic republicanism, it can validly be claimed that, "while all its parts are derived from the people, none of them is the people" (Mansfield, Democracy, 1987, p. 55).

hallmark of the latter is the separation of powers[614] restraining the three branches[615] of government, namely, the executive, judicial and legislative, together with a traditional[616] separation of the State and the Church.[617] In the USA, Germany and Australia, for example, further limitations against possible central governmental despotism are effected through a constitutional Federalist structure devolving certain powers to the individual States (*cf.,* Article IV, §4, US Constitution). In this aspect, Chief Justice of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Jeffrey Sutton, advances resorting to State Constitutions for the protection of individual rights in concerns where Federal law has shortcomings. His position is that "All individual Constitutional rights, both Federal and State, have the potential to protect us" (2022, p. 2).[618] Within this

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614 Without entering into a discursive of the Constitutional separation of powers doctrine, the point can be made that the doctrine is an entrenched safeguard against Government overreach. For example, it enables the Supreme Court to, "Declare acts of Congress unconstitutional" and so protect individual rights and public policy. In the vernacular, Constitutional scholar James Wilson says that, "Separation of powers are a fine idea, except when they prevent me from having my way" (Wilson, J., Powers, 1987, p. 38-39). This sentiment is no doubt frequently contemplated by Presidents, politicians and the public alike, but, nonetheless, sums up the essence of the doctrine, so necessary for public order and the common good.

615 The vast array of influential but unelected nomenklatura (public/civil servants), attached to the Executive, constitute what renowned political science professor, Charles Lipson, refers to as the "4th branch of government" (Branch, 2022).

616 Mention needs to be made of the so-called "establishment clause" justifying a "wall of separation" between religion and State which the Courts apply to enforce State "hostility towards religion" (Muñoz, V. P., Establishment, 2022). Until the Supreme Court overturns the established doctrine of separation of State and religion, in whatever guise, persecution will continue to follow for even minor instances of public demonstrations of religion. As in the case of abortion permitted through Roe v Wade, a faithful originalist textualist reading of the Constitution by the Supreme Court will clarify that the Constitution does not in fact allow for abortion nor a prohibition of public demonstration of religion.

617 The origin of such principle can be traced to the Judeo-Christian tenets establishing Western cultures. In particular, the scripture of Matthew 22:15-21 which concerns rendering to 'Caesar' what belongs to him and to God what is rightfully His. The implication is, therefore, that Caesar cannot be God for not all belongs to him. Consequently, unlike God, the State cannot be sacred. In the result, "Christianity desacralized and thereby limited the State" (Weigel, Christianity, 2021), forever divorcing the two entities into that which is sacred contra that which is profane.

618 A rather neglected protection against Federal overreach is the strategy of strengthening State Constitutions. In an informative Harvard Law Review article of 1977, Justice W. J. Brennan encouraged citizens to uphold protection of individual rights through State Constitutions instead of exclusively relying on, or challenging, the Federal Constitution (Brennan, W. J., 1977, pp. 489-504). Texas is an example of a State enacting laws to successfully challenge Federal Abortion laws (*cf.,* Ch. 8 herein).

constitutional republican paradigm, with its necessary limitations, a classic liberalist democracy[619] was free to develop through the period of modernity.[620]

Arising from a background of the Enlightenment era, modernity came to be identified through the political philosophy of classic liberalist democracy which was formed[621] upon the egalitarian principles of proto-liberalist utilitarianism enunciated by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and followed by philosophers such as John Locke (1632-1704), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and their circle (Driver, 2014). Liberalism[622] is defined[623] by its characteristics of representative democracy, republicanism, capitalism, the separation of Church and state,[624] separation of powers of government, limited government,[625] secularism in public affairs,[626] with individual rights, obligations, and freedoms balanced by the equality of all

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619 The significant advantage of an 'open society' (Karl Popper, Open Society, 1945, p. 5ff.), such as that of a liberal democracy polity, is the inherent faculty of 'reflexivity,' a process where "perception affects actions" (Niyazov, 2021), thus allowing a regime to respond to its citizen's reactions and the needs of society. The existence of reflexivity can undermine a "historicist framework such as Marxism" (Niyazov, 2021). Marxist historicism (*cf.,* Karl Popper, Historicism, 1957, p. vff.), has therefore only succeeded in closed autocratic, authoritative, or despotic societies like China, Cuba and the USSR.

620 "Liberalism", says Oxford scholar Joseph Raz, "is a political tradition which has developed and become one of the dominant political forces in what is known in the Western world over the last three hundred years or so" (1988, p. 1).

621 Historian Helena Rosenblatt reveals that the notion of liberalism can be traced to ancient Rome, specifically through the proposals of the stateman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.) (*cf.,* 2018, p. 5).

622 Political scientist, Prof. Patrick Deneen, states that "Liberty is a word of ancient heritage, yet liberalism has a more recent history being arguably only a few hundred years old (2018, p. xiii).

623 "Liberalism", explains legal and political theorist, Robert George, is a "complex and multi-faceted tradition" (Moral, 1993, p. xi), not easily or neatly defined.

624 The political framework that became known as 'liberalism', had as its primary purpose the curtailment of "the role of religion in public life". Similarly, contemporary secular liberalism, "aspires to be a universal project that supplants traditional religion and it to the private sphere" (White, 2018).

625 The notion of limited government proposed by John Locke and his ilk, does not derive from Locke's concept of a *tabula rasa* but, instead, from the Christian principle of separation of Church and State. Specifically, the State cannot and should not sacralize power intended to be exercised only by the Church. Originating from the Messiah's directives, redacted in Matthew 22:15-21, the State ("Caesar)" does not have powers conferred only on the Church of the Messiah, the two authorities to remain forever distinct. Separation of Church and State authorities is considered the "first great objective of the liberal tradition" (Siedentop, 2014, p. 349), which is unsurprising given the historic Roman Catholic Church domination of State and political life in Europe.

626 The USA guarantees freedom of religion to protect "religion from State involvement". However, in France, the guarantee of freedom of religion "sought to shield the State from religious involvement". The ultimate effect is the similar, with minor differences in application (Donadio, 2021).

persons[627] and religions in an open society, and enforced through the rule of law,[628] applied fairly.[629] Political commentator, Simon Heffer, well describes the liberal political tradition as enabling an "advanced and mature"[630] society, one whose commendable principles are to be defended and promoted.

While acknowledging the importance of separation between state and Church, Hobbes pointed out in his 1651 text, 'Leviathan', that the English Libertarian "sees double" due to the competing but intertwined alliance of the temporal and the spiritual, that is, the Government and the Church (1651, Ch. 39, p. 362). In so doing, Hobbes implicitly emphasised the importance of common values as a temporal reflection of beneficent precepts of the spiritual. Birthed through the insurrections in Britain (the so-called 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688), America (1776) and France (1789), social liberalism soon became the pervasive Anglo-American political philosophy (Gaus, 2020). The purpose of this political philosophy was to rid society of unjust feudalism, economic bondage, authoritarianism and tyranny but, to an extent, particularly in France,[631] a new despotic regime arose. Nonetheless, the commendable objectives of liberty, equality, and fraternity, leading to the purging of distinct and prejudicial social classes were substantially established, albeit at great social cost and suffering. Thereafter, restrictions on political and economic freedoms became progressively relaxed and laws suitably amended. In conjunction, extrinsic controls maintaining a level of acceptable decency, compassion and morality in society decreased. Parallel with the rise of individualism and the 16th century Reformation, was a decline in the restraining factor of State acknowledged Christian praxis and precepts. This evolvement was a continuum process for, assuming a dominant level of the characteristics of rights, obligations, and equality, the next evolutionary step in societal Institutions was for the advancement of individual freedoms and the simultaneous reduction of autocratic State controls. The situation escalated into the crisis of

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627 St. Paul states in Galatians 3:28 that, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". The clear meaning for society is that of human equality, for all have been made in the image of God (1 Cor. 11:7ff.). Whereas secular culture has emphasized the 'natural' inequality of persons, according to birth, class, and economic status, "Christianity underwrote the fundamental norm of the equality of all". This led to a "new sense of justice, for justice must reflect moral equality rather than natural inequality" (Weigel, Christianity, 2021).

628 Legal Scholar, H. Potter, confirms that throughout English history, the intersection and inseparability of the rule of law with liberty have remained paramount (2019, p. 3).

629 Immanuel Kant takes this a step further by claiming the "root liberal assumption" of liberalism, is that of an "individual autonomy" (Deneen, 2018, p. viii).

630 Heffer, S., Moral, 2020.

631 In the view of historian Helena Rosenblatt, "liberalism owes its origins to the French revolution and wherever it migrated thereafter, it remained closely linked to, and affected by, political developments in France". Therefore, post its ancient beginnings, liberalism was truly, "born in Europe and spread outward from there" (2018, p. 5).

the post-modern environ.[632] Thus, it can rightly be assessed that liberal[633] democracy can constitute its own enemy for an inescapable tension exists between democracy and liberalism, between the balance of freedoms,[634] rights, and the checks[635] against extremism. Political scientist Matthew Crawford of the University for Virginia's Institute of Advanced Studies, verifies that "Democracy and liberalism are two distinct things" which have never been "entirely at ease with one another" (2021). The rationale is that democracy invites the possibility of a illiberal dispensation, one without moral restraints yet intended for the common good, as is emerging in existent society.[636] The freedoms fundamentally contained within a democratic political regime can result in its own attenuation for, as elucidated by political philosopher Yuval Levin, "modern liberalism assumes and requires a society with a certain moral foundation, but it does not always reinforce that foundation and frequently undermines it". Levin concludes, however, that "it is up to us to use the tools at our disposal to sustain that moral culture" (2016). The "tools" are multifaceted, including both political and legal representation in the public square, and promotion of the cultural Judeo-Christian orientation of society, coupled with the freedom to engage the evangelical mandate of Matthew 28. For, if not, then a Constitutional liberal democratic[637] polity cannot survive as its precepts require a significant level of public morality arising from, and faithful to, the principles of the dominant monotheistic religion, namely, that of Judeo-Christianity.

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632 Conservative political theorist, R. R. Reno, comments that, "We imaged that a less judgmental and more affirming moral culture would allow people to flourish in their 'difference' – and instead we got family instability, a decline in marriage, coarse and often politicized entertainment, and deaths of despair" (Season, 2020).

633 Liberalism can be described as the "freedom from constraint: the freedom to act according to one's own conception of the good without impinging on another's right to do the same" (Mills, 2021). However, liberalism needs to be balanced with republicanism which recognizes the "centrality of the concept of the common good in its notion of freedom" (Mills, Liberalism, 2021).

634 The inherent freedoms enjoyed within a liberal political dispensation contain a paradox. Antony Mills explains as follows: "post-liberals accuse liberalism of engendering social atomization, cultural fragmentation, and moral decadence. The result is less freedom and less equality. Thus, under the banner of liberation, liberalism creates a system that is illiberal. In this regard, liberalism fails precisely in the measure that it succeeds" (Mills, M. A., Common Good, 2020).

635 Necessary to ensure a harmonious societal balance; what Arnold Kling refers to as "ordered liberty (2022).

636 Robert George, while endorsing the democratic liberalist tenets of freedom of thought and speech, religious liberty, equal dignity of all human beings, disagrees with "anyone who in the name of liberalism endorses abortion, pornography, gender affirmation surgery or suppression of religious expression" (Reason, 2021). George highlights the dangers of a democratic liberal polity where the protection of conflicting human rights is not catered for, and liberalism is not founded on the precepts of a theistic based natural law which would lead to a common good.

637 The ominous words of Irving Babbitt regarding the fragility of the democratic arrangement come to mind here, "In the long run, democracy will be judged by the quality of its leaders, a quality that will depend on the quality of their vision. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (*cf.,* Prov. 29:18), we are told, but where there is sham vision, they perish even faster" (Democracy, 1924, p. 16). These words highlight the danger to the established concept of democracy by radical leftist leaders such as President Biden, in search of social and political hegemony.

It needs clarification that in American parlance, the term 'liberal' now refers to intemperate leftism[638] and not in the sense of English liberalism[639] which is a conservative[640] political conviction the principles of which established "liberal democracies the world over" (Deneen, 2018, p. viii). In like manner, the term 'progressive'[641] applies to leftist politics with ensuing ideologies. An often exasperating[642] and imprecise word, 'liberal', has fluctuating connotations in modern society, the cultural framework of the term being vital as meaning varies according to the application. It may appear at first flush that a classic liberal polity and that of conservative theory are diametrically opposed for, in essence, they "serve different ends". Yet political theorist Aaron Powell adds that the "liberty that libertarians strive for, upsets traditional patterns – including the very patterns political conservatives seek to conserve" (2021). Despite Powell's contention there is a significant overlap of political interests in the post-modern era, for conservatives[643] wish to preserve[644] the good moral order of a society based on cultural Christianity, which has been empirically proven to be effective, while the libertarians[645] desire further freedoms from Statist control. The irony is that unless a certain significant, and majority iterated, level of moral rectitude and ethical societal standards is first attained through restrictions, no further relaxation of State confines on personal freedoms can be countenanced, thereby limiting liberalist principles. In this sense there is a convergence of conservative and liberal objectives for both political philosophies actively seek social stability

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638 In the contemporary Western context, liberals are considered persons who are "members of the radical left, in favour of large government that spends a great deal and intervenes excessively in people's lives" (Powell, 2012).

639 Similarly, 'Contemporary liberalism', an antonym of the term 'classic liberalism' (being a somewhat conservation concept), can be described as, "late-stage liberalism which calls itself 'progressive', and embodies a distinctive secularized soteriology and eschatology" (Vermeule, Strategy, 2017).

640 According to Roger Scruton (1944-2022), conservative political polity seeks to "conserve a historically given community" (What, 2002), with its conventional values. In this setting, conservatism is closely aligned to the classical liberal outlook and not the progressive polity of leftism. Scruton adds that the "conservative is the one who looks for the good in Institutions, customs and habits that he has inherited". He is therefore, "suspicious of experiments and innovations that put loyalty to risk" What, 2002), that is, loyalty to the extant classical liberal framework that for centuries has served Western civilization well.

641 'Leftist' and 'Progressive' are interchangeable terms in the current political context.

642 Rosenblatt concedes that 'liberalism' is a "slippery or elusive term" (Rosenblatt, 2018, p. 2).

643 Roger Scruton reveals the conservative outlook, when faced with aberrant ideological challenges to the political status quo, as follows, "conservativism is dedicated to maintaining the structure and Institutions of a society threatened by mercantile enthusiasm and social unrest" (Meaning, 1980, p. 15). Hence the critical clash with leftist ideology seeking radical realignment of the existing political landscape.

644 Wilmoore Kendall identifies with this explanation of 'conservatism' when he concludes that, "conservatives are those who are defending an established order against those who seek to undermine or transform it" (Conservative, 1963, p. ix).

645 Prof. Joshua Mitchell, a political theorist, concludes that, "liberal citizenship can easily be undone". Liberalism is based on an idea, a political theory, not on "blood or soil", that is, not on nationality or land, and is therefore fragile, "always in danger of falling apart into the primordial, tribal, condition of man" (Politics, 2021).

and reasonable standards of ethics in public affairs and individual morality. Conversely, in the current Anglo-American post-Christian setting, both political views are being tempered as conservatism is in the process of becoming outmoded,[646] and so too is classical liberal democracy.[647] The political challenger is the coercive political ideology,[648] intolerant of constitutional freedoms and in antithesis[649] to the commendable principle of subsidiarity[650] and hitherto political polity generally. Progressive liberalism has patently failed its promotors as a coveted social and political philosophy for the advancement of society. This development is due to the swift advance of Identitarianism undermining personal freedoms and displaying an intolerance for the concomitant rights of those with contrary views.[651] The limitations imposed by a conservative polity would be preferable[652] for the containing[653] of such extremist impositions, as it is ineluctable that society as a whole has libertine tendencies given the evidential nature of original sin through the praxis of innate antinomianism throughout history. Conservatives therefore work towards retaining or recapturing traditional tenets which have

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646 Culturalist Patrick Garry brings to attention that "after the election of Barak Obama, and in the face of a seemingly overpowering liberal (leftist) wave, conservatives once again debated the relevance and application of their ideology" (Conservatism, 2022).

647 Pinkoski opines that "Christianity produced liberalism" and consequently, "unlearning liberalism requires unlearning centuries of Christian belief" (2021).

648 The term, 'Political ideology' used here refers to a "reductive political theory that, when implemented, is incapable of securing the free and informed assent of the government and so must rely on extensive fraud and compulsion" (Howland, 2022), to ensure propagation of the desired ideology.

649 The ideological biased agenda of the Biden Administration is contra-indicative of traditional democratic liberal republicanism. Prof. D. E. Burns suggests that, "The tradition of non-ideological political thought is patriotic. From Athens to Rome to Florence to England to France to America, political philosophers have loved their city or nation for (among other things) being free and strong enough to permit well-intentioned internal critique" (Liberal, 2019). The freedom of critique against Statist ideological imperatives is no longer available within the American political and social system, being stymied by legal sanctions.

650 'Subsidiarity' is "the political principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level" (Lexico: UK English Dictionary, 2022).

651 Harvard University's Adrian Vermeule claims that, "progressivism is what happens when one follows the logic of human liberation to its endpoint, overriding all the culturally contingent limitations and shaky conceptual barriers" (Human Conflict, 2019).

652 Preference for a conservative democratic polity, through a classic liberalist tradition, in furthering the legitimate aspirations of a representative majority, is based on the "central conservative truth" of the conservative political tradition. The central truth is that it is "culture not politics that determines the success of a society". To the contrary, "the central liberal (leftist) truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself" (Moynihan, Family, 1986, p. 190). Herein lies the danger. An idiosyncratic ideological agenda by, for instance, an Administration like that of President Biden, can force upon a majority of the populace an alien social culture, thereby changing the extant culture through political maneuvering, as explained by Patrick Moynihan. This feature of progressive polity is the antithesis of the conservative project, for rather than being for the good of society, is actually to its detriment, a situation not likely in the conservative and classical liberalist dispensation, with its Judeo-Christian foundations.

653 It needs to be mentioned here that, politically speaking, "progressivism is the antithesis of conservatism" (Giubilei, F., Conservative, 2019, p. 6), and therefore essential in containing radical progressivist polity.

previously given stability to society and, in this respect, actively endeavour to force a definable recapitulation of what has been lost. The paradoxical yet perceptive words of Italian intellectual, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa come to mind here, “If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change” (The Leopard, 1911, p. 31).

Classic liberalism,[654] of which the conservative model is an off-shoot, as a democratic, political, and social phenomena is predominantly predicated[655] upon the solid, timeless,[656] pillars of cultural Christian values.[657] This is particularly the case in the areas of law, ethics, truth, and morality – a fabrication labelled “fusion” by political analyst Frank S. Meyer (1996, p. 156). Combined, the values lead to a conservative[658] political outlook as virtue is formatively necessary in the exercise of personal freedoms in order to achieve an acceptable standard of

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654 With acknowledgements to John Locke, Yoram Hazony brings to attention the three main principles underlying the liberal system of political theory. First, the “availability and sufficiency of reason”. It is through applied reason, he says, that humans are able to “discover universal truths that hold across all human societies and in every historical time frame”. The principle of reason is what Identity Ideologues refuse to employ, hence their purposed cognitive dissonance. Second, the “free and equal individual”. Freedom is negated by Identity activists for those opposed to their ideology. Third, “obligation arises from choice”. Activists likewise negate the right of choice when faced by those opposing them (*cf.,* Hazony, Democracy, 2019).

655 Veteran U.S. politician, Daniel Moynihan, rejects the notion of Judeo-Christian tenets underlying the success of the American Democratic Liberal dispensation. Instead, he avers that, “The government of the U.S. was not fashioned out of ‘self-evident truths’ but rather was the work of scholar-statesmen who had studied hard, learned much, and believed that they had come upon some principles of human behaviour made possible the reintroduction of republican government nearly two millennia after Caesar ended the experiment”. There is much to challenge in Moynihan’s synopsis. Briefly, though, the Founding Fathers of the U.S., the “scholar-statesmen” referred to, were actually the ones who acknowledged the “self-evident truths” of Judeo-Christianity upon which tenets the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence were founded. Moynihan, in true Democratic Party ideology, attributed, instead, the American success story to “principles of human behaviour”. The reality is that it was a combination of both the underlying principles of Christian culture, as lived out by “scholar-statesmen”, and the ‘hard work’ of others, that built a prosperous and free America (*cf.,* Moynihan, Politics, 1987, p. 22).

656 Francesco Giubilei elucidates that, “Conservatism is linked to eternal values stretching beyond a single era, valid in every historical period. Categorical conservatism must be, therefore, not only historical but ideal, universally functional, sociological and transcendental” (Conservative, 2019, p. 3).

657 Not to overlook the significant influence of Greek philosophy and rationality, together with Roman law from which emanates the rule of law doctrine so foundational in the Western legal tradition.

658 The conservative political arrangement is described by political theorist, Professor Russell Kirk, in five main distinguishing features. In each instance, he posits the adverse effects of radicalism on the conservative tradition. In sum, therefore, firstly, the principle of the “perfectibility of man and the illimitable progress of society”. He argues that, “radicals believe education, legislation and environment can produce men like gods”. Secondly, “Contempt for tradition. Reason impulse and materialistic determination are preferred as guides to social welfare. Formal religion is rejected and various ideologies presented as substitutes”. Thirdly, “Political levelling. Order and privilege are condemned… with an eagerness for centralization and consolidation”. Fourthly, “Economic levelling. Collectivist reformers hack at the institution of private property”. Fifthly, “Radicals unite in detesting Edmund Burke’s description of the State as ordained by God”. (*cf.,* Kirk, Mind, 2016, p. 10). Kirk’s political conservatist principles clearly identify the many challenges to extant Western society by Identity Ideologues.

distributive justice and societal harmony (*cf.,*1996, p. 181). The prevailing condition, however, is that although society retains varied elements of classic liberalism, the influence and public praxis of cultural Christianity has markedly decreased, thus allowing a certain moral vacuum, a purported neutrality,[659] to exist in the public forum. This state of affairs is in contradistinction to the scene a short few decades ago when Americans could be viewed as having, "something very similar to the establishment of religion in the life of the nation", where there existed "an agreement about morals". At such time, Churches "gave a general form and a general tone to the culture" (Bottum, 2008). The prevailing identity of the political dispensation was democratic republicanism, which gave rise to a form of national identity coupled with capitalism which allowed for economic freedoms. Irrespective of the political philosophy, it was a dominant religious order that provided "meaning and narrative", via an eternal and transcendental outlook. To exemplify, in 1965 Statistics indicated that well over 50% of Americans were members of a Protestant Church. But it seems that "around 1975, the main stream of Protestantism ran dry" and the "great Church of America came to an end", with less than 8% of Americans belonging to a Protestant Church in 2008. The situation in Europe also reflects this secular trend for "Protestantism is essentially gone from Europe now" (Bottum, 2008). The polar opposite hemispheres of the Antipodes and the Nordic countries, once bastions of Protestantism have also experienced a loss of attendance and commitment. Journalist Hjalmar Saevik points out, "despite its long Christian history, Norway is experiencing rapid secularisation… with explicit Christian values getting more unfamiliar and controversial. This is very visible around sexuality (especially LGBT issues) and bioethics" (Forster, 2021). Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), would not have been surprised at the post-liberal era focus on identity and its expressions for he perceived that the primary cultural struggle would become one "between diverse human identities and the cultural symbols that represent them" (Rose, World, 2021, p. 20). Spengler predicted[660] that the cultural Christian "symbols", the tenets underpinning Western society, would be confronted with post-liberalists promoting instead a recognition of their non-conventional individual identities.[661] Inevitably this situation would lead

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659 Spengler wrote not as a political actor but presciently, predicting the aftermath of a post-liberal 20th century. He stated that, "I write not for a few months ahead or for the next year, but for the future" (Rose, World, 2021, p. 19).

660 Secularism dispenses with the need for universal truths, engaged through scientific rationality, preferring a *tabula rasa*, a claimed neutrality, which indubitably concludes in subjective relativism. In this way, moral legitimacy is centred on the individual, thereby preventing attainment of a common good or a social justice inherent in universal truths and morality, all of which emanate from the natural law tradition, and its iterations.

661 Spengler's contentions were prescient as some 85 years after his death for Carl Trueman, discussing the 'cancelling' of cultural symbols and flags, perceives that "these arguments are not just about the things themselves. They are about who owns time and space – about who owns the culture's memory and imagination". When considering June as the Alphabet group's ostentatious

to cultural conflict resulting in “the Western world is forsaking its own identity and common interests” (Rose, World, 2021, p. 20). Spengler emphasised that this confrontation could only be “understood through the lens of Identity politics” (Pinkoski, Irreligious, 2021). Resultantly, a post-modern and post-structuralist secular milieux currently prevails, creating an environment where the principles of modernity and true democratic liberalism cease to have much significance. Concomitantly, the fundamental and beneficial restrictions of the hitherto political order are substantially reduced. Always heretical through the ages and at times identifying as the dominant belief system, secular humanist ideologies intertwined with paganist spirituality have had opportunity to significantly expand in the post-Christian[662] moral lacuna to yet again become normative, rather than remaining of limited influence in society.

It is a firmly established principle that justice should be ideologically neutral.[663] To the contrary, the tendentious and extreme civil rights claims by race and sex-gender actors have become manifest in an eccentrically defined and partisan social justice agenda contrary to the common good. Despite a declared objective of egalitarianism, the version of social justice sought has resulted in politically biased laws forcing compliance with militant ideologies of a minority sect, a cohort previously deemed in the mainstream to be morally deviant and socially unacceptable. Evolving from limitations on immorality, to the benefit of early modern society, and now to the unrestrained licentiousness of present society, Ideologically slanted statism has resulted in legal curbs paradoxically protecting unconventional behaviour, rather than constraints formulating civic virtue and decency.[664] The downgrading of cultural Christian[665] influenced State controls in the fields of ethics and morality, gives vent to intemperate manifestations of individual, and so societal, behaviour in the search for lost meaning, and hence identity, in an ever-fluctuating, complex, and confusing ethical environment. Prevailing

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‘Pride Month’, Trueman avers that, “June witnesses as comprehensive an attempt at cultural revolution as one is ever likely to see” (Pride, 2022).

662 Chantal Delsol perceives the current situation, in a post-Christian Western context, to be as follows, “to believe or to make believe that if Christianity collapses, everything collapses with it, is nonsense. The Christian rule is already being replaced, neither by nothingness nor by the storm, but by well-known, more primitive and rustic forms of history. Behind collapsed Christianity come Stoic morals, paganism and Asiatic spirituality” (End, 2021).

663 Law professor Robert George argues against neutrality in this context, averring that, “Law cannot be, and must not aspire to be, substantively neutral – that is, neutral on questions of morality and human well-being and fulfilment” (Reason, 2021). While George has a valid point, arising from a natural law stance, such a declared position cannot be deemed as having delivered an objective justice if not derived from a purportedly ideologically neutral perspective. That is the theory, but in practice Judges will inevitably have variated backgrounds influencing their decisions.

664 Robert Royal writes that, “only freedom and justice with limits can hope to achieve what is achievable by limited, flawed creatures like ourselves” (Camus, 2014).

665 Hazony points out that core tenets of society like “God, the Bible, the family and the independent national state”, cannot be derived from liberal principles for the reverse is true. Liberalism is predicated upon such principles (Democracy, 2019).

political philosophy ceases to stress the need for a virtuous society or commitment to a consensual 'common good' - a concept which autotheistic and reductionist secularism with its exclusion of natural law ethical creeds is unable to comprehend.[666] Instead, the emphasis is now on the autonomy of the individual claiming a right of auto-construction and public expression through therapeutically-centred Identity theories based on emotion, irrationality, and a cognitive disconnect with reality. At the same time, the philosophical theories surface from a neo-Gnostic epistemic duality of body-spirit, originally emanating from Edenic events. Simultaneously, there is no allowance or tolerance for the development of an egalitarian cultural articulation of classic liberalism, or its 'cousin' species[667] in the form of modern political conservatism,[668] [669]enabling the development of a common good.

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666 This contention is particularly relevant when the common good is understood as follows: "the common good must contain the recognition that a political community preserves something that transcends individual self-assertion" (Reinsch, R, Common Good, 2022). Sectarian ideologies therefore cannot give expression to a widely accepted, egalitarian, common good outside of a narrow context. Richard Reinsch suggests the solution is a common good founded on the Constitution. He posits that, "the common good of the Constitutional order… is one that receives its better ordering through the actual purposes and structure of the Constitution" (Common Good, 2022). Prof. Stoner concurs when he states that, "common good constitutionalism" deserves attention "as a way of thinking about justice and the constitution, and generally about our society and the rule of law (Constitution, 2022).

667 Yoram Hazony perceives that the fundamental difference between liberal democracy and conservative theory is that the liberal tradition has 'discarded conservative principles'. The latter are the "religious, national and historical-empiricist principles that have for many centuries held such a prominent place in the Anglo-American tradition" (Democracy, 2019). Nonetheless, the team of Haivry & Hazony, in a separate journal article, emphasize the close interrelationship between the two political paradigms by stating that "many prominent conservatives see conservatism as a branch or species of liberalism", which, in their opinion, is the "classic and most authentic form of liberalism" (Haivry & Hazony, Conservatism, 2017). It is obviously the excessiveness of contemporary liberalism (leftism) that is the concern for conservatives and classic libertarians alike, who lament Locke's "ordered liberty" within the classic liberal tradition (Kling, 2022). The complementary principles of 'order' and 'freedom' is well established in the alliance between conservative and (classic) liberal theories.

668 Scholars Haivry and Hazony jointly list the five basic principles of the Conservative tradition. First, the notion of "Historical empiricism" whereby the "authority of government" derives from empirically verifiable "constitutional traditions" offering "stability, well-being and freedom". Second, that of "Nationalism". Here, they posit that the "Anglo-American tradition harkens back to principles of a free and just national state, whose origin is in the Bible". Third, "Religion", which implies that the State, "upholds and honours the biblical God and religious practices common to the nation". Fourth, 'Limited executive power" whereby the laws of the nation place constrains on executive authority. Fifth, "Individual freedom". This means that an individual's "life and property" are to be protected against "arbitrary actions of the State" (Conservatism, 2017).

669 Haivry & Hazony opine that the "historic task of American conservatism is to preserve and strengthen American liberal democracy". They add that, therefore, "what is needed now is a new conservatism based on old conservative - and liberal principles" (Conservatism, 2017). The import of this suggestions is that the many beneficial aspects of the liberal democratic tradition are worth conserving but the new, leftist, radical, elements require discarding.

In 1943, philosopher Charles de Koninck in his controversial work, '*De la Primauté du Bien commun contre les personnalistes le principe de l'ordre nouveau',*[670] raised a caution against "secular hedonistic individualism" which refutes a concept of a common good. De Koninck describes the practical indicator of a common good as living "in common with other beings within a larger whole ordained to the good of those who are made up in a harmonious diversity that expresses God's perfection". He adds that this "supreme good is a common good that rests on the proper good of each", and for the benefit of all. (Roy, 2014). It is only in a theistically based context that a genuine common good[671] founded on objective and absolutist moral parameters can be established. Secularists with their emotivist and sited ethical construal are unable to establish an acceptable and consensual common good.

Although it cannot be claimed that cultural Christianity has been significantly tempered in society, certainly a marginalisation of its influence has taken place. While minor elements of modernity may intersect, society has long entered into a post-modern and post-Christian stage in which a tendentious and anti-Christian narrative has become ubiquitous in a staunchly secular, neo-pagan orientated, socio-political atmosphere. Social commentator, Damian Thompson, explains that whereas at the end of the 20th century, 40% of Americans regularly attended Church, there is now a new reality which indicates that, "four centuries of Christian flourishing have come to an end. Instead of one of those 'awakenings' that periodically jolted their faith back to life, Americans are caught up in a great unravelling" (2020). These factors indicate a civilisation crisis attributed to the intensifying deconstruction of conservative, Judeo-Christian tenets, and the humane order upon which Anglo-American cultures are instituted.[672] Commenting on the fragility of the liberal idea underlying Western democratic polity, Georgetown University professor Joshua Mitchell opines that the radical leftists undermining the liberal principles of regnant democracy, "do not offer a post-liberal idea of citizenship; it rather returns to the pre-liberal condition of tribalism" (Politics, 2021). Mitchell's view has much

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670 Translation: 'From the Primacy of the Common Good Against the Personalists and the Principles of the New Order'.

671 Anthony Mills questions application of a common good. He says that, "it is not within the State, but rather within subordinate associations that a common good can be achieved and enjoyed". Mills posits further that, "it does not mean that the State cannot or should not promote the common good, if by that we mean protecting those institutions (families, neighbour, places of worship, workplaces) in which we pursue common goods together as citizens, including by securing public goods" (Mills, M. A., Common Good, 2020).

672 In Roger Scruton's words, "A kind of hysteria of repudiation rages in European opinion-forming circles, picking one by one on the old and settled customs of a two-thousand-year-old civilization and forbidding them or distorting them into some barely recognizable caricature" (Government, 2014). The "customs" Scruton refers to are those founded on the Judeo-Christian tenets underpinning Western tradition.

merit for the politics of Identity, the new civic religion[673] and illiberal political norm do not offer a 'common good' despite protestations to the contrary. In actuality, Identitarianists can only propose a society divided along tribal lines, without prospects for unity[674] while striving for an elusive concept of diversity.[675] Political ideological polarization can be an indication of a healthy democracy for political groups necessarily differ on "political ideas and policy goals" (Finkel, Bail, 2020), in the representation of their constituents. Conversely, the species of schismatic ideas rampant in Western society are those which focus "less on the triumph of ideas than on dominating the abhorrent supporters of the opposing party" (Finkel, Bain, 2020). To be expected, the political dichotomy of ideas is particularly acrimonious, leading to extreme sectarianism,[676] and does not reflect classical liberal democratic polity, nor progression towards a common good.[677] Hadley Arkes of the Claremont Institute concludes that the internal situation in the U.S. can be described as "the gravest crisis of the regime since the Civil war".[678]

The regression to a narrow tribal allegiance is evident in the so-called 'Rainbow Flag' concept (the "Pride Reich"), the banner under which the Alphabet fringe gather to distinguish their sexually atypical tribe from the remainder of society, the conventional heterosexual cohort. In like manner, Critical Race Theorists, avowing anti-racism, distinguish their acolytes from

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673 Jurist, William Barr, summates that, "the secular project has itself become a religion, pursued with religious fervor. It is taking on all the trappings of a religion, including inquisitions and excommunication. Those who defy the creed risk a figurative burning at the stake – social, educational, and professional ostracism and exclusion waged through lawsuits and savage social media campaigns" (Notre Dame, 2019).

674 Cognizance is taken of Josef Pieper's words to the effect that, "real unity among human beings has its roots in nothing else but the common possession of tradition in the strict sense – sharing in common the sacred tradition that goes back to God's words" (Tradition, 2010, p. 66). Objectives like Cultural unity, the common good of society, and social justice cannot therefore be achieved through the capture and dominance of Western culture by Identity Ideologues.

675 Victor Davis Hanson argues that "all citizens should give up their own ethnic, racial and tribal primary identities" to create a common culture as without a "collective civic sense of self, the inclusive idea of an American citizen wanes and fragments" (Citizen, 2021, p. 15). The danger, emphasizes Hanson, is that when a citizen "owes more loyalty to his first cousin than to a fellow citizen, a constitutional republic cannot exist" (2021, p. 16).

676 Conservatives, like classic liberal democrats, "argue that conservatism, in its political identity and agenda, should focus more on the health of social communities and less on individual rights". Additionally, the idea of the common good should emanate from "each community itself and not mandated by the Federal government" (Garry, Conservatism, 2022). Garry is correct in both respects. Conservatives emphasize more the common good than individual rights which liberals tend towards although both political theories acknowledge the importance of both. The essential differences between the two is mainly of academic interest concerning the degree of personal liberty. Communities, rather than a central State, are in the best position to determine what is in their common interests and it is where meaning and group concordance can be realized.

677 Psychology professors, Packer and Van Bavel, claim that when humans "identify with a group (they) are motivated to pursue the group's interests and goals. But while that feeling provides the fuel for collective action, group norms set the direction, determining what forms those actions take" (Packer & Van Bavel, 2022). The result is evident in the emotive actions of Identity Ideologues, such as race and sex-gender activists.

678 Arkes, H., Hammer, J., et al, A Better Originalism, 2021.

alleged racists - the remainder of society, in particularly ethnic whites - through membership or support of movements such as the Black Lives Matter sect. Contemporary tribal allegiance, therefore, demands a passionate ideological partisan affiliation with membership being a proof of identity, a clan identity.[679] Tribalism along ideological lines inevitably leads to external tribal conflict and society is thus further polarized, eliminating any reasonable opportunity for seeking a common good. This is particularly the situation with Identity actors who, despite claiming diversity, equality, and tolerance, demand from all society a capitulation to a new national identity reflecting their aberrant and idiosyncratic clan identity.

Clearly, the principles of a hitherto liberalist democracy are under threat from a regressive, tribalist[680] group identity, as Mitchell predicts. He concludes that the "category of the liberal citizen" cannot be maintained "without a renewed Christianity" (Politics, 2021), that is, the renewed cultural influence of Judeo-Christian tenets. Striving in vain for a sacred identity through tribal affiliation, sectarians need to be made aware, through Christianity in the public square, that individual transcendence can only be found in the Messiah, not through a tribal identity contrary to Christian precepts. Professor Victor Davis Hanson in his study of the pending demise of Anglo-American citizens and their rights as enjoyed hitherto[681], concludes with the statement that, "Contemporary events have reminded Americans that their citizenship is fragile and teetering on the abyss". Like Mitchell, he urges individuals to "rebuild and recover what they have lost" (Citizen, 2021, p. 18), that is, a culture and national identity reliant on the principles of a liberal constitutional democracy exhibiting natural law derived Judeo-Christian precepts, and not be swayed by divisive Identitarianism.

The concept of a cultural Christian based 'common good' - a uniform civic virtue – is central to the political doctrines of democratic liberalism and lends itself to be articulated through a humane order in the public space. In so doing, a widely endorsed understanding of social

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679 Two leading psychologists, in their study on Western political tribalism, claim that, "American politics has become driven by tribal conflict" (Packer and Van Bavel, 2022).

680 *Cf.,* The Dying Citizen: How Progressive Elites, Tribalism, and Globalization are Destroying the Idea of America' (Hanson, Citizen, 2021).

681 Scholar T. J. White perceives that, "Democracy is a means towards an end. The end in question is the political common good, the collective lives of individuals, families, and organizations that are sustained within a larger whole in which they can flourish" (White, T. J., 2018).

justice[682] based on commendable civic rudiments such as reason,[683] human dignity, respect, freedom,[684] equal rights, purity, virtue, decency, compassion, ethics and morality will follow. Yet this altruistic concept finds no general reception in a post-structuralist society subjugated to legal and political powers endorsing and enforcing Identity focused creeds. The idea of a 'common good,' a somewhat imprecise postulate better understood cognitively, morally and emotionally rather than defined as a broad social assembly, has connotations in the natural law foundations of American society. The principles of a commendable common good were encapsulated in the U.S. Constitution, as indicated by the Preamble thereto, namely, "We the people….. in Order to…promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty…" (1788). Such broad objectives have been replaced by a topical attention on individualism - the well-being of the 'inner-self', a narcissistic and therapeutic focus stimulated by Freud and his psychoanalytic theories. Individualism *per se* can be a healthy indicator of a functioning liberal democracy, to be contrasted with Statist collectivism and conformity which, instead, reflects a narrow, egotistical, determination which excludes primary attributes of a common good - the antithesis of a well-balanced democratic republic. In the current dispensation, virtue as a composite set of values evident in beneficent practical demonstration, known also as civic virtue, has been sublimated by the ideological Identity ideas of a neo-Gnostic Elite commanding the social agenda in pursuit of a distributive and sectarian form of justice, endorsed both politically, socially, and legally. As a consequence of ideological and contextual bias, objective truth has become a casualty. In the setting of post-modern cynicism, there exists no mutual commitment to an intellectual discourse possibly resulting in objective,

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682 Luigi Taparelli (1793-1862), emanating from the Aquinian natural law tradition, emphasized the dual elements of the social justice concept. Firstly, it comprised of "a virtue of individual conscience – a constant and perpetual will to render to each his (inalienable) right", due, "simply on account of their participation in society". Secondly, "Government actions (institutions, policies, laws) ought to protect and promote the fulfilment of duties and the exercise of inalienable rights of persons in society, as these are the purposes for which society exist" (Behr, Social Justice, 2019, p. 86). To counter unwarranted Statism, Taparelli coupled his concept of social justice with that of subsidiarity, which Pope Pius XI, described as a situation whereby it is "gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community. So, it is also an injustice and a disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them" (Pius XI, Social Order, 1931, para. 79). This issue discussed further in Chapter 8.3.

683 Edward Feser, brings attention to the limitations of reason. He clarifies that while "unaided human reason can establish that there exists a divine first cause of the world, it cannot afford us a direct (as opposed to inferential) knowledge of God's every essence or nature" (Pantheism, 2022), for that is a matter of supernatural revelation.

684 Mills states the core element of liberalist polity is that of freedom. However, he adds that the political philosophy of liberalism, "asserts the universality of rights on the basis of rational precepts equally available to all people" (Common Good, 2020). Hence, some rights to freedom have to be restrained to accommodate collateral rights of others in an effort to attain a form of common good'.

rational, verifiable, or empirical truths and civic values for the common good of society.[685] And, there cannot be such a mutual commitment as radical Identitarians do not desire objective truth through discourse, or any other means, but, rather, to seek an eccentric and contextually variable form of social justice through State authoritarianism. This deduction should not be unexpected for, as Jacob Howland points out, "An Ideology's focus is on efficacy rather than truth".[686]

While acknowledging the hypotheses of notables such as Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas concerning the idea of a 'common good' of society, the moral disposition of individuals, and the duty of the State to promote it, it has to be conceded that society does, rather, amount to a fictious person, a *persona ficta*. A fictious person is an entity constituted of more than its component organic parts (Latham, 2021). In operating via devolved powers, the entity acquires legitimacy. Subsequently, when one or more of the integrated parts becomes dysfunctional then the whole entity can become contaminated and unable to operate as originally desired. This view particularly concerns morality and ethics in society, and therefore the emergence of pliable but exclusionary fixated morality of an individual is not a harbinger of a continuing common good for existent society. A feature of a well-functioning liberal democracy with a balanced moral philosophy and established 'common good',[687] is the idea that bigoted Ideologues pursue their agenda peacefully while taking the corresponding rights of others into consideration while acting in a non-aggressive mode. Hence, when Identitarians form a notable sect within society and act in an belligerent manner, with *animus,* to force acquiescence to their beliefs, then such society is unable to remain liberal, moral, and

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685 It is contended by Prof. Michael Polanyi that scientific rationalism has been a "major influence towards intellectual, moral and social progress" (1970, p. 910), that is, progress resulting in the common good of society. Nonetheless, he adds, due to rationalism's innate standpoint of scientific scepticism and doubt, human reason had been undermined and "bred a widespread nihilism", which in turn had resulted in "danger to the spiritual conception of man". The consequence was the "destruction of liberal societies over wide ranges of Europe" (1970, p. 911). While discussing the destruction of Europe through wars and revolutions, Polanyi claims that the greatest threat to Western man is, rather, a "moral inversion" due to a vacuum of reason (Chaput, Believe, 2018). Commenting on Polanyi's polemic, Chaput deduces that "rejecting the traditional philosophical foundations of Western culture gives rise to a spiritual turmoil that science, technology and prosperity cannot quell. And when the soul is deprived of truth, then it turns to toxic substitutes" (Chaput, believe, 2018). To conclude, unless the civilization is founded on and demonstrates Judeo-Christian precepts with their moral legitimacy, interlinked with Hellenist rationality and the natural law principles of Roman law, then the end result will be meaning and identity devoid of transcendence, of value-neutral secularism, ending inexorably with nihilism.

686 Howland, J., Ideology, 2022.

687 The complexity of determining a common good is summarized by James Stoner as involving, "the theoretical (the meaning of common good); the historical (distinctiveness); political (aspects central to constitutionalism such as separation of powers); and moral (concerning conscience and the human person)" (Constitution, 2022).

democratic for very long (Badhwar, 2021). Such a scenario eventually leads to internal moral degeneration with tempering of constitutional rights and obligations, and erosion of the culture.

The internal moral decline of Roman Society, despite commendable civil and criminal legal sanctions, such as those promulgated by the Emperor Justinian confining unacceptable conduct, eventually led to the nation's destruction by invading Visigoth barbarians (c. 410 C. E.). Post-Christian Western societies face a similar dilemma through the passing or diminution of Judeo-Christian precepts sustaining legal, moral, and ethical imperatives. The 'Barbarian hordes' threatening the moral order and political stability of contemporary society, mainly comprise self-centred, and therapeutically focused, Ideologues functioning in the name of distributive justice but in actuality dividing the populace into opposing camps. In such social environment, the term 'justice' is a grave misnomer for its antonym, injustice, is what transpires, giving further vent to societal disturbance. Nullification of the right to disagree, to publicly hold a contrary view through freedoms of speech and religion,[688] are under critical threat by restrictive legislation such as 'Equality Acts,' despite Constitutional safeguards. The average person holding conservation views cannot easily engage in a successful defence against legal suits filed in the name of discrimination and breach of an 'Equality Act'. An event of this nature inevitable causes rising anxiety amongst those holding contra-leftist views, inhibiting essential personal freedoms.

The expanding intrusion of the State, in a case of unwarranted political and moralistic overreach[689] into the private lives of its citizens,[690] is the converse of a classic liberal political framework.[691] Statist actions tend towards autocracy fostered by partisan public nomenklatura

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688 Freedom of Religion, as per Thomas Farr, is "a natural inalienable right" and not a "privilege granted by governments" (Freedom, 2022).

689 Moralistic overreach by Administrations, such as those of President Biden, is doomed to eventual political stalemate and thus failure. The reason is that it insists on its "own correctness, elevated to the urgency of the moral plane (which) makes compromise not merely imprudent but indefensible. Because of its tendency towards monomaniacal focus on single issues to the exclusion of all others, it cannot engage in horse-trading" (Weiner, Morals, 2019). Negotiation with contending political parties is essential for the sake of the common good of society, internal peace and order, and a widely accredited form of social justice. Weiner concludes, "It is more common for moral results to be attained through coalitions of individuals or interests who each possess pieces of the truth" (Weiner, Morals, 2019). Biden's leftist government clearly disagrees, being partisan to the extreme.

690 An example is the fact that the "majority of the current Justices on the US Supreme Court reject the long-standing rule against public funding of religious institutions". The prohibition of State funding for religious organizations has been "the mainstay of the principle of separation of Church and State" (Green, S K., Church and State: Preface, 2022).

691 A facet of Constitutional republicanism is that there exists a distinction between State and society, for "the State which is public, is in the service of society which is private, and the State is limited to this service." Consequently, the "subordination of State to society is the main truth of constitutional government" (Mansfield, Democracy, 1987, p. 62). Statism occurs when the State no longer views itself as subordinate to mainstream society and, instead, acts in its own ideological or political

(career civil servants), thereby mitigating sundry natural rights and codified freedoms. In Anglo-American societies, the escalating interloping of the State into private affairs, particularly in the areas of sex and gender, is evidence of the expiration[692] of the substantive principles of the classic liberalist tradition, conservatism, and democracy in submission to climbing authoritarianism. State control over citizens' personal concerns has long persisted in jurisdictions with collectivist economic and social arrangements, such as Marxist-Leninist China, Cuba, and North Korea. In Western societies, despite their adverse historic exposure to authoritarianism, evidence of similar practices are developing rapidly. To counter this threat, for instance, a number of European political parties have bandied together in order to oppose dictatorial attempts of the European Union Parliament (EU), an unelected body, to enforce[693] ideological rules and regulations upon Europe as a whole.[694] The allegations are that the EU[695] is preparing to carry out a "cultural revolution that will destroy social structures of member /nations, starting with the family and traditions", in order to create a "new man". The defiant cohort avers that the EU has become a "tool of radical forces" and seeks to "carry out a civilization transformation of Europe" in order to "create an European superstate devoid of European traditions, social Institutions or moral principles". In so doing they are "abandoning Judeo-Christian values and, instead, aligning themselves with leftist positions for political gain" (Kern, 2021). As in some EU member countries, UK culture has succumbed enthusiastically to the avalanche of Identity ideologies emanating from the US. Despite certain cultural differences between the two countries, "Abortion… and same-sex marriage have been quickly accepted into the British mainstream (and) it is not surprising that events on one side of the

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interests. This is the situation with the actions of the Biden Administration, professing that its ideological laws and regulations are for the common good of society but, in fact, are only in the interests of a minority sector of society and the administration itself.

692 Ironically, a sharp criticism relating to 'expiration' of the West's political heritage comes from the Kremlin's policy advisor, Sergey Karaganov, who perceives, "the West, after dominating the global economy, ideology, and culture for 500 years, finds itself in ideological decline". He adds, "All powers, if they want to be great, must have a set of ideas leading forward. When these ideas were lost, great powers ceased to be or great or simply disintegrated". His conclusion is that this has "happened to the great European powers", which have now "started to crumble". The writer explains that, according to President Putin's October 2021 media address, "Liberalism has failed and the new progressive liberal ideas pushed by the West are evidence of a loss of values and identity" (Mahjar-Barducci, Ideology, 2022).

693 Delsol recognizes the rise of a new State religion with its own morality. She says, "the European rulers represent the tabernacle of the clericature. In short, we have returned to a typical situation of paganism: we have a State morality" (End, 2021).

694 Columnist Kevin Myers records that the European Union rejected the claim that, "its constitution should accept any acknowledgement of its historic debt to Christianity". As a consequence, Myers points out that "Western civilization has been indoctrinating its children in racial gobbledygook, multiculturalism, pseudo-egalitarian, the right of transgender homosexuals to marry one another", and so on (Ireland, 2022).

695 Legal theorist, Juanma Badenas, recognizes that "the European Union is becoming a kind of secular papacy" (Christendom, 2022), that is, a dictatorial cabal enforcing a secular civil religion.

Atlantic should affect the other" (Cowan, 2021). The same sentiments apply to diverse Western jurisdictions reflecting the extreme leftist agenda of the current US regime of Joe Biden, the 46th US President. Biden's unequivocal and indefatigable promotion of secularist and neo-pagan leftist practices such as abortion, same-sex marriage and similar, is in stark contrast to the directive of the 18th President, Ulysses Grant, who in 1878 publicly recommended to students that they should, "hold fast to the Bible as the anchor sheet of your liberties; write its precepts in your hearts, and practise them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization and to this we must look as our guide in the future" (Federer, 2021).

The veracity of Augustine's analysis that society is comprised of those members of the 'heavenly city' comingled,[696] yet in competition and tension, with those of the 'earthly city' (1871) is laudable and reflects a situation enduring throughout history. Yet an 'earthly city' cannot effectively survive as a stable society without the vital influence of those of the 'heavenly city' imparting their humane and virtuous values. Whereas it can be inferred that the tenets demonstrated by devout adherents of the dominant faith would in fact influence the society, in addition there would also be virtuous persons of differing faiths and beliefs such as certain humanists, pagans, and heathens with their own moral codes, sometimes reflecting elements of the natural law emanating from a non-theistic background. Even so, it has to be accepted that civic virtue, giving life to a common good in society, can never be fully achieved until the eternal order. Nonetheless, a well-functioning society actually requires and desires something more realistic and immediate, and that is both internal and external peace and order. It is the duty of Christians to continue to influence the culture of the 'earthly city' so that just laws and values can arise to create the required peace and order. In such setting, individuals can live their lives with entrenched freedoms, and to practice the dictates of their faith. While becoming a shrinking influence in society, Judeo-Christianity has had enormous historical impact in establishing the naissance principles of civilisation and there is no rationale why such influence cannot again become endemic and change society for the better. A renaissance, a reconstruction, of cultural Christianity can arise again as it did in Europe,[697] circa 14th century onwards. The practical question remains as to what can be expected in replacement thereof, given the developing ostracization of cultural Christian precepts for, as

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696 *Cf.,* Matthew 13: 24-30: the parable of the 'Wheat and the tares'.

697 In 1971, President Charles De Gaulle of France wrote in his publication, *Mémoires d'Espoir,* that Europe's nations all had the "same Christian origins and the same way of life, linked to one another since time immemorial by countless ties of thought, art, science politics and trade" (Gregg, Europe, 2015). It is the "Christian origins" of Europe that are under existential threat by secular and pagan humanist ideologies.

Chief Rabbi of the UK Jonathan Sacks pointed out, “without a return to the shared commitment of a common good, liberal democracy will fail” (2020). Unfortunately, a consensual concept of social justice leading to a ‘common good’ appears to have little realistic chance of implementation in the present social divergence due to the existential nature of the struggle for orthodoxy, in the face of rampant Identitarianism.

A cultural void cannot exist, for the demise of a regnant culture inexorably leads to replacement by another waiting ‘in the wings’. Perhaps the looming cultural colonization by narcissistic Identity ideologies, intersected with paganist spirituality, will constitute a new form of global civilization for Western society. Oswald Spengler’s theory appears valid when he perceives that cultures have a natural life cycle. In particular, his view is that “the future of the West is not limitless, tending upward and onwards for all time towards our present ideals, but instead is a single phenomenon of history strictly limited and defined as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries…” (1916, p. 39).[698] From a secular perspective, supported by underlying philosophies sustaining civilization, Spengler is correct when he surmises, that “every philosophy is the expression of its own and only for its own time”. However, he fails when he states that, in this context, “there are no eternal truths” (1916, p. 41). It has been, and continues to be, the eternal truths of Judeo-Christian precepts that have given rise to, and sustained since inception, a Western civilization with all the human rights and dignity later contained within a liberalist democratic political polity. It is this polity which creates opportunity for a common good founded through a just, consensual, and virtuous expression of social justice enforced through a rule of law, fairly applied.[699] An element of hope for Western society arises through the deduction that radical leftism, the so-called “militant progressivism”, as a construal is, according to Harvard professor Adrian Vermeule, “structurally unstable”. Vermeule’s rationale is that, “in the long run it undermines itself by transforming tolerance into increasing radical intolerance of the intolerant – meaning those who hold ‘illiberal’ views” (Strategy, 2017). Ideologies are fluid and dynamic, unsound and variable, with no rational or verifiable scientific or moral foundation, based merely on abstract ideas and ideals. The critical secular and relativist offensive upon the foundations of essential Western Institutions - developed after centuries of cultural Christian culture – through activists’ “militant progressivism”, resulting in a “structurally unstable” society, is commented on by Harvard-

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698 From Spengler’s imposing opus, ‘The Decline of the West: Forms and Actuality’ (1916), one of the most controversial books of the 20th century (*cf.,* Sedgwick, 2019, pp. 12-13).

699 The concept of justice in Western cultures, arising from Judeo-Christian principles, was in practice enhanced by the emphasis on evidence-based verdicts “rather than on physical tests or the testimony of relatives”. First millennium Church councils, such as “several of the Councils of Toledo redefined criminal laws in ways that point towards the norms of justice and the concepts of jurisprudence expected in 21st century democratic societies” (Weigel, Christianity, 2021).

based psychologist, Steven Pinker. Pinker maintains that stable, traditional, institutions are of crucial relevance to society. He explains that such Institutions comprise, *inter alia*:

"Communities that run by truth-enhancing rules, like liberal democracies with their checks and balances; the judicial system with its adversarial process and presumption of innocence; science with its empirical testing and peer-review; responsible journalism with its editing, fact-checking, and source-verification; and academia, with its commitment to free inquiry and open debate".

Pinker concludes:

> *"When universities are suffocated by cancel culture and other kinds of repression of intellectual freedoms, we are disabling our only known means for approaching the truth, and sapping the credibility of the Institutions that people must trust if they are to replace their superstitions and folk beliefs with our-best understanding of reality"* (Q & A, 2022).

In the aforegoing passages, Pinker has correctly diagnosed the contemporary challenge to long-standing and functional Institutions which are becoming, and some have already become, compromised by neo-Marxist derived, radical actors enjoying significant Statist, corporate, institutional, media, and otherwise elitist support for a restructuring of society.[700] Yet, heretical assaults against the Divine's kingdom purposes for society are bound to fail for, "no weapon that is fashioned against" his Church and his plan of redemption for humankind will succeed (*cf.,* Isa. 54:17). Still, cognizance needs to be taken of the fragile and precarious nature of long-established Western culture for, as pointed out by Christopher Dawson, "culture is an artificial product, it is like a city that has been built up laboriously by the work of successive generations. It is the essence of culture that it is communicated and acquired". It comprises a "tradition of learning, and an accumulated capital of knowledge with a community of folkways into which the individual has to be initiated" (Crisis, 1961, p. 3). It is Dawson's use of the latter word, 'initiated', which places the onus on right-thinking persons to educated (in the broadest sense) others in the Western tradition, much like the Church has a mandate to promulgate the Messiah's gospel. It is through this process alone, alleges Dawson, that the "culture is handed on by the society and acquired by the individual". To defeat cultural radicalism, a "political behaviour" based on conservative principles, "needs to be built on noble habits, practices, and worthy leisure, borrowed from generations of conservative thought" (Crisis, 1961, p. 3). Attempts of this nature necessarily "originate in our homes, our

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[700] Humanities professor, Gary Morson, recounts that, "revolutions never succeed without the support of wealthy, liberal, educated society" (Liberals, 2020).

neighbourhoods, our communities, our cities, our schools, and should guide our national debates" (Roberts, K. D., Future, 2022). In this way, as recounted by Richard Neuhaus, Western culture, itself a reflection of established Judeo-Christian precepts, will beneficially affect the political environment, for the common good of society (*cf.,* Editorial, 1990).

7.3 Social Justice[701]

Prior to the present societal discord, a formative contribution to the civic discourse surrounding distributive social justice was made by social theorists like John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), Roscoe Pound (1870-1964), Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992), John Rawls (1921-2002) and many others. Hence it is necessary to briefly consider the effects of the social justice concept upon the current conundrum in Western society. The objectives, for instance, of the French Revolution (c. 1789) seeking liberty, equality, and fraternity were iterated much later by the Communist inspired Bolshevik uprising (c. 1917). In both circumstances, the motivation was to accomplish a form of social justice leading to a 'common good'. 'Social justice' is likewise the war cry of Identitarians pursuing a metamorphosis of contemporary society while claiming victimhood.[702] In the method of prior social revolutions, the present woke brigades seek freedom of diversity, equality, and inclusion through an idiosyncratic social justice.[703] Though, when detached from the Judeo-Christian background of natural law, as amplified by the redacted Mosaic Law and the later Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; Matt. 22:29; Matt. 6:12), social justice becomes a secular and humanist endeavour, varying greatly according to the parochial milieu of its proposer. The element of contextuality constitutes an obstacle towards attaining a consensual, multi-partisan, common good. For justice *per se,* as universal concept, to

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701 The term, 'social justice', was created by Luigi Taparelli (1793-1862), and "refers to the justice due between associations on the same, or at greater or lesser, levels of the social hierarchy" (Behr, Economics, 2011, p. 608). Taparelli emphasized a natural law approach to the concept of social justice, "in the tradition of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas" (Weiss, Teachings, 2022). Taparelli's contemporary, Antonio Rosmini (1797-1855), held a similar understanding of social justice. Professor Robert Kraynak, confirms that, "the term 'social justice' was not invented by secular progressives but grew out of the Thomistic natural law tradition", as understood by "Taparelli and Rosmini" (Origins, 2018, p. 4). Social justice is differentiated from the juridical concept of due process justice.

702 In the worldview of the Identity activists, "attentiveness to the invisibility of the innocents is the true measure of social justice." This stance results from a claim of victimhood, the 'innocents' of the dichotomous class and gender struggle. Political scholar, Joshua Mitchell, adds that, "Identity politics silences the 'transgressors', listens to the 'innocents', and encourages episodic 'activism' on behalf of the innocents against the transgressors" (Identity, 2019) - all for the purpose of attaining a notion of social justice.

703 Harvard Psychology professor, Steven Pinker, concludes that the concept of social justice should be founded on "factual claims" that can be affirmed because "reason and evidence suggest they are true". Therefore, says Pinker, there cannot be a "trade-off between rationality and social justice or any other moral or political cause" (Rationality, 2021). The reason being that rationality, that is, justification and validation through reason and objective empiricism, is an imperative requisite in defeating relativist construals.

achieve its aims it must "not only be done, it must be seen to be done" (Davidson, Justice, 2007). This traditional dictum of jurisprudence is echoed by Elias Canetti when he explains that "justice becomes real when it is carried out in the presence of the crowd". The French Revolution comes to mind here. Canetti continues, "it is the crowd we have in mind when we speak of the importance of justice being public" (1978, p. 51). A consensual common good can only transpire when social justice is manifestly and publicly exhibited. This is the rationale behind Western social turbulence for Identitarians endeavour to publicly impose their narrow and intrusive concept of social justice, aimed at a proposed common good, upon a disaffected majority.

In a discussion of a post-modern, contemporary, concept of social justice, the 'Department of Social and Economic Affairs' of the 'United Nations International Forum for Social Development', published a memorandum (Social Justice, 2006), in which they claim that the "notion of social justice is "relatively new" (p. 11). They add that by the mid 1900's, the idea of a social justice had become, "central to the ideologies and programs of virtually all the leftist and centrist political parties around the world, and few dared oppose it directly" (p. 12). The idea of what constitutes just or unjust is cultural, parochial, contextual and largely relativist and hence evades a universally accepted finite definition.[704] In the manner of secular humanism, relativist social justice is devoid of a common, agreed, or absolutist morality and therefore inexorably leads to division of purpose. In a similar manner, the term, 'distributive justice', amounts to social justice in its practical application with the two terms considered "synonymous and interchangeable in common parlance and the language of international relations" (p. 13). The U.N. memorandum confirms the nebulous meaning and relativist character of both social justice and its affiliated term of distributive justice, which are "often identified with unqualified references to justice… the precise reasons for which may only be conjectured" (Social Justice, 2006, p. 13). Within such circumstances, says Nobel Laureate Friedrich Hayek, there can be "no objective test of justice" (2012, p. 211). And so, opines social theorist Michael Novak, it remains an "abstract ideal" (2000), available to be appropriated by Ideologues for nefarious and idealistic purposes, as is the current case. Hayek submits, in his perceptive work, 'Law, Legislation and Liberty' (2012), that without a purpose

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[704] The same contention applies to the scientific field for, according to W.A. Wilson, the Identity Ideologues claim that "colonization, racism, immigration, native rights, sexism, ableism, queer -, trans-, intersex-phobia and economic justice are scientific issues". Wilson adds that the liberals (leftists), "desire to inject the views and interests of progressive social causes into the methodology of science itself, and perhaps even into its conclusions" (2017). Having predominantly captured the Humanities, the scientific field is the next target for radical Ideologues in order to complete their dominion and refabrication of society. Science would no longer be substantially value-free or empirical, thereby further attenuating objective truths in favour of relativist construals.

of universal and uniform moral virtue, social justice 'demanded by individuals' (2012, p. 230) cannot be realized. Hayek explains that "this places the duty of justice on authorities with power to command people what to do" (p. 230). Novak describes this situation as a focus on attaining power, not virtue for the 'common good' (2000). Governing authorities invariably seek to dominate and control the populace, as Karl Popper emphasised in 'The Open Society and its Enemies', perceiving that totalitarian tendencies "belong to a tradition which is just as old or just as young as civilization itself" (Popper, 1945, p. xxxv). Roger Scruton similarly highlights that Marxism, under the fiction of social justice, disguises the fact that "it is not a truth-directed but a power-directed system of thought", and that explains the "willingness of intellectuals to believe it".[705]

The nomenklaturas of Biden's Administration are exemplars of the situation for they have taken it upon themselves to "command" compliance through intrusive 'Equality' legislation. Legal enforcement of radical Identity ideologies causes a deep morass in Western society. The severity of the ideological moral abyss between members of society is such that no 'social contract' for the common good is possible, despite proposals to this effect by John Rawls in his 'Theory of Justice' (1971, p. 11). Rawls' submissions appear to have an inclination towards a perceived social utopia where reason and compromise co-exist, an intersection which certainly remains inapplicable in the critical contemporary social contest where civic discourse is stifled. Additionally, Rawls' proposal of an 'original position' (1971, p. 11) for determining a bilateral consideration of social justice, is idealistic when related to the current ideological storm for it assumes rationality and fairness (1971, p. 11), on the part of all parties to the debate. Even so, the true 'original position' cannot be other than that exemplified in the Edenic scenario, a theistic context, and which position is categorically rejected by atheistic humanists. The heretical personage, Nimrod, initiated, and his ideological atheist, paganist successors exemplify, the contrary position currently reflected in the culture. Rawls makes unrealistic assumptions about the reasonableness and morality of parties to a social contract for he states that "the purpose of these conditions is to represent equality between human beings as moral persons, as creatures having a conception of their good and capable of a sense of justice" (1971, p. 19). Clearly, Rawls' assumptions are fraught with difficulty for they appear to replicate an Edenic utopian scene (what political historian Jason Morgan terms a "lost world tradition", 2021). Instead, the reality is that of an ideological battleground devoid of an objective common good and virtue, but with a narcissistic focus on the autotheistic self. In such circumstances there exists no possibility of achieving a co-operative social concordance for a common good

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705 Scruton, R., Political Philosophy, 2006, p. 150.

in a communal or national context. A social justice leading to a common good cannot be successfully achieved when devoid of absolute truths and morality, and that is why Morgan harkens back to his “lost world tradition”, and Rawls his “original position”. Juliana Pilon refers to such usage of the social justice concept as “utopian conceit” (2019, p. 19), for it is based on a neo-Gnostic and fallacious assumption of superior knowledge in manufacturing an ideological social utopia. The concepts of Morgan, Rawls and Pilon, closely interrelated, are manifestly impossible to implement in the present confrontational morass besetting society, and will therefore remain theoretical, idealistic, and unattainable until resolved in the dynamic of the eschatological era.

A more realistic and achievable solution, by way of a compromise, may perhaps somewhat surprisingly be found in the principles and practices of the Japanese legal system. Legal scholar, Mark Ramseyer of Harvard University, proposes a ‘Second-Best Justice’ (2015) theory and uses concordant legal outcomes in the Japanese legal system as an analogy. These outcomes are not designed to attain an idealistic “perfect justice” (2015, p. 3) outcome but, rather, a mutually satisfactory and practical key in order to resolve legal disputes “predictably and cheaply” (2015, p. 9). In Ramseyer’s words, “Japanese Courts do well because they merely try to ‘make-do’. They do not aspire to perfection. They aspire only to a ‘good enough’” (2015, p. 1) result. Jason Morgan, disparaging Rawls’ original position proposal, states that, on the other hand, the ‘second-best’ outcome principles of Japan’s juridical decisions, “seek the reasonable solution to a dispute, one acceptable to all parties that repairs communal harmony to the greatest extent possible. Perfection does not enter the equation, either as an original ground or as a goal” (2021). Nevertheless, both Rawls and Morgan are unrealistically optimistic in their proposals for they are misapplied to the contemporary social conflict. The clash is a grave ideological contest with existential implications, and therefore no space for compromise or a mutually satisfactory outcome. The societal contest is, in essence, a repetition of the original spiritual battle in the Edenic Garden for the soul of humankind – between the malevolent vicarious serpent and the Creator himself, enacted through the pinnacle of his creation, the first human couple. With commencement in the primeval contest, with its far-reaching lethal consequences, the contemporary situation is simply a continuation of that conflict, a battle to be fought to the very end, with the victorious outcome revealed in the book of Revelation, chapters 20 - 22.

The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (Part III, §1, Ch. 2, Article 2, §§2, para. 1905 ff.) is useful in defining the concept of ‘common good’, the projected end result of social justice activism. Significant highlights are as follows:

- The “common good concerns the life of all” (1906) – not just sectarian Ideologues endeavouring to assert their views of life on society;
- It “presupposes respect for the person as such” (1907), for all are created equal. Therefore, “public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person” including ‘freedom of religion’;
- It “requires the social well-being and development” (1908) of the community as a whole;
- It “requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order” (1909);
- It is in the “political community that its most complete realization is found. It is the role of the State to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens and intermediate bodies” (1910);
- The ’order of persons’ in the common good is always “founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love” (1912); (Vatican: Catechism, 2003).

None of the commendable elements elucidated in the aforegoing restatement of a common good are pursued by the Biden Administration, or the radical woke zealots causing turmoil in society. There are three primary reasons: firstly, the above elements of a common good have a Judeo-Christian heritage in antithesis to the secular humanist and populist agenda of the Administration. Secondly, the woke agenda is not to accomplish a consensual social justice, through a resultant common good, despite avowals to the contrary.[706] Rather, it is for power – political, legal and social power [707] to impose their atheistic identity ideology upon society at large contrary to the latter’s theistic background. Thirdly, an abstract idea upon which the secular ideology is based cannot give life to an objective, practical, ethical and moral definity so necessary in achieving a multi-lateral common good accepted by society. And so, without a settled understanding of common good, no true, fair, or enduring social justice can ensue. The actions of the Biden Administration indicate a prime example of the cogent need for a new generation of right-thinking politicians principled by theistic tenets, to find their place in

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706 Through a process of ‘virtue signaling’, Identity Ideologues claim to be acting in the best interests of social justice, claiming the moral high ground. Nevertheless, true virtue “is silent, it is not something we self-attribute but a trait of character recognized by others” (Nelson, S. Virtue, 2022). In the case of the Biden Administration and sectarian Ideologues, their claimed virtue is not acknowledged by the majority populace. Therefore, explains Scott Nelson, “virtue signaling is the opposite of real virtue” (Virtue, 2022), a fact well understood by opponents to the Identity politics devastating Western society.

707 Prof. Victor Davis Hanson concisely describes the ‘woke’ agenda as follows, “Wokeness is not about kindness, equality, fairness or morality. It is the power agenda of the elite of all races”. He adds that, “Wokeism is both contrary to human nature and antithetical to democratic and constitutional government. Without public support it has embraced an entire array of cruel Soviet and Maoist means to achieve its own self-interested ends. It is a cruel cult, created by and for the careerist benefit of the privileged” (Wokeism, 2022).

government. In this way, opportunity would arise for a social justice based on a virtuous and identifiable common good. After all, the primary aim and *raison d'être* of a true democratic government is social justice, resulting in peace and harmony. The words of the 4th U.S. President James Madison ring true, namely, that "Justice is the end of Government" (Federalist #51, 1788),[708] which words highlight the significant shortcomings of the current political regime in the U.S. The vigorous increase in secular humanist ideologies promoted by the Biden regime, with hegemonic tendencies forcing their factional political stance upon society, does not necessarily reflect the will of the majority of the populace. A November 2021 Survey Report revealed that only 19% of the US populace could be seen as either "Establishment Liberals or Progressive Left" (Pew, Blue v. Red, 2021). On the other hand, about 55% were conservatively inclined. Only 12% of elected politicians could be categorised as "Progressive Left", while nearly 80% were classified conservative (Pew, *ibid*.).

Perhaps the design proposed by President Madison will eventually bring a modicum of balance in the political area to ensure the proper functioning of US representative democracy. In Federalist Papers #10 (1787), Madison anticipated a situation where, "the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority" (Federalist #10). Madison concedes that the "causes of the faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only be sought in the means of controlling its effects" (*ibid.).* Madison finds the solution in a republican, representative, democratic political structure which should ensure a suitably large enough number of multiparty representatives (but limited in total number) amounting to a significant political pluralism, in order to "guard against the cabals by a few". Therefore it would be "more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried" *(ibid*.). The current constitutionalism of the US will inevitably have to reflect the vote of the representative majority. The political history of the US indicates that no one party governs for indefinite periods, and, as the Identity political brigade hardly represents the majority of the populace, change will be forthcoming. In the interim, though, immense damage is occurring to vulnerable sectors of society. It is incumbent upon the chosen vehicle of the Church to bring 'salt and light' to influence society, and thus the political class. In this manner, the reinstatement of traditional laws and judicial decisions will ultimate reflect a common good expressing public virtue, again indicative of the cultural Christian underlay of Western society.

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[708] The collection of the historic 18th century Federalist Papers can be considered as the "unsurpassed exemplar" of "American Political thought" (Burns, Liberal, 2019).

It can be said that the overemphasis on a drastic and parochial concept of social justice by the Alphabet sect to accord with their tribalist idiosyncrasies, together with supportive political overreach in the public arena and contraventions of Judeo-Christian founded constitutional freedoms like that of speech and religion, is reminiscent of ancient heretical behaviours. For instance, that of Nimrod and the Tower of Babyl episode endeavouring to establish an over-realized political utopia to reflect a secular humanist, perfect and just society in antithesis of the theistic Edenic utopia. And, further, Nimrod and his cohorts' tribalist component was exposed upon advent of conflated languages contrary to the prelapsarian common language intended for a unified humankind. Generally, the insular view of Identitarians of the struggle for social justice is understood as a mortal confrontation between the forces of good (secular humanist emotivist[709] morality) and evil (absolutist Judeo-Christian tenets), rather than striving for a reasonable, unified, uniform, or perhaps balanced 'common good'. The latter view harkens back to the heretical Manichean cosmic duality of a spiritual universe in fatal contest with the evil, material, created world. The Manichean heresy (Elwell, 1984, p. 683), is underscored by the Gnostic duality of the primacy of the spirit versus the irrelevant anthropomorphic material body, in the approach of current Identity ideology. The primeval origins of these heresies find repetition through the ages into the contemporary philosophical conflict besetting Western societies - all in the attempt to assert a tenuous comprehension of social justice.

It is worth bearing in mind that the Redeemer-Messiah, on his first advent, did not come for the primary purpose of ensuing social justice, much to the chagrin of the Jewish nation (*cf.,* Jn. 12:13ff.). His mission was essentially to proclaim the good news of redemption and to advance the Kingdom of God (*cf.,* Lk. 4:34). On his first advent, the Messiah established a spiritual, supernatural, kingdom to advance grace to the spiritually lost (Jn. 3:16). In particular:

- He came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28);
- He came not to "call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Lk. 5:32);
- He came to "seek and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:10);
- He came not "to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (Jn. 3:17);

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[709] Sociology professor, Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, explains that emotivism is the "loss of any shared vantage point and basis for judgement beyond individual subjective desires. While emotivism can come in the guise of emotion, it often works in the service of, or as a cover for, calculated self-interest" (Vitae, 2020). In other words, emotivism is a relativistic, narcissistic, and contextual concept.

- He came to bring eternal life, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (Jn. 6:35).

Nonetheless, there are many instances where the Messiah expressed concern and compassion for the poor (both the materially and spiritually poor), the downtrodden, the outcasts of society. He reacted to poverty in society, not to attain a form of social justice (*cf.,* Lk. 12:51), as articulated by Identitarians or progressive Christians but, rather, as a demonstration of a higher purpose through exhibiting compassion, mercy, and love (*cf.,* Matt. 9:36; Matt. 5:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; Rom. 15:26; Acts 24:17; Acts 11:29; Mk. 8:3; Matt. 5:44). For the woke brigade, on the other hand, their higher purpose is to seek a narcissistic form of social justice which endorses their individual aberrant identities while striving for agent-centred ontological status and meaning, rather than considering a philanthropic agenda. To exemplify, a 2019 Report of the National Association of Scholars, surveying 60 U.S. tertiary education institutions, reveals that, “Social Justice activists in the Universities subordinate higher education towards the goal of achieving social justice” (p. 18). The net effect is that they are “turning higher education into an engine of progressive political advocacy”. This situation has led to the requirement, *inter alia,* that students are compelled to register for “social justice courses such as ‘Native Sexualities and Queer Discourse’ in order to graduate”.[710]

The Messiah’s focus on the concept of the common good of humankind and their society was predominantly in supernatural terms, with soteriological and eschatological import. He clarified that “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (Jn. 3:17, *cf.,* 3:16). The Messiah did, however, indicate principles of what became known in modernity as classic liberalist polity. For instance, the separation of State and Church;[711] ownership of private property;[712] and individual freedom.[713] All of these elements, and more (*cf.,* Matt. 5), reflect the natural law and Judeo-Christian basis of Western liberal polity, the tenets of which are under lethal challenge.

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710 Macdonald, H., Cost, 2019.

711 Matthew 22:21, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's”; John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world”.

712 Acts 5:1-4; Lk. 12:15ff.

713 John 8:36.

7.4 Radical Secular[714] Humanism

Practical atheism, an expression of secular humanism originating in the Edenic garden, animates the moral, religious, and cultural decay within present-day society, while simultaneously threatening the just social order and established customs of Western civilization.

In an attempt to create a progressive, humanist, non-religious utopia (somewhat reminiscent of Nimrod), and to force upon society an ideological monopoly as the norm in developing a perfect and just society, the progressives - the leftist Ideologues - are effectively destroying the prevailing moral and social framework, which they deem anachronistic. The intended result is to relegate existent culture to a pre-civilization era, for, in normal anarchist jargon, *res delenda est* – everything is to be destroyed - and recreated with a loftier ideological Identity. In this context, the observation of Pope John Paul II can be applied directly to the Identity actors:

"When people think they possess the secret of a perfect organisation that makes evil impossible, they also think they can use any means, including violence and deceit, in order to bring that organisation into being. Politics then becomes a 'secular religion' which operates under the illusion of creating paradise in this world" (John Paul II, 1991).

An enigma demanding resolution is the question of how a moral lacuna could so swiftly arise in the extant setting of Anglo-American culture. The seeds of secular humanist antinomianism were sown primordially, and have persisted throughout subsequent human history in paradigms such as Gnosticism.[715] Still, the rather sudden emergence of politically and legally endorsed secularism[716] in the last few decades is cause for great concern.[717] It is axiomatic that what transpires in American society profoundly affects other external cultures. The 20th century

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714 It has to be conceded that "secularism is not one thing – it is a complex and contingent process that takes place differently in different places both within Europe and beyond" (Davie, 2021, p. 268).

715 Del Noce states, "Neo-Gnosticism has played a decisive role in the process of Western secularization" (2014, p. xviii).

716 The post-modern secularism of Western society is explained by professor Charles Taylor as follows, "Whereas the political organization of all pre-modern societies was in some way connected to, based on, guaranteed by some faith in, or adherence to God, or some notion of ultimate reality, the modern Western state is free from this connection". He adds, the "political society is (now) seen as that of believers and non-believers alike". As a result of which one can, "engage fully in politics without ever encountering God" (Secular, 2007, p. 1). In other words, the 'non-necessity' of God in the public square has fully emerged in post-modern society.

717 Gomez makes the observation that secularization "means the de-Christianization" of society, a process which amounts to "a deliberate effort in Europe and America to erase the Christian roots of society and to suppress any remaining Christian influences" (2021).

secularisation[718] of the American education system, commencing with learners at a very young age, must bear significant responsibility for the decreasing cultural Christian influence in Western society as a whole. A leading cause of the endemic American secularisation[719] of education, for instance, can be attributed to the efforts of the seminally influential atheist educator, John Dewey (1859-1952), one of the 34 signatories to the American Humanist Association's, 'Humanist Manifesto 1', of 1933. The Manifesto states in part that:

- Religious Humanists understand the universe as self-existing and not created;
- Humanism believes that man is part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process;
- The time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought";
- In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer, the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being;
- Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfilment in the here and now (American Humanist Association, Manifesto 1, 1933).

Dewey's approach was a turning point in the US education system. Dispensing with the historic 'Western Christian Paideia' which emphasized Christian character and values - a system hitherto dominant in U.S. and Western education - Dewey instead adopted an increasingly radical 'American Progressive Paideia' model of pedagogy. The latter reflected a sociological perspective wherein "nationalism replaced Christianity as the centre of American *paideia".* Emerging from such progressive beginnings, the prevailing pedagogic model reflects

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718 It is estimated that the contemporary era of secularism represents the so-called 'third wave' thereof in Western society. Social commentator, Michelle Boorstein, opines that the first wave were the "early freethinkers"; the second wave were the 'New Atheists', like Richard Dawkins and his cohort, who "were defined by their angry, direct, criticism of religion". However, the third wave comprises a "huge group of Americans who share secular values" and who will numerically constitute one of the "biggest political forces in the near future" (2022).

719 Aaron M. Renn, editor of the City Journal and a political commentator, categorizes American secularization into three distinct movements. Firstly, "pre-1994", the era of a "Positive world" in which "society retains a mainly positive view of Christianity. Christian moral norms are the basic moral norms of society and violating them can bring negative consequences". Secondly, "1994 – 2014", the era of the "Neutral world" in which society is largely neutral towards Christianity which remains "a valid option within a pluralistic public square". Thirdly, "2014 to present" - society now has a negative view of Christianity whose "morality is expressly repudiated" as a threat to the "new public moral order" (Worlds, 2022).

a ‘Marxist Cultural Paideia’ emphasizing America’s racist roots,[720] and other allegedly oppressive factors.

In the result, Dewey was primarily responsible for “turning public schools from largely Protestant Christian academies into secular indoctrination centers” (Clay, 2021). In such context, all religious symbols and activities were prohibited including a ban on religion studies and public prayer. It was therefore inevitable that, in due course, society itself became compliant with Dewey’s secular humanist ideology which in turn influenced politics, Institutions, and the outlook of the justice system. In this regard, attention must be drawn to the legal contest in the 1963 landmark case of Abington School District verses Schempp (374 U.S. 203, 1963). This case was decided by the Supreme Court of the US (“SCOTUS”), the highest juridical authority in the U.S., and affected the First Amendment right of freedom of religion. Here, the Court held that in the public square one religion cannot be recognised in preference to another and the State itself is disallowed the Institutional recognition of religion in general. These conclusions led to the Court’s decision that the State had to be equally neutral towards all religions (including atheism), and therefore illustrations of Judeo-Christianity (such as Bible readings and devotions) in Public schools[721] were forbidden. The Court added that it was not attempting to entrench a “religion of secularism”,[722] but was advocating neutrality[723] towards all religions. And that is the central issue for proclaimed neutrality[724] inescapably has a default position of secularism, notwithstanding the pluralistic[725] culture.[726] To practically deny the utterance of all religions in the public sphere is to enforce

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720 Yenor, S., Counterinsurgency, 2022.

721 A practical solution to this prohibition was suggested by Yoram Hazony in 2019, when he proposed that the Bible should be taught through ‘cover’ courses such as within “history, literature or philosophy”, a strategy not prohibited by juridical decision. However, he points out that, “most public schools offer no such courses” (Democracy, 2019).

722 Vile, J., Abington, 2009.

723 Secularism cannot legitimately claim to be neutral for, “it is itself a tradition of thought about personal and political morality that competes with others” (George, R., Clash, 1999).

724 Professed neutrality, in the form of a *tabula rasa* (the theory that the “mind is in a hypothetical primary blank or empty state before receiving outside impressions” [Merriam-Webster]), cannot exist due to inescapable social influences to which all human beings are subject, thereby resulting in a cultural innatism with variegated prejudices.

725 In two 2022 decisions, the Supreme Court dealt blows to the Lemon case. Tal Fortgang states that the matters of “Kennedy and Carson represent the restoration of some of America’s defining principles in the face of hostile secularism that leaves no room for pluralistic coexistence” (Victory, 2022).

726 Orthodox secularism seeks to “privatize religion, to render religiously informed moral judgements irrelevant to public affairs, and public life, and to establish secular ideology as the nations’ public philosophy” (George, R., Clash, 1999).

secularism, the exclusion of God, itself an atheistic position.[727] Practical atheism,[728] and its formulation of secular humanism, has become the default position in a proposed lacuna of religion, but, in actuality, constitutes a religion of its own.[729] The 'religion' of the State is secularism. The 'secular purpose doctrine' was affirmed in another landmark Supreme Court case, the 1971 Lemon versus Kurtzman matter[730] which decided that the State could neither advocate the promotion, that is, the 'establishment,' or even the negation, of religion in the public arena. The Court denied an 'entanglement' between religion and State, while affirming the secular position advocated in the Abington case.[731] In this way, endemic secularism arose through a spiritual void, while the public practice and influence of religion in State Institutions were denied by the US Supreme Court. Some 50 years later in 2022, however, the Supreme Court effectively overruled the Lemon precedent when it upheld the principle of religious liberty in Kennedy v. Bremerton. In Kennedy, the Court did not deny the right of a public high school football coach, a Christian, to openly pray on the field after the game.[732]

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727 Robert George disagrees with the objective of a neutral stance in legal matters, claiming that the fundamental error of liberalism is the belief that, "in constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice, it is necessary for law and government to retain a stance of neutrality" on matters connected to a "morally worthy way of life". George argues, instead, for natural law concepts of "basic liberties such as freedom of speech and religious liberty" to be the foundation of juridical issues, not "appeals to an alleged requirement of moral neutrality". George is correct for, as contended above, moral neutrality is not attainable in practice. Therefore, a foundation of natural law is essential for equitable justice. However, he does concede that "there is no single, uniquely correct, resolution, or settlement that provides a fixed standard of justice for all societies (Reason, 2021). George very much advocates a realistic approach while not compromising his faith in a claimed necessity of the natural law foundation in human affairs.

728 The contention that State secularism inevitably results in a practical atheist paradigm is disputed by Prof. Jacques Berlinerblau who argues that, "In the U.S., secularism has become synonymous with atheism. But that is a big mistake". He adds, "At its core, secularism is (only) an approach to governance" (Basics, 2022). In order to circumvent the clear connection between secularism and atheism, Berlinerblau avers that, "there is no one agreed-upon understanding of the term (secularism)" (2022, p. 1). He thus imparts an eisegetical and idiosyncratic reading of the term to suit his narrative, instead of adopting a plain, literal, traditional reading such as that in the Oxford Dictionary which states, "Secularism denotes a system which sought to order and interpret life on principles taken solely from this world without recourse to belief in God and a future life". Generally, secularism is now used of the "tendency to ignore, if not deny, the principles of supernatural religion" (Oxford, Secularism, 2006). Berlinerblau posits that secularism *per se*, in seeking a neutral position, is a "political secularism" which "refers to legally binding actions of the secular state that seek to regulate the relationship between itself and religious citizens, and between religious citizens themselves" (Basics, 2022, pp. 5, 198). While there is merit in his definition, it is only partial for he thereby implicitly denies that a State's secularization agenda inevitably results in the only possible default position from proposed neutrality, which is that of practical atheism. While secularism and atheism are clearly not the same thing, the practical consequence of the former invariably results in the latter. This conclusion is what Berlinerblau refuses to accept.

729 Mary Eberstadt, classifies secularism as a rival faith (*sans* transcendence) to Christianity, which is regarded as a "competitor to be vanquished rather than as an alternate set of beliefs to be tolerated in an open society" (Secularism, 2018).

730 Lemon v. Kurtzman (406 U.S. 602, 1971).

731 McGovern, G., Lemon, 2009.

732 Kennedy J. v. Bremerton School District. 2022.

State sponsored secularism has a weighted morality, promoting an environment without God and without Judeo-Christian precepts. This attitude has led to moral and ethical confusion exacerbated through State enforcement of a malleable morality focused on the deification of the autonomous-self. State formalised secularism, practical atheism, can consequently be held to be the State approved civil religion, through many germane definitions thereof. Even so, it cannot be successful in achieving its teleological purposes due to the impossibility of reflecting a religious or political neutrality in the public arena. While State neutrality superficially appears appealing as an equal, just, and fair position, the reality is quite the contrary. Neutrality, and secularism, is not only a contextual, weighted, concept but it can easily be politicised. For instance, questions can legitimately be raised concerning the judicial understanding of the idea of a secular, neutral, 'common good.' In the important SCOTUS matter of Planned Parenthood versus Casey in 1992 (505 U.S., 833, 1992), the apex Court claimed that it acted for the common good of society and the rule of law in upholding the elective abortion rights originating in the Roe case. It very much appears that the Court had acted *ultra vires*, beyond its purview, in inferring through eisegesis interpretation that acceptance of abortion rights corresponded to affirming the legitimacy of the Court itself. By so doing, the Court revealed its connection, "with the legitimacy of the current political regime" (Hittinger, Crisis, 1996). The Court's biased understanding of 'common good' reflects a moral overreach by a branch of government in support of the ideological penchant of State policy. Legal theorist, William Haun, finds comport with such conclusion when he engages in a polemic against the SCOTUS ruling in the 1990 case of Employment Division v. Smith (#494 U.S. 872 [1990]),[733] which considered the concept of the common good and its intersection with religion, particularly the right of religious liberty. The Court ruled that:

> *"the only decisions in which this Court has held that the First Amendment bars application of a neutral and generally applicable law to religiously motivated action, are distinguished on the ground that they involve not the Free Exercise Clause alone but that clause in conjunction with other Constitutional protections*" (Employment Div., 1990, p. 494).

Presented differently, not in all cases where the exercise of freedom of religion is claimed does the Court endorse such freedom, due to other contingent factors. William Haun opines that the Court's decision in Smith amounts to a "rejection of any judicial role in ensuring the harmonizing understanding of religious liberty" (Liberty, 2020). In light of the Court's decision, the question of the common good of society cannot remain dependent upon legal protection

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[733] U.S. Supreme Court: Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon versus Smith, Case No. 88-1213. Decided April 17, 1990. 49 U.S. 872 (Employment, Div., 1990).

of the free exercise of freedom of religion. The decision reveals a bias against protection of religious freedom rights despite claimed neutrality, implying equality for all. The question remains unresolved in law.[734] State enforced secularity in public affairs, consequently, despite averring a neutral political and legal position, cannot attain neutrality as Institutional approach invariably bends towards a systemic ideological preference, despite previous SCOTUS rulings in the Lemon (1971) and Abington (1963) matters disavowing weighted juridical slants, as discussed above.

Supported by U.S. Supreme Court decisions, the totality of Anglo-American culture developed over the past centuries is under threat of abolishment through a reconstitution of the fundamental values underpinning such cultures. The key target for destruction is the religious basis of circumambient culture. Anarcho-Ideologues demand to operate without extrinsic metrics in the practice of their theories, that is, without any form of censorship. In the way of revolutionary strategy, anarcho-Ideologues desire to override any considerations of the rights of conflicting notions such as freedom of religion or speech. In consequence, all religious authority and influence in public affairs is to be side-lined in favour of a 'neutral' secular humanism, coupled with pluralistic elements of occultist New Age concoctions of neo-paganist spirituality and evolutionary materialism. By so doing, reliance is placed on situational ethical concepts justifying a subjective, humanist, validation of morality and praxis. Gene Veith views the situation as follows, "Whereas modernism sought to rid the world of religion, postmodernism spawns new ones. Unconstrained by objectivity, customs, reason, or morality, these new faiths differ radically from Christianity. They draw on strains of the most ancient and primitive paganism" (1994, p. 198).

In the post-Christian era, empirically defined values and truths are dispensed with as is reason, morality, rationality, compassion, and decency, all reputed as discriminatory and judgemental. All the same, and to the contrary, the concept of discrimination is not naturally prejudicial for all right-thinking societies need to discriminate between decency and barbarianism and so identify concepts and practices that are unacceptable in such society. It is an indication of leftist miasma, irrationality, maladroitness, and lack of sagacity that enables radicals to renounce any discrimination against, or critical comment of, their oppressive sectarian practices. The object of this is to attain hegemonic power, not to endorse the regimen of democracy. True representative democracy in the view of progressive leftists does not suit

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[734] Progress was made in the June 2022 SCOTUS decision of Carson v. Makin wherein Chief Justice, John Roberts concluded that, "the State's anti-establishment interests do not justify enactments that exclude some members of the community from an otherwise generally available public benefit because of their religious exercise" (Piper, E., Religion, 2022).

their intentions for although democracy embraces the ideal of equality, it also embraces a balance of protection for differing viewpoints. Democracy allows legal, political, philosophical, and theological challenges to the prevailing system. Dedicated leftists embrace a semi-authoritarian system which enforces their ideologies upon the majority populace. Public articulation of differing views is already a problem for to disaffirm or even criticise a convinced Ideologue by stating obvious empirical truths highlighting the irrationality, immorality, or amorality of their stance, is considered opprobrious under current legislation. Generally, an 'Equality Act' enacted under the guise of political correctness and fairness but originating from earlier but binding Supreme Court decisions, enforces acquiescence in the public space. In this manner, codes governing public demonstrations of speech and behaviour inconsistent with an 'Equality Act,' force a repression of rational and intellectual debate.[735] Citizens are required to condescend to the sex-gender ideologies, exemplified by the humanist 'Rainbow' flag - the 'Pride' flag and not to the principles represented by their own national flag. The reason for this Statist action is that the legal, political, and societal articulations of unrestrained personal sexual freedom, in all its aberrant forms, publicly demonstrates a major victory for Ideologues intent upon the secularism of society. The words of Kyle Harper sum up the motive of Identitarians when he avers that, "sex is the crux of secularisation" (2018). Mary Eberstadt supports Harper's view when she posits that, "the single most deadly enemy of our time is the sexual revolution". She adds that "the new intolerance is a wholly owned subsidiary of that revolution. Thus, no revolution, no new intolerance" (Intolerance, 2015).

In the US Constitution and Bill of Rights, there is no provision specifying unfettered free speech - 'whether political, religious or ideological' - that allows society to "permit any product, no matter how depraved its content, to be created, sold, promulgated, procured or kept". Hence "a society that refuses all censorship is in some very crucial sense extremely unjust" (Hart, Freedom, 2004). Fairness, equality, and justice are not, in actuality, the aim of leftists for they seek to achieve a form of skewed distributive justice whereby others are subjugated to their ideologies. The shrinking of freedoms pertaining to religion and speech are the central focus of Identitarians who also endeavour to contravene the ancillary right of freedom from compliance with, or exposure to, offensive, indecent materials and behaviours. Civil freedoms encompass a balance, through restraint, of competing public freedoms for the smooth and harmonious operation of society. It is in the actions of mutually beneficial societal restraints that decency, modesty, tolerance, virtue, and concern are promoted. These virtues are

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[735] Mary Eberstadt surmises that the "new intolerance will cause secularization". Certainly, intolerance is a factor in negating public expression of religious views, particularly Christianity with its exclusivist morality and precepts (Intolerance, 2015).

antithical to the unrestricted freedoms demanded by activists, resulting in patent societal instability and anarchy. Civilisation has not been hindered but instead benefitted through restraints over many decades. An example is the age restriction imposed in the visual media to protect the childhood and innocence of the young.[736] It is indeed a pity that the dogmatic and monopolistic agenda of the Ideologues does not allow for differing views, especially those based on reason and the beneficial influence of cultural Christianity promoting morality, peace, and good order. As rightly stated by the fine intellectual, Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2006 Regensburg address, "listening to the great experiences and insights of the religious traditions of humanity, and those of the Christian faith in particular, is a source of knowledge and to ignore it would be an unacceptable restriction of our listening and responding" (Lecture, 2006). The vociferous advocates of secular humanism, conversely, denigrate all formal religions[737] and highlight the imperial-self as the centre of veneration.

Competing sectors of society, namely, those requiring a measure of balance and restraint of the indecency and immorality of the humanist Ideologues; and those demanding freedoms lacking restraint while ignoring all natural laws and a balance of rights,[738] is the driving factor of societal conflagration. This conflict is indicative of a deep and irreconcilable political and religious divide in the name of competing ideologies. Where the majority of the populace has developed a partiality for immorality, then the norms of democracy and liberalism can work in ways adverse to a good, moral, and just social order. To develop a culture reflecting a common good, with all its intrinsic features and wherein the right of self-realisation as a form of identity is not the highest value but, instead, the consideration of and respect for differing views is only possible through a unitary cohort of regenerated 'new creations' (2 Cor. 5:17). Whereas a category of virtuous non-theists or pagans, no doubt, are present in society, they do not have access to the reforming power of the Holy Spirit to bring about significant personal change. Consequently, the obligation mainly remains on devout disciples of the Messiah, acting

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736 The Film Publication Board (FPB), justifies its classification requirements in respect of children by enunciating its objectives as follows, "To protect children from exposure to potentially disturbing or harmful contents and from premature exposure to adult experiences". Furthermore, "In making their decisions, classification committees, consistent with the principle that in all matters concerning children, the best interests of children are paramount, must aim to strike a reasonable balance between competing interests and the protection of children from potentially disturbing, harmful and age-inappropriate content" (FPB, 2019, p. 30).

737 Karl Marx's famous dictum to the effect that 'religion is the opiate of the people' is quite incorrect. What is correct, rather, is the view that "unbelief is the actual opiate of the masses" (Hofer, Unbelief, 2022). This is patent from the increasing secularization of Western culture and the exodus from Churches and Christianity itself.

738 Theologian James Rooney, clarifies that, "the natural law tradition is clear that rights imply correlative moral duties such as the right to religious freedom implies a duty to seek the truth in matters of religion" (Illiberalism, 2022).

through, and in tandem with, traditional Judeo-Christian Institutions to bring 'salt' and 'light' (Matt. 5:13-16) to society as a show of their mandate to make disciples of all men (Matt. 29:19). These disciples need courage in the praxis and application of Kingdom values to profitably apply their allocated talents (Matt. 25:15-22). As noted historian Arnold Toynbee, stressed in his strategy to counter mounting secularism, the nations' religious heritage of Western Christianity "in all its forms has to be reintroduced". To achieve this the focus should be on what Pope Benedict XVI labels, "exceptional individuals" (Europe, 2006). Patently, these persons could only comprise 'mighty men' like the warriors of King David (2 Sam. 23:8-39), together with dedicated women, who together constitute the devout and committed disciples of the Redeemer-Messiah, carrying out their Kingdom mandate to make 'disciples of all men' (Matt. 28).

Although the awakening, and vociferous efforts, of the Judeo-Christian lobby to confront the dire cultural situation may be construed as a form of narrow nationalism, it will only be due to a group effort of like-minded citizens that change will be forthcoming. As Yoram Hazony puts it, "the current nationalism is an attempt to avert the complete collapse of the traditional Western order" (Democracy, 2019). In a similar vein, the ardent mass support for President Trump, who ostensibly respects Biblical principles in his political philosophy,[739] can be also seen as a form of nationalism. A widespread movement of right-thinking Americans protesting against the ideological onslaught on traditional values and in support of the liberal democratic dispensation including the ethical principles upon which it is founded, can, correctly, be considered a very necessary nationalist movement. Hazony refers to this phenomena as a "contest between two powerful movements – a 'liberal' (leftist) movement that has been dominant for some time, and a nationalist movement that openly seeks to resist it" (Democracy, 2019).

Attention needs to be brought to the events of the French revolutionary period (c. 1790) when a major reorganisation of the prevailing Christian basis of society occurred. There are many striking similarities to the Statist secularist agenda[740] in contemporary Western culture, for, in

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739 Hazony surmises that "perhaps 70% of Trump's votes came from evangelical Christians and conservative Catholics" (Democracy, 2019).

740 Given the explication herein of the dominant enforcement of State secularism in Western society, it is an indication of the pervasive progressive, 'woke', ideologies that have permeated tertiary educational Institutions, when prominent U.S. scholar, Jacques Berlinerblau (1966 -), Professor of Jewish Civilization at Georgetown University, publishes his incongruous conceptions of the secularization theory in Western culture. Against all evidence and Constitutionalist guarantees to the contrary, Berlinerblau avers that, "the free exercise of conservative Christian religions is increasingly assuming the cultural, even legal, stature of an inalienable American right. In the name of 'religious freedom', clerks, doctors and bakers openly discriminate against LGBTQ citizens. Our rightward-charging judiciary lets worshippers congregate during a pandemic; religious devotion,

words echoing the Supreme Court judgement in the case of Abington School District versus Schempp (374 U.S. 203, 1963), the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, concluded that the French revolution was an attempt to "replace religion with a completely secular ideology" (1971, p. 394). Extensive iconoclastic secularism was enforced through decrees, little different in effect to the ideologically based laws adversely affecting the Judeo-Christian precepts of regnant Anglo-American society. For instance:

- "Monastic vows" in accordance with religious activity, were prohibited;
- "Solemn vows" between Priests and God prohibited. In replacement thereof, "Clerical oaths to the Civil Constitution of the Church" were demanded to accord with the 'Civil Constitution of the Clergy'; where allegiance was no longer to God and King, but to the civil authorities of the nation;
- Marriage became a "civil contract" only;
- Celibacy requirements for the now 'secular' clergy, 'relaxed'. The clergy became "civil servants elected by democratic vote" (Hittinger, Two Thomisms, 2008);
- The sanctity of marriage vows undermined by "Unilateral and no-fault divorce";
- The compulsory vow to "King of the realm" abolished (Hittinger, Pontificia, 2017).

Finally, Russell Hittinger adds, in a restatement of a dictum referred to in Aristotle's Politics (Vol. II), that, "the human person is a domestic (matrimonial-familial) animal, a political animal, and an ecclesial animal" (Societies, 2017). These three categories are under threat from rampant secularism through: firstly, the adverse effect on a conservative understanding of marriage, family, and personal ontology from legalised same-sex marriage and gender-sex self-identification, coupled with the detestation of the Fatherhood of God concept. Secondly, the totalitarian[741] aims of leftist actors who control the political narrative in relation to identity.

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apparently, trumps public safety". The sub-heading to his article states that, "James Madison blew it – by failing to restrict the power of religion in public life. Fixing that is crucial now" (Berlinerblau, Guardrail, 2022). This article was published in January 2022, during the current term of radical leftist President Biden whose Administration exercises all possible powers to restricted and eradicate religion from public life, and to prohibit Church gatherings during the Covid-19 outbreak. Berlinerblau's article, together with his 2022 book, 'Secularism: The Basics', reveal his clear *ressentiment* against the Judeo-Christian tenets underlying Western civilization and lack of concern for constitutional religious freedom rights. It is oxymoronic that he holds the chair of Jewish Civilization studies at the venerable Georgetown University.

741 German intellectual Eric Voegelin understood the rise of political totalitarianism as a form of "political Gnosticism" which, as Professor Patrick Deneen explains, is the "belief in human perfectibility through politics, in the form of fascism and Marxism aligned against the still extant forms of Christendom that are especially vital in the West" (Deneen, Political Gnosticism, 2022). In other words, a duality of a superior, deeper, political vision disconnected from the reality of prevailing norms and values of present society. Voegelin presciently says that the limit in advancing a civilization is "reached when an activist sect, which represents the Gnostic truth, organizes the

Thirdly, the attempted eradication of established Judeo-Christian tenets underpinning society's ethics, morality. Likewise eradication of established laws by a Government capitulating to a cultural re-set of secular humanist ideologies, hitherto abhorrent to a majority of society.

This anticipated re-set is a cultural Marxist driven attempt to create a new order in the method of social and communist doctrine for, as Antonio Gramsci explained, Marx intended a "single culture, a single religion, a world-wide conformism" (1971, p. 374). Nonetheless, as with the aftermath of the French revolution, Christianity cannot easily be eliminated from society and will reassert itself, although possibly with greatly diminished authority, in the public arena. In this fashion, both the public practice of Christianity, and the influence of Judeo-Christian precepts, will continue to endure despite a mounting secular context, for, as the Redeemer-Messiah emphasized, "I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:8).

7.5 Pluralism and Syncretism

Charles Taylor in his publication, 'A Secular Age', avers that the escalating secularisation of Anglo-American civilization[742] reflects the transition from a society "where belief in God is unchallenged… to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace" (2007, p. 3). A mantic statement given the mounting Institutional enforcement of secular humanism, which, as an alternative worldview, competes for dominance in the public square with a pluralism[743] of neo-pagan New Age ideologies. The latter include occultist astrology, syncretic religions and spiritual faiths, all germinated through a growing multiculturalism enjoying the freedoms inherent in a classic liberal order. Pluralistic faith paradigms, including secular humanism, have rising political and legal advantage in the enforced contraction of cultural Christian tenets and praxis. Western culture, long instituted upon orthodox creeds is under severe challenge. Taylor's view is supported by the position of sociologist Peter Berger contending that the secularisation theory of society, when defined as the significant elimination of religions in favour of secularism, is quite incorrect. Instead, Berger claims that a pluralism of religions and secularism have always co-existed. In the result, the

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Civilization into an empire under its rule. Totalitarianism, defined as the existential rule of Gnostic activists, is the end form of progressive civilization" (Voegelin, 1952, p. 132).

742 Taylor uses the term, "North Atlantic", while Spengler uses "West-European-American" (1916, p. 3).

743 Use here of the term 'pluralism,' implies the "phenomenological, empirically verifiable and multiple ways of perceiving the reality of competing worldviews in society" (Berger, Altars, 2014) and not simply a relativist fabrication. The context will indicate the variable meaning of the term. However, the question can be raised as to whether or not "reality" can be "empirically verified?". This remains a polemic issue.

true sense of secularisation theory is that, politically and legally, pluralistic views of faith putatively have equal moral standing in society with conventional religious views and secularism itself (*cf.,* Altars, 2004). After all, religious pluralism is a theoretical, teleological, concept embracing all religions and faiths as equal purveyors of formative truths, with none having any greater claim to transcendence. Thus, all faiths ultimately converge into the same finale of transcendence. Nonetheless, in practical application, the expansion of pluralism through atheism and agnosticism (both articulations of secularism), secular humanism itself, and the eclecticism of divers faiths, indicate an attempted replacement of the Judeo-Christianity Divine with a false god of a humanist or paganist identity with no moral equivalency to the definitive tenets of Judeo-Christianity.[744] Insofar as orthodox Judeo-Christianity is concerned, with the impossibility of objectively demonstrating the transcendent superiority and truths of Christian faith - for it is a matter of divine revelation - creates the deduction that it is the factors of internalized doubt and unbelief that give vent to mounting ambivalence surrounding the primacy of the Divine (Matt. 13:3-9). Budding pluralism is then exacerbated through the divide within Christendom itself of professing Judeo-Christians into two major camps: firstly, that of conservative evangelicals and Catholics holding to established orthodox doctrinal practices; and, secondly, those holding leftist (previously labelled 'liberal') views diluting the orthodox canon in favour of appeasing the progressive troop. This appeasement is particularly visible in the areas of sex-gender, abortion, and its associated formulations. The two most prominent camps of leftist, liberal, Christians are, firstly, the Open theists who propound a less than omniscient and omnipotent God, allowing space for humanist edicts. Secondly, the so-called progressive theologians, supporting Darwin's evolution theory while averring the mythology of canonical events. These cohorts adopt 'Christian' views re-formulated to accommodate the political culture while disavowing moral judgements, and so contravening the principle of *Immortale Dei.*[745] Progressive theologians aim to 'modernize' the anachronistic Church in a process of *aggiornamento,*[746] and to "rescue Christianity by excising those elements that seem most offensive" (Doriani, 2017). The "elements" deemed

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744 Philosophy of Religion professor, Paul Griffiths, clarifies that pluralists aim to "rebuke the Christian tendencies that are imperialist and condescending in their judgements about non-Christian religions, but in doing so they are themselves engaging in precisely the activity they wish to rebuke" (Pluralism, 1996), namely, a fundamentalist approach. A further tension inherent in pluralism, is that pluralists desire to "find a religion-free conception and ethical space to stand, from which to judge the desirability and usefulness of all religious phenomena", one that is "value-free and incontrovertible" (Griffith, Pluralism, 1996). A futile task, for a humanist, value-free, and neutral lacuna cannot exist.

745 *Immortale Dei* - A term coined by Pope Leo XIII in 1885, whereby he held that, "a Catholic does have an obligation to obey a State (not founded on Catholic principles), and to work within it to promote the common good, regardless of the State's origins" (Farlex, 2012).

746 *aggiornamento* - A process of modernization.

unacceptable will differ according to the context, and in the current situation are chiefly focused on identity – the Fatherhood Identity of God, and the *imago Dei* of humankind. Thus, the atomizing of society occurs not only as between competing faiths but also within Judeo-Christianity itself, as has long occurred to various degrees, but now in an increasingly visible extent. The swelling focus on the autonomy of the self as the fount of truth and morality, reflects as the central tenet of secular humanism, neo-paganism, and certain articulations of non-traditional Christianity.

A 2020 U.S. study of Christianity reveals that the prevailing worldview of the current four generations of American adults, amounting to roughly 88% of the population, can be described as being spiritually syncretic while still claiming a form of Christian faith. Ranging from a low of 57% among millennials to 83% among the older generation (Barna, May, 2021, p. 1), the pluralistic composition of spirituality among these generations reflects the vast inroads that secular culture has made into erstwhile orthodox Judeo-Christian adherents. The apostasy is demonstrated through the doctrinal concessions by forums such as Churches, assorted Denominations, Seminaries, Colleges and Schools who accommodate the prevailing secular and neo-pagan liberalist culture. The millennials are the future generation of Americans, those likely to be making significant political, corporate, and related decisions.[747] The majority of them (May 2021), profess, *inter alia*, the following beliefs, reflective of their eclectic Christian convictions:

- Abortion is morally acceptable where necessary to enhance personal economic or emotional well-being;
- Premarital sex is acceptable with a prospective life partner;
- Reincarnation is a real possibility;
- The adherence to liberal (leftist), progressive, theological concepts and doctrines;
- Unconcerned or ignorant about the existence or otherwise of a Christian God;
- Do not deem the Bible as a source of absolute morality nor accept the concept of original sin or other orthodox doctrines;
- Together with Generation 'X' (those in mid 50's), are most likely to believe in the veracity of astrological horoscopes;
- Believe that Hindu Karma is pertinent to their lives;

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[747] Tyler Cowen, perceives that, "Educational polarization increasingly characterizes U.S. politics, with the more educated Americans more likely to vote Democrat. Those same Americans are also likely to run nonprofits or major corporations, which would explain the ideological migration of those institutions" (America, 2021).

- Believe that allowing people to own private, immovable, property perpetuates economic injustice;
- Believe in Darwin's materialist theory of evolution of human beings;
- Believe that suicide and euthanasia are acceptable (Barna, May, 2021, pp. 1-2).

The life philosophies of the millennial generation can be encapsulated in the appellation, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism ('MTD'), a faith system loosely connected to, and emanating from, 17th – 19th century Deism. MTD is a post-modern, post-structuralist, heterogenous, pluralistic, and morally contextual version of classic Deism but with no accountability for sin. This outlook is due to the stimulus of the psychological therapeutic hypothesises of Sigmund Freud with his emphasis on one's 'inner being', a rather narcissistic view devoid of definitive controls. MTD is particularly demonstrated through the displaying of humanist ideologies by the two younger generations, the millennials and Generation 'X'. Identity lost is the underlying cornerstone of MTD as is patent from their search, according to the above points, for meaning in differing belief and faith systems or combinations thereof, while committing steadfastly to none. These generations are the cohort attempting to fabricate their own identity through tribal groups driven by race, sex and gender ideologies - made popular by cultural Identity politics - and to engage in the activist movements currently causing discontent in society. Avowing tolerance, diversity and equality, with freedom of representation, they in fact "are not a tolerant generation despite their self-image and public promotion as such" (Barna, May, 2021, p. 2). In line with other hegemonic Ideologues, these splenetic personages insist on societal compliance with their pluralist[748] precepts, especially since political and legal measures apply to contraventions thereof. Expressed alternative views are interpreted as hostile speech, in line with sundry 'Equality' legislations.[749]

The analysis reached by Richard Neuhaus is worth reconsidering, "we think it true to say that politics is, in largest part, an expression of culture, and at the heart of culture is religion" (Editorial, 1990). Religion, particularly Judeo-Christianity, is in danger of marginalisation for its values and norms are diminishing in the predominant culture. Evidence is visible through the

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748 The difficulty that the pluralistic, secular Ideologue's face in their rebuttal of Judeo-Christian definitive tenets, particularly relating to morality, is that they, "are caught between an implicit need to provide arguments for the superiority of their own views of human nature and human destiny" over tradition cultural Christian precepts. Simultaneously, and to the contrary, they hold "explicit commitments to principles that exclude the legitimacy of just such arguments" (Griffiths, Pluralism, 1996). In paraphrase, the imperatives of Judeo-Christianity need to give way to the imperatives of secular humanist ideology. In this setting, relativism itself becomes an imperative construal of the Ideologues. Rationality was never a strong point with Ideologues of whatever iteration.

749 The combination of progressive forces enforcing a regeneration of society amounts to a hegemonic oligarchy. In the view of Robert Michels, this consequence is due to the "oligarchical tendencies of group life" (Soziologie,1911).

advance of contrary politics with supporting legislation and the atypical, deviant, praxis of the prevailing libertarian Identity ideologies, restricting freedoms of contrary beliefs. It is clearly in the area of religion that the rise of MTD among the two younger adult generations is of most concern. It is the values and doctrines of cultural Christianity that have shaped the moral and ethical fabric of Western cultures for centuries, but are now being discarded. The influence of Christianity upon culture, politics and its adjunct of law and justice, is under severe threat or, at least, in danger of significant vitiation or of becoming irrelevant. It does not assist matters that evangelical Christians are becoming more progressive, keen to accord with the prevailing culture for, in a 2020 study, around 40% of members in evangelicals Churches admit that they are not 'born-again'. In formal, mainline, denominations, up to 80% do not consider themselves to be 'born-again' (Stonestreet, Mainline, 2021). Overall, nearly 176 million Americans identified as Christian but only 9% held to a biblical worldview (Barna, August, 2021). At the same time, progressive Churches are rapidly declining for they are indistinct from the preponderantly secular culture. Compromised Churches have, resultantly, lost their integrity as purveyors of Kingdom principles (Rev. 2:5ff), having no distinct message to offer a confused society. The distinguishing feature of progressive Christians is their focus on the "humanistic ethic of social justice" in preference to core Judeo-Christian rules and praxis (Waha, 2021). Progressive Christians authenticate a humanist version of Christianity, one without an objective Deity, one which the field of evolutionary materialism does not have. By decrying absolutist divine rubrics, they avoid accountability for their actions. Compared to Judeo-Christian creationist doctrines, Darwin's evolutionary ideology is escalating in popularity as an alternative avenue to personal Identity: around 54% of college educated Americans (2019), agree with the research statement that "Human beings as we know them developed from earlier species of animals" (Blair, 2021), in contrast to the created *sui generis* and *imago Dei* of humankind.

Following the survey results, Barna deduces that the "youngest adult generation of today, Millennials, are now threatening to reshape the nation's religious parameters beyond recognition" and have "gone further than any recent generation in cutting ties with traditional Christian views" (May, 2021, pp. 5). By this observation, Barna implies that a new religion is challenging and rejecting society's implicit civil religion, that arising out of Judeo-Christianity. The 'new religion' can be identified as a combination of secular humanism with pluralistic New Age syncretic spiritually, of which MTD is an iteration. The 'new religion', by its very nature, vitiates established doctrines to conform to a non-religious but spiritual conglomerate. This 'new religion' is not driven by empirical considerations of truth, but through situational ethical postulates created upon neo-Gnostic dualistic and solipsistic concepts of transcendence, without a rational eschatology verifiable through a valid hermeneutical exegesis. Millennials

are “committed to living without God, the Bible or Churches” (May, 2021, p. 5), in a progressive and post-modern situation. Their outlook presages an endemic secular, post-structuralist, society reflecting a neo-pagan assorted spirituality as a manifestation of popular culture and, hence, politics. In this new reality, the highest values are deemed to be individual demonstrations of sited morality, sexuality, and gender as a means of emphasising the authenticity of Identity intersecting with self-formulated choices in determining a comprehension of meaning in life. The creative authority sought by Adam and Eve is repeated in the New Age of post-structuralism, through the ideology of a self-determined Identity, arising from neo-Gnostic esoteric elitism coupled with a dichotomy between realism and solipsistic epistemology.

7.6 A Clash of Civilisations

Renowned Harvard University political scientist, Samuel Huntington, predicted an external clash of the world’s chief civilizations, particularly between those holding Judeo-Christian tenets against those of Islamic fundamentalism and eastern Confucian worldviews (*cf.,* Clash, 1996, pp.183ff.). James Kurth, an erstwhile student of Huntington, differs from his mentor by presciently stating that the actual conflict of civilisations is already under way internally (Real, 1994). Kurth’s view is valid for an internal battle for orthodoxy within Anglo-American society is the real and immediate collision of civilisations. Judeo-Christian orthodoxy, forming society’s implicit civil religion, strives against secular humanist ideologies and neo-pagan pluralistic spirituality for dominance in influencing the common culture. The theological and philosophical roots of Christianity emanate from a divine revelation, revealing truth while meeting all the challenges of reason. To the contrary, secular ideologies ignore the faculty and tests of reason in favour of a deterministic, biased, and often causally irrational edifice of curated ideas and ideals. The latter concept lacks universal scope but appeals to hardened zealots unlike the orthodox principles of the Christianity. In short, prevailing radical humanist Ideologues deny any element of transcendence – an essential ingredient of spiritual transformation. Instead, activists aver a populist, Statist endorsed, ideology focused on an immanent and materialist supra-natural personal Identity, in order to eschew strictures of an *imago Dei.*

The situation surrounding the Nazi-era conflagration of ideologies was but a forerunner of the post-modern generation’s moral crisis, so giving credence to Godwin’s law. The German novelist Thomas Mann, in a 1940 radio address, perceived that the Third Reich’s agenda in relation to purging European Jews, “was nothing else but the ever-recurrent revolt of unconquered pagan instincts, protesting against the restrictions of the ten commandments” (Levenson, Enemies, 1991). In Mann’s view, the war in Europe was about “more than politics: it was about theology”. In actuality it was about Judeo-Christian theology and praxis in mortal

conflict with neo-paganist Nordic ideology[750] embracing the "deities of blood and soil" (Levenson, 1991) in an attempt to reconfigure the prevailing faith into a pagan construction to accord with the ideals of the Third Reich. A 2017 study[751] by History Professor Eric Kurlander of the spiritual aspects of Nazi theories confirms the aforegoing allegations of occultist[752] Nazi ideology, and its mortal conflict with Judeo-Christianity. For instance, Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess was fascinated with the occult and "sponsored astrology, cosmo-biology and other esoteric medical practices". In similar means, Himmler (Chief of the SS) encouraged research on the "Holy Grail, witchcraft, and medieval devil worship" (2017, p. 2). The Nazi aim was to "replace Christianity with a religious faith that was more authentically German", by which is meant "Ario-Germanic paganism and Indo-Aryan Spiritualism" (2017, Ch. 6).

Alleged nonconformity to Nazi ideology justified the liquidation of dissenters of the proposed new race and religion. Yet, not only Jews were held to be mortal enemies of the desired new ethnicity (of which Nietzsche's *Übermensch* was an unwitting contributor), but Christians too, as critics like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Mann and Paul Tillich discovered. This lethal war, concerning Nordic spirituality intersecting with Aryan racial identity in direct confrontation with the Mediterranean Jewish religious and ethnic identity (and by extension, Christian identity), amounted to an internal and external clash of civilisations. Neither culture could compromise due to diametrically opposing views of morality and religion. There was no neutral ground or room for quarter. There was little expectation of successfully accommodating contrasting core ideas between civilisations, both internal and external, especially when they gestate into hazardous ideologies. The turbulent history of Europe underlines this position. Arnold Toynbee opined in his magisterial classic, 'A Study of History', relating to the nations of Europe, that "Of the 26 civilisations we have identified…16 are dead and 9 of the remaining 10 - all in fact, except our own - are shown to have already broken down". In a detailed discussion of the root causes of such breakdowns, he acknowledges internal strife emanating from "the idolization of an Ephemeral self " (1946, pp. 660-3). The same perspective could be directed towards the ambient situation with its fixation on Identity politics advancing the concept of an auto-constructed imperial self, while upholding minority rights to the exclusion of differing views.

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750 Termed "Ario-Germanic religion" by Kurlander (2017, p. 10).

751 'Hitler's Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich' (E. Kurlander, 2017, Yale University Press).

752 Del Noce asserts that Nazi ideology is a neo-Gnostic construct, "revealed by the very symbol of the Third Reich and the idea of the thousand years" (Del Noce, 2014, p. 303).

The current Anglo-American internal collision of civilisations for ideological dominance[753] of the common culture, is exhibited by aggressive race and sexual identity concepts, long energised by academics and elites, with particular focus on the vulnerable spheres of the humanities.[754] The immense success of radical ideological infiltration in tertiary education, for instance, is described by Pierre Ryckmans in his 1996 Boyer Lectures in Australia when he pointedly stated that, "The main problem is not so much that the University as Western civilization knew it is now dead, but that its death has hardly registered in the consciousness of the public, and even the majority of academics" (1996). The prevailing ideologies are connected to, and emanate from, critical theories relating to fixated race theory (ethnic hierarchy), militant feminist theory (abortion, euthanasia, eugenics), the Gay agenda (the Alphabet sect with its sex-gender theories and same-sex marriage) and multiculturalism (emphasis on minorities, secularism, religious pluralism and an unattainable cultural unity).[755] At their core, secularists seek the eradication of the Judeo-Christian religion from public life despite its defensible, rational, ethical codes founding the laws, rules, and the moral order of Western societies. Instead, Identitarians desire ideological and cultural domination, and further desire the appropriation of autocratic State powers in their favour through political, corporate, media and legal endorsement. Simultaneously, Statists insist on downgrading of entrenched Constitutional rights endorsing freedoms available to society as a whole in favour of their eccentric concept of distributive social justice. The seminal issue between the two competing views concerns differences in moral and religious viewpoints, arising from their respective creeds.[756] While the Judeo-Christian moral codes of a 'sacred tradition' are rationally defensible (*cf.,* George, R., Clash, 1999), they are contrary to the quixotic irrational 'moral' order proposed

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753 Prof. Larry Siedentop refers to this "collision" as a "civil war" in which both "religious belief and 'godless' secularism is understood to be irreconcilable opponents" (2014, p. 349ff).

754 Russell Kirk rightly understands the importance of a liberal education, which itself is conservative in application for it, "defends order against disorder. In its practical effects, liberal education works for order in the soul, and order in the republic" (Time, 1996, p. 43), basically what Kirk earlier referred to as "ordered liberty" (Order, 1974, p. 430).

755 The negative effects of rampant multiculturalism are described by professor of politics, Eric Kaufmann, as follows, "the modern leftism aspect of multiculturalism has corrupted liberalism, hijacked the national identity of Western nations and undermined the ethnic majorities which lend stability to national identities" (Liberalism, 2022). Kaufmann is correct in his summation for multiculturalism inevitably leads to an internal conflict of cultures in an impossible search of a new national 'homogeneity'. No concept of the common good can emanate from radical multiculturalism, for, inter alia, the political and social emphasis swings from equal opportunity to an unenforceable and tenuous equal outcomes policy.

756 Jurist Juanma Badenas describes the situation as follows, "During the next few years we will continue to be witnesses to a battle between two moralities – between a civilization that is still sustained by a secondary religion (monotheism) and a polytheistic and agnostic one that is capable of forming an easy connection with people's irrationality". Badenas concludes that, "a universal and rational morality is (not) possible", for the battle, insofar as it concerns, "a rational debate is lost" (Christendom, 2022).

by secular humanist and pluralistic Ideologues for wide application in the public square. G. K. Chesterton's remarks find context here, "Christianity is at one with common sense; but all religious history shows that this common sense perishes except where there is Christianity to preserve it" (The Everlasting Man, 1925, p. 85).

To exacerbate matters, the drastic moral propositions of Identitarians are supported by a political and moralistic overreach by State organs, amounting to a coercive ethical imposition. The aims of Ideologues in atomizing their personal moral affinities to a State ratified new ethical norm is plainly contraindicative to a good moral order of society, particularly one based on classic liberal democratic and Constitutional concepts. Apart from a Statist and juridical endorsement, the adoption of secular Identity ideologies as official corporate policy by large multinational commercial entities in the US and Europe, brings a serious social and economic dimension to both the public and private arena. Employees are bound to adhere to policies imposed by the corporate elite failing which their livelihoods are threatened (*cf.,* Chapter 6.3, *infra*). In conjunction with a Statist administration, unelected nomenklaturas, politicians, academia,[757] mass media, and sundry activists, a powerful corporate elite has emerged in the name of 'political correctness' and social justice. Leading social commentator and Archbishop of Los Angeles, Jose Gomez, understands the rise of a secular elite leadership as a group "in charge of corporations, governments, universities, the media and in the cultural and professional establishments" who aim to create a "global civilization, built on a consumer economy and guided by science, technology, humanitarian values, and technocratic ideas about organizing society". Gomez concludes that "in this elite worldview, there is no need for old-fashioned belief systems and religion. In fact religion as they see it, especially Christianity, only gets in the way of the society they hope to build" (2021).

Activists adopt a tactic of 'cancel culture'[758] while claiming 'political correctness' in imposing their slanted views on society.[759] Dissenters are silenced politically and economically, that is,

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757 For instance, the University of Nottingham, in the U.K., issued a caution to students against reading George Orwell's classic dystopian novel, '1984', on the grounds that "it contains explicit material which some students may find offensive and upsetting" (Hastings, 1984, 2022). The parallels between the events in the novel mirror many of the contemporary 'woke' brigade's ideologically and authoritarian based actions, validated by, *inter alia*, academia's 'caution' against reading the novel.

758 In a 2021 Report on "Authoritarianism and Political Discrimination in Academia", Professor Kaufmann's study reveals that over 40% of US and Canadian universities would not hire politically conservative academics. Similarly, 33% of British Universities would not hire a Brexit supporter. Additionally, 70% of US conservative academics, "report a hostile departmental environmental climate for their beliefs (2021).

759 In discussing the emergence of the 'cancel culture' phenomenon, historian Mark Malvasi, comments that Identity activists, "require the abandonment of all that our predecessors have done". This action is therefore a direct assault upon the integrity of the classic Liberal and, particularly,

'cancelled',[760] or 'de-platformed', whether they are individuals (particularly academics, public figures, or politicians), or businesses. Gomez highlights the fact that "often what is cancelled and corrected are perspectives rooted in Christian beliefs – about human life, and the human person, about marriage, the family, and more" (2021). And that is the crux of the matter, for human identity, the *imago Dei* of humankind, is under threat of refabrication in favour of the heretical *eritus sicut Deus*. As is to be expected, underlying the assailment on personal identity is the nefarious spirit of that ancient serpent, the alter ego of his master, acting through, *inter alia*, the unfettered materialism of corporates seeking ever increasing riches through a manipulation of society. The internal 'clash' of ideologies, in a variety of articulations, is evident from the chasm between the general populace and the powerful elites seeking hegemonic control over individuals lives in every area of relevance. The net result is the reductionism of national identity into polarised tribes with separatist identities, contrary to consensual social justice and common good of society.

Considered an instigator of modern secularism, 18th century philosopher David Hume dispensed with the emphasis on reason by emphasising the pre-eminence of subjective passions to justify a valid moral order. Hume stated that, "Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and may never pretend to any office other than to serve and obey them" (1739). His stress on passion as the avenue of knowing God, access to the Divine, was furthered by the theories of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the 'father' of a liberal, progressive, theology based on emotion not reason, sentiment not rationality, irrespective of foundational creeds. In his 1799 masterpiece, 'On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers', Schleiermacher urges that to truly understand religion as a means of encountering the Divine the seeker should, "turn from everything usually reckoned religion, and fix your regard on the inward emotions and dispositions" (1898, p. 18). The endorsement of emotion and subjectivity, generally an iteration of solipsism, in theological circles is evident in the irrational propositions of Christian materialists. These theists decry objective, literal, and historical dogma, instead adopting irrational, pseudo-scientific construals such as evolutionary determinism. In similar vein, the same cohort of progressive theists impose free allegorical

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the Conservative political tradition long established in the Anglo-American context. Malvasi argues that cancel culture is simply the "latest slogan to engage public attention in the ongoing battle for the soul of our Western civilization" (Cancel Culture, 2022). In other words, a serious threat to freedoms, like speech and religion, inherent in the Western political landscape.

760 Professors Hawley and Hanania, in a detailed report of November 2020, conclude that "culture not economics drive American politics" (2020). That is, identity ideologies reign in society to the detriment of economic or merit-based construals.

conjectures, as a hermeneutical method, in relation to the Book of Genesis in particular while disparaging the literal and historical claims of scripture.

Hume and Schleiermacher's emphasis on the emotion of passion has little merit for the moral order of society requires rationality and a legitimacy ensuing from natural law, justice, and universal human rights and dignity. Further, if these concepts are not contained in civil and criminal codes governing conduct lacking reason, the sole remaining faculty is that of an emotively[761] generated, contextual, passion.[762] One of the original drafters of the US Constitution, James Madison, in his essay titled 'Federalist Paper #10' of 1787, pointed out that man's reason is fallible when attached to passion for it creates an "insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests", which cannot result in the common good of society. To attempt reasoning with Ideologues passionately fixated over abstract ideas and ideals affecting the core issue of morality, is generally futile and naïve. In any event, conversion to a theistic viewpoint is predicated on supernatural revelation coupled with inner conviction of the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that reason or passion is generally irrelevant for a rational explanation of Judeo-Christian standards can be a starting point with a receptive auditor. Reason itself was insufficient to deter Adam and Eve from utilising their power of contrary choice. The irrational and naïve actions of the First Couple, free of external inhibitions and rejecting reason, resulted in the advent of secular humanist ideology. The same line of logic applies to present-day acolytes with their skewed emotive comprehension of morality.

The pre-eminence of the natural law[763] was a pivotal factor in the drafting of the U.S. Constitution which itself was preceded by 15 State Constitutions. The State Constitutions explicitly recognized natural law rights as "pre-political rights to which all individuals are

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761 MacIntyre's phrase, 'emotivist morality', describing situational virtues, is of relevance here (Virtue, 1981, p. 19)

762 Robert George perceives that if reason is subject to emotions alone, then this makes it "impossible to vindicate any fundamental moral principles, including any fundamental human rights." The critical question George posits is this: "Where do those fundamental rights come from?". Secularists, like Hume and his circle, have no rational answer to this question other than to proclaim the right of an agent-centered, subjective, opinion. Hence, the popularization of relativist 'situation ethics, so favoured by later existentialist philosophers, and adopted by identity Ideologues. However, the inverse is true: when emotion flows from a grounding in reason, that is, "rightly ordered", then "it helps us to accomplish the morally good ends that we have basic reasons to pursue" (Clash, 1999).

763 US Attorney General William Barr, in an address to the University of Notre Dame in 2019, commented that, "the founding generation were Christians. They believed that the Judeo-Christian moral system corresponds to the true nature of man. Those moral precepts start with the two great commandments – to love your God with all your heart, soul and mind; and to love your neighbour as yourself. But they also include the guidance of the natural law – a real, transcendent, moral order which flows from God's eternal law, which itself is impressed upon, and reflected in all created things" (Barr, Notre Dame, 2019).

entitled", and which governments are required to uphold (Dinan, 2021). With the multiculturalism occurring in Western societies whereby Islam and other faith paradigms are becoming more prevalent, natural law inspired topics relating to the sanctity of life, and practical morality, become even more intricate in countering the extreme practices and intentions of Identitarians. The issue of multiculturism is an complex one, particularly in Canada where the term implies a leftist agenda, labelled 'wokeness' in the vernacular. The agenda is to create a new polyethnic national identity and thereby attenuate the predominantly homogeneous white ethnicity of the present identity. In its practical application, multiculturism features the sublation of the dominant national and ethnic culture, the liberal democratic polity, and extant religious roots, in order to accommodate revered components of alien, immigrant, cultures.[764] It appears that connection with the sacred practices of standing culture, especially as concerns Judeo-Christian roots and the constitutional freedoms from whence they originate, are in danger of being subsumed and repudiated for the sake of fostering secular ideological objectives. A moral vacuum is the inevitable outcome.[765] The atheist philosopher, Douglas Murray, penned an article titled, "Would human life be sacred in an Atheist world?". His belief was that a post-Christian society has only three alternatives. The first, "to abandon the idea that all human life is precious". Second, to adjust to an atheistic "version of the sanctity of the individual". Thirdly, if the previous two "do not work, then there is only one other place to go, which is back to faith whether we like it or not". Murray ominously concludes that "the sanctity of life is a Judeo-Christian notion that might very easily not survive the disappearance of Judeo-Christian civilization" (2014).

Even though Christianity is fast becoming a minority faith in the environment of multiculturalism, it persists as the repository and purveyor of crucial truth. Christianity is thus entitled to the same cultural and legal rights of all other religions and faiths. Canadian multiculturism, as an example, is multifaceted, and the State engages in despotic efforts to

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764 Resistance to the process of multi-culturalism is growing in France, where they term it the 'Great Replacement', *Le Grand Remplacement* - a theory made popular by the right-wing Presidential candidate, Eric Zemmour. Roughly 66% of the French populace agree the phenomenon is in process. A consequence of multiculturalism is that a 'war for democracy is being waged' but on a bigger field even than just France" alone (Lemoine, 2021). As the academic, Michael Anton, confirms, "The great replacement is happening not just in American but also throughout the West" (Anton, 2021).

765 A 2021 study by two prominent psychology professors, deduces that a vacuum in society such as that created upon the eradication of morality arising from Judeo-Christianity, and the perceived ensuant loss of personal *imago Dei,* inexorably results in reversion to a tribal or group identity for those seeking replacement of lost identity and meaning (Van Bavel & Packer, 2021, pp. 14-19). In the current identity morass facing members of society, a replacement identity is sought in a like-minded ideological clan.

achieve the desired reflection of imprecise objectives such as 'equality, diversity[766], cultural freedom, authenticity, and openness' to become a "truly pluralistic and polyethnic society". Such objectives are equivocal and irrational for, in the efforts to ensure equality, the practical implementations need to be considered. For instance, does 'equality' entail "equal opportunity, egalitarian distribution, equality before the law, sexual equality, racial equality, cultural equality and so on?" (Yenor, 2021). The question of diversity and other desired objectives are equally fraught with complexities. These complexities are main targets for bureaucratic overreach in attempting to micromanage and transform society into an identity suited to a secular ideology. The promoters of the ideologies, claiming an altruistic objective to ameliorate culture and society, intend to abolish all individual and class differences for the purposes of emphasising the common, egalitarian, and humanism, of all peoples, irrespective of the social and cultural cost through an enforced ideology. This strategy is in accordance with classical Marxist tactics, and not unlike that of proletariats of the French revolution. The core issue is, as always, that of religion for if all persons are reasoned as equal so are all religions to be considered equal repositories of truth. Therefore, one religion cannot claim to represent truth to the exclusion of others for this would amount to *animus* speech under Equality laws. The Canadian State, as in the USA, enforces the view that an ideology of secularism is preferable as a 'neutral' common ground. Whereas in the USA, case law established secularism in public Institutions, Canada, despite its heritage of Christian principles of English Common Law, engages in the practice of *Laïcité*, that is, the establishment of a "secular state that vigilantly guards against the incursion of religious convictions into the public square" (Koyzis, 2021). The effect is the same, for religion is to be extirpated from the public square. Cultural Christianity in Canada, like south of the border in the USA and other Western jurisdictions, is under grave threat of marginalisation due to its absolutist claims to truth.

Whether or not protest against the exclusivist claims of Christian dogma was the key factor in the numerous 2021 arson attacks on Christian Churches in Canada is uncertain, but it would undoubtedly have been a significant cause. It is reported that by July 2021, 48 Christian Churches of various denominations have been either burnt or vandalised (Olohan, Churches,

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766 'Diversity' is generally a vague and relativist term, not easily definable, and has to be considered contextually. Legitimate questions can be raised such as 'to diversify from what common standard?'; and 'Can an empirical common standard even be identified?'. Veith perceives that, "Postmodernists laud cultural diversity, but if there is no universal humanness, why respect people from other cultures?" (1994, p. 78). Furthermore, says Veith, postmodern academics promote the benefits of diversity but by so doing they "indict Western civilization for its assertion of absolutes and universal principles which have allegedly resulted in racism imperialism, sexism, homophobia, and the whole litany of post-Marxist evils". The result is the "dismantling of a unitary culture in an attempt to establish a multicultural state" (1994, pp. 148-149) of their own construction, not unlike the Tower of Babyl situation.

2021). Canada is an example of a society undergoing an internal collision of civilisations, a fractionalisation of opposing ideological camps through extreme secular ideological social engineering. In contrast to the US, social protests in Canada are somewhat muted when compared to the frenzied activities of Identitarians in their southern neighbour. Not only in the two North American nations have socio-political complications emerged. In the UK, the Editor of the 4th September 2021 issue of 'The Economist' commented on the gravity of the current internal conflict of political philosophies as follows:

*"Classical liberals believe that the best way to navigate disruptive change in a divided world is through a universal commitment to individual dignity, open markets, and limited government. The illiberal left prefers to enforce ideological purity by no-platforming their enemies and cancelling allies who have transgressed. The stakes could not be higher" (*Beddoes, 2021).

Europe likewise faces an internal contest of political philosophies due to incipient multiculturalism, which situation further exacerbates the polarization of society. The chief reason is that, like the USA, the EU has secular democratic liberalism as its default position in the public square. EU member states are faced with the abolishing of cultural Christian precepts which long underpinned its values. Whereas in the USA with its legal background based on common law and the necessity, therefore, of juridical interpretation and precedent (hence, Lemon v Kurtzman, 1971, *ibid*.), the EU applies a codified system of laws. These laws arise from civil and statutory law originating from the Judeo-Christian fount of natural law, but far less subject to juridical decision, due to the perspicacious format of legal sources. The civilisation clash within EU societies is not only between the ethics and morality of ideological Identity politics versus cultural Christianity, as besetting US culture, but, in addition, between the secularisation of such societies and the multiculturalist impact of the Islamic faith which arrived with the flood of Muslim refugees in the last two or three decades. The EU attempt to force secularism and religious pluralism upon society as a non-normative, but central, principle of international relations (*cf.,* Wolff, Secular, Intro., 2021), is being met with resistance from many quarters. For instance, the lethal attacks on journalists in the 2015 Charlie Hebdo newspaper matter, in Paris, France. The developing situation is addressed by author Sarah Wolff in the June 2021 publication, 'Secular Power Europe and Islam: Identity and Foreign Policy' *(cf.,* Secular, 2021). Islamic Sharia law is therefore in contest with both sanctioned (and politicised) secularisation in public affairs, and with cultural Christianity whose principles are the base of essential norms. A three-way mortal interplay for meaning and identity continues the ontological insecurity of national and individual Identity, while searching also for societal peace, coherence, and harmony in a rising post-Christian scene.

An inter-nation ideological conflict has emerged between member states of the European Union for they are now in danger of becoming embroiled in an imbroglio[767] with each other. The cause is the enforcement of Identity ideologies, imposed by unelected nomenklaturas ruling the European Union from headquarters in Brussels. An alliance has been formed of right-thinking conservative member States opposed to dictatorial directives from Brussels. EU Bureaucrats endorse the Biden administration's Identity protocols by insisting on 'woke' ideological compliance as an official European Union policy. Central European countries like Hungary and Poland, both pro-life, family orientated and religious endeavour to avoid the societal disarray evident in other member states. They resist Brussels' directives and strive to retain their cultural and religious heritage. In so doing they face forms of ostracization,[768] until they capitulate to Brussels' demands. For instance, Biden's administration refused to extend Hungary an invitation to attend the International Democracy Convention in December 2021, which invitation was made to nearly 100 other countries. Avowedly pro-life Guatemala, was likewise refused an invitation by Biden (*cf.,* Bilger, Guatemala, 2021). Furthermore, the Biden administration avidly supports the removal of Hungary's democratically elected president, Viktor Orbán, due to his rejection of radical identity policies insisted upon internationally by Biden and his cabal (*cf*., Maitra, 2021). Despite International criticism, Orbán was re-elected to Office for another term in April 2022. Biden and the EU exercise a Statist coerciveness over countries in receipt of financial aid, using their economic power to impose partisan existential ideologies upon resistant, but vulnerable, recipients, faced with difficult decisions.

In additional to internal challenges emphasized by James Kurth, an external threat, predicted[769] by Samuel Huntington emerged in 2022. A geo-political, critical, threat to the classic liberal democratic[770] architecture of Western culture by authoritarian-militant actors arose in February

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767 Legal theorist, Lénárd Sándor, explains that, "European law, which previously been on an equal footing, seems to be seeking hegemony over the legal systems of the member states, no longer merely to harmonize them but to incorporate them into a furtive federalism". He continues, "the only legal brake on the hegemony of EU law are the Constitutional Courts of the member states which are empowered to filter out *ultra vires* EU acts that violate national constitutional identity" (Courts, 2022). The importance of the Constitutional Courts to protect individual rights and freedoms cannot be overstated.

768 Chantal Delsol states that, "Countries that resist total liberalization are singled out by others, treated as backward, as if it were an affront to good taste, good conduct, reason and intelligence" (End, 2021).

769 However, Huntington did not foresee an external 'clash' between two professed Christian nations, to wit, Russia and Ukraine, in 2022, but, rather, between Christian nations and Islamic or other heathen nations.

770 On March 6, 2022, the Ukrainian Ambassador to the USA, Oksana Markarova, emphasized that, "other democracies will not remain safe if Russia's aggression against her country is not stopped" (Choi, Ukraine, 2022), thus threatening the Western democratic arrangement.

2022, with Russian president Vladimir Putin's invasion[771] of Ukraine. Putin's sanguinary aggression is based on irredentist, religious,[772] spiritual[773] political, and ideological reasons. Putin also has nationalist objectives continuing from the ambitions of Peter the Great (1682 – 1725), through the period of the Czars, and the succeeding Communist, USSR, regimes to re-establish a vast Russian empire. Putin's proposed empire will reflect a combination of Russian Orthodox religion, intersected with Russian nationalism and visions of re-establishing Slavic domination of the region. Support for this postulate is found in an analysis by Professor Dimitry Adamsky, a prominent Russia scholar, as set out in his 2019 publication, 'Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy'. Adamsky writes that "Faith has a high profile in President Putin's private and public conduct and in domestic and foreign policy[774] for it (faith) is a measure of national identity". This faith, that of Russian Orthodoxy, has "saturated the Russian nuclear military-industrial complex". The Russian Orthodox Church ("ROC") has "crafted a new pantheon of military heroes", and the ROC has "positioned itself as one of the main guardians of the State's nuclear potential, claiming the role of a guarantor of Russian national security". To advance such security, the ROC has designated St. Seraphim as the official "patron saint of the Russian nuclear industry" (Adamsky, 2019, Ch. 3). Clearly, the ROC has played an "unprecedented role in Russian identity, politics, and national security" with a strong "bond" between the "Kremlin, the ROC and the nuclear weapons community". This interactive relationship can be referred to as "Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy" (Adamsky, 2019, Ch. 1). The Orthodox Russian Church's foray into politics and military power indicates a post-millennial theological posture, expressed through rampant Orthodox Dominionism and Reconstructionism but energised through a misplaced nationalism *(cf.,* Jn. 18:36).

In this vein, President Xi of Marxist China also has revanchist aspirations, indicating China's intent to incorporate the independent country of Taiwan into China through military means.

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771 Stephen E. Hanson, professor of Government, narrates that the invasion is a "watershed moment for the future of global democracy" (Anthony, Ukraine, 2022)

772 In a discussion with leading Russia analyst, Professor Dimitry Adamsky, Israeli columnist Amos Harel, records Adamsky as saying that, "Putin is driven by a potent concept of values, religion and tradition. Of this confrontation (with Ukraine) he talks in terms of a war of the 'sons of light against the sons of darkness'" (Harel, Goal, 2022).

773 Putin is recorded as saying that "Ukraine is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space" (Fraser, Putin, 2022). The claim of "Spiritual space" imparts a religious element to the conflict, one that is contrary to Biblical precepts, and therefore malevolent. Furthermore, Putin's ideological adviser is Alexander Dugin the "proponent of Putin's 'Russian World' concept, a spiritual and political ideology that emphasizes traditional values, the restoration of Russia's power and the unity of all ethnic Russians" (Heintz, J., Putin's Brain, 2022).

774 Archbishop Daniel, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA, concludes that "the President of the Russian federation (Putin) is making it a religious war. The responsibility is on him and his soul". The Archbishop describes the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, who supports Putin's irredentist war against Ukraine, as a "religious politician and not a spiritual father to his people" (Nescott, Politician, 2022).

Both these antagonists, Putin and Xi, have hegemonic ambitions not only in a military and geographical sense but also politically and culturally. President Putin's speech in October 2021[775] reveals this intention for, while no doubt concealing an hegemonic ideological agenda (expressed in a despotic authoritarianism), Putin disparaged the West's progressive liberalist architecture,[776] stating that "when the world is going through a structural disruption, the importance of reasonable conservatism as the foundation for a political course has skyrocketed, precisely because of the multiplying risks and dangers and the fragility of the reality around us". The reporter adds that Putin is promoting a "new conservative ideology" so that "Russia would become a political and ideological pole for conservatives in the United States and Europe as well". There could therefore be a political and ideological role-reversal, with the West becoming, "a pole for progressive-liberal-communist ideology while Russia would represent the conservative pole" (Mahjar-Barducci, 2022). The 2022 geo-political situation, with Ukraine and Taiwan as 'flashpoints', and the attenuation of America's military strength (*cf.,* Rakov, 2022), especially with senior military appointments dictated by populist sex-gender quotas irrespective of merit, coupled with Biden's extreme leftist administration, does not bode well for preservation of the West's classic liberal democratic heritage. Powerful new external military and ideological global actors have emerged to challenge the liberal democratic architecture, with its great values and principles which have well served the Western culture, buttressed by a hitherto dominant military. This situation should not be unexpected, for in Huntington's view, "culture and cultural identities which are, broadly speaking, civilization identities, are shaping the cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world" (Clash, 1996, p. 20). Huntington summarizes his political theories as follows:

- Westernization (coupled with modernization), has not produced, "a universal civilization in any meaningful sense nor the Westernization of non-Western societies";
- The "balance of power is shifting: the West is declining in relative influence. Non-Western civilizations are reaffirming the value of their own cultures";

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775 President Putin's October 2021 speech to the Valdai Forum was described by his foreign policy advisor, Sergey Karaganov, as "the first major and strong call for reinventing Russian ideology for Russia and the world". He adds that "the main process that is now taking place in the world is the loss by the West of its previous positions" (Karaganov, 2021). Consequently, "Putin's speech can be viewed as an ideological manifesto that tries to put Russia back in the center of the world's political map" (Mahjar-Barducci, 2022).

776 Huntington emphasized that the "fault lines between the world's major civilizations" will explain future conflict" (Clash, 1996, p. 20). By "fault lines" he implies civilization disparities, that is, the political, cultural, ideological, social and religious differences.

- A ‘civilization-based world order is emerging. Countries group themselves around the lead or core states of their civilization”;
- The “West’s universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations”;
- The “survival of the West depends on Americans reaffirming their Western identity and accepting their civilization as unique and not universal, while uniting to renew and preserve it against challenges from non-Western societies”.

Huntington concludes that “avoidance of a global war of civilizations depends on world leaders accepting and cooperating to maintain the multicivilizational character of global politics” (Clash, 1996, pp. 20-21). These are wise and prescient words. But two mitigating factors come to mind: firstly, it is the emphasis on multiculturalism in Western societies which imparts an alien dynamic to existent homogenous culture, thereby exacerbating the potential for internal strife. Secondly, the assumption that disparate world leaders will co-operated in maintaining a peaceful and cooperative atmosphere. Both of these two factors act against a harmonious world order, as is evident with the present internal discord in the West, added to the external risk factors of current Russian aggression[777] and China’s hegemonic intent.

A parlous situation therefore faces Western civilization with its liberal democratic polity and cultural Christian values, for the combined internal forces of secularism, humanism, paganism, pluralism, Identitarianism and heathenism[778] threaten in ever expanding measure. Phillip Shannon refers to this phenomena as “the dismemberment of Western civilization before the high altar of multi-cult diversity”.[779] External forces have also arisen to superimpose a new

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777 The justification of Russian aggression in 2022 is little different ideologically to that of the Nazi war machine. Professor Jon Levenson claims that, “the onslaught against the Jews would inevitably become an attack on democracy, on Christianity, on the Mediterranean world in which the Western tradition was spawned, and ultimately on the moral life itself” (Levenson, Enemies, 1991). The lethal assault on a democratic Ukraine by a totalitarian Russia amounts to an attempt to eradicate the principles of democracy and Christianity in favour of a nationalist, authoritarian regime encouraged by the Russian Orthodox Patriarch, Kirill, to reassert Russian orthodoxy in Ukraine.

778 Extraordinarily, the present invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022, while based on publicised pretexts, is predominantly justified by a matter of religion. Both countries are staunchly Christian Orthodox and the conflict is for dominance of the Russian Orthodox Church over the separatist Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Ukraine’s capitol, Kiev, is seen as the fount and seat of Russian orthodoxy and the Russian Church, in full support of Putin’s revanchist aims, desires to reclaim their dominance over the breakaway Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

779 Shannon, P., Woke, 2022.

political, religious[780] and ideological structure to the detriment of the democratic liberal order.[781] The wise words of political commentator Ann Applebaum apply when she perceives that, "there is no natural liberal world order and there are no rules without someone to enforce them. Unless democracies defend themselves together, the forces of autocracy will destroy them" (Order, 2022). The societal contest for a dominant *Weltanschauung is* terminal in effect and is a battle that each generation needs to contest anew. The stygian words of Winston Churchill, when confronted with the imminent Battle of Britain for the survival of the Isles, aptly apply to the current situation. Churchill concluded as follows:

"If we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science" (Churchill, 1940).

Couched in theological terms, a post-Christian civilization will result a secular humanist construction intersected with a paganist spirituality of sorts in a "sordid service of the self, of the impulses of the will, of the nothingness that is all that the withdrawal of Christianity leaves behind…a conscious nihilism, with its inevitable devotion to death", concludes theologian David Hart (Christ, 2003). Hart's dictum illuminates the dire alternatives to the demise of cultural Judeo-Christianity. The growing demise of extant Western culture,[782] exacerbated through feckless leadership focused on the secularization of the public arena and dictatorial Identity issues, is well illustrated through the ominous words of 1923 Nobel Laureate Poet, W. B. Yeats, in his poem, 'The Second Coming':

> *"Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold;*
> *Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*

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780 Historian Kelaidis concludes that Russia uses the Russian Orthodox Church "as an instrument of foreign influence in Ukraine (and other nations). A tactic made possible by the Patriarchate of Moscow's desire to establish itself as the leader of the conservative Orthodox cause". In sum, the "war between Russia and Ukraine will be a religious war" (Kelaidis, War, 2022) and this factor constitutes both an internal and external struggle for control of the eastern Orthodox Church. Perhaps the term, 'religious sectarianism' can describe the conflict.

781 The fragile nature of the Western democratic arrangement was highlighted by professor of Public Policy, Robert Reich, in his comments relating to the Ukrainian – Russian situation, but globally applicable, as follows, "The people of Ukraine are also reminding us that democracy is the single most important we have inherited from previous generations who strengthened it and risked their lives to preserve it. It will be the most significant legacy we leave to future generations – unless we allow it to be suppressed by those who fear it, or we become too complacent to care" (Reich, Putin, 2022).

782 Contemporary French philosopher Chantal Delsol remarks that, "the incredible energy with which Christian culture has struggled for two centuries not to die, clearly shows that it did indeed form a world – a world cohesive in all areas of life – and it was called Christianity. Christianity built a civilization, which has lived according to its laws and dogmas, as best it can, for sixteen centuries" (End, 2021).

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity".
(W. B. Yeats, 1889, p. 186).

The existential challenge facing Judeo-Christian influence on society, and so Western civilization itself, is highlighted by King David's rhetorical question in Psalm 11:3, "if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?". The rhetorical question constitutes a call to action for all disciples of the Messiah in the present struggle against malevolent forces threatening prevailing civilization, and the Judeo-Christian orthodox tenets upon which such civilization is founded.

7.7 Conclusion

Emerging from a primeval background, secular humanism has been reborn in the post-modern era through adverse historical factors resulting in a practical deconstruction of the earlier classic liberalism of modernity. Secularism is intersected with heathenism, and further intertwined with pluralistic and eclectic neo-pagan mixtures of New Age belief systems in challenging the moral, just, and religious order of society. The new State religion of secular humanism, and its adjuncts, is endorsed and enforced through legal directives from the highest juridical authorities in the land, from which there exists no expedient judicial appeal.

The central focus of Identitarian confrontation with cultural Christian creeds remains that of identity, primarily the identity relating to the Fatherhood of God. Once this pivotal doctrine has lost credibility, all other ensuant dogma is likewise impaired. The purpose of the offensive against the Fatherhood doctrine is so that, firstly, the *imago Dei* of the created *sui generis* human beings made in his image and endued with eternal, transcendental qualities, having dignity and purpose with intrinsic worth in body, soul and spirit, can be then be repudiated. Secondly, once society has dispensed with a patriarchal Creator figure, then both the binary gender identities of his archetype humans, Adam and Eve, as well as the heterosexual prototype of their divinely construed permanent and monogamous marriage, predestined to be exclusively between two persons of opposite binary genders and based on supernatural *agape* love with application both horizontally and vertically, is likewise annulled. Justification is then acquired for a purported marriage relationship outside of the Divine's paradigms, that is, between persons of the same sex or gender or any combination thereof, all based on humanist *eros* love - sexual, physical, self-centred love. This kind of marriage finds public validity due to cultural, political and legal endorsement. Thirdly, upon the 'demise' of the Fatherhood of God concept, gender activists then justify their inimical theories by affirming

feminine or androgenous deities and their own imitations of such genders, whether amalgamated or otherwise. In this way, the nuclear family unit can be destroyed, and by extension, the society ordained by the Divine in Eden.

The contention surrounding identity is obvious from the humanist, therapeutic, ideologies now driving social chaos for the emphasis is on the pre-eminence of the self-venerated individual seeking authenticity. This situation transpires when self-styled justification has occurred due to the perceived demise of *imago Dei* emanating from the Fatherhood of God, and the replacement therewith of the heretical *eritus sicut Deus* idea of Genesis 3:5. Without a coherent grounding in transcendence through a substantiated soteriology, the secular humanist search for ontological security, meaning, and identity is doomed to failure, with significant consequent physical and psychological damage to its zealots. Attempts to make the sovereign-self a free-standing entity connected to a variety of humanist theories and aberrant groups, all in search of identity but unconnected to the Fatherhood of God and so to the *imago Dei* of humankind, are doomed to failure for it is only in the Most High God that, "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Heterosexual marriages, traditional family structures, and social fabrications are severely affected through malignant Identity ideologies rampant in society. As Pope Benedict XVI concluded, "if homosexual unions are perceived as enjoying the same standing as marriage, then we are truly facing a dissolution of the *imago* of humankind, bearing consequences that can only be extremely grave" (Europe, 2006). The prescient words of John Howard, in the title of his 2009 Philadelphia Society address, "Culture Makes or Breaks an Ordered Free Society" (2009), needs bearing in mind for the very existence of cultural Judeo-Christian based Western society is under grave threat by woke humanist ideology.[783] Howard finds support through Spengler's statement that the decline of a ruling culture is a "philosophical problem that when comprehended in all its gravity, includes within itself every great question of Being" (1916, p. 3). Spengler's view has significant merit as individual ontology goes to the core of meaning in life obtained through a personal identity, which ultimately determines the overall culture of society.

Matthew Rose, referring to the established, but in contemporary times somewhat tenuous, liberal democratic political theory of Western civilization poses a crucial enigma, "What comes after liberalism?" He explains that:

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[783] Viktor Orban claims that Western Europe is in a post-West milieux and the true, intellectual, West is now found in Central Europe (*cf.,* Deme, D., Vision, 2022).

> *"We know what came before it: oppressions, ignorance, violence and superstition. We are living in a post-liberal*[784] *moment. After three decades of dominance, liberalism is losing its hold on Western minds. Its most serious challenges come from within Western democracies themselves where intelligent critics, and not just angry populists, are expressing doubts as to its most basic norms"* (World, 2021, pp. 1-3)

Rose concludes that the emerging secular humanist class, with Statist support, comprise "a political right prepared to dismantle liberal Institutions, not simply manage their decline" (World, 2021, pp. 1-3).

Contextual secular humanist and neo-paganist morality, coupled with Gnostic founded duality in the realm of identity, justify extreme practices such as unmitigated abortion, reconstruction of binary sex to suit gender acolytes, the euthanasia and eugenical termination of vulnerable persons, the disparaging of males, the destruction of women's rights in favour of transgender identifiers, and the attempted marginalisation of the Caucasian ethnic group in favour of minorities. All these issues are at the centre of the upheaval besetting Western societies and all reflect a search for identity and, hence, meaning. This search initially commenced in the postlapsarian scenario and through the ages has never ceased, simply articulating itself in differing guises. The struggle for orthodoxy is not ultimately against the proponents of Identity self-identifiers, social justice activists, or feminists in conjunction therewith, but essentially, "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). It is first and foremost a spiritual battle for the salvation of the 'lost' using divine, supernatural, weapons such as prayer, *agape* love, divine power, faith, and the Word of God. Nonetheless, the visible line of battle is against the agents of darkness, the human activists who doubtlessly act unwittingly on behalf of the fallen angel, Lucifer. And these agents have to be confronted with all the wisdom, truth, love and authority by the children of God. Satan does not operate in a *lacuna* but through his representatives as is evident from the actions of his mimesis, the serpent, in the Edenic Garden, and that of Judas Iscariot in the Gospels (Matt. 10:4). Collectively, the world's rulers, the leaders of society, acting as Satan's unwitting agents,

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[784] A consideration of what a 'post-liberal order' looks like, deserves attention. The concept of globalization is an extension of the liberal order in that the liberal environment accommodates the concept. However, the 2022 Russia - Ukraine war, has devastated the extension of a global liberal order. Political science professor, Gladden Pappin, states that the, "post-liberal analysis holds that emergent political conditions in the world involve the abandonment of liberalism. The competition is on for ideologies and political systems to replace it". He adds that the "rapid collapse of the liberal order" due to the Ukrainian conflict, leads to the following emergent characteristics of a post-liberal order: firstly, the "values-based international order has ceased to exist". Secondly, "liberal capitalism no longer believes in its power to bring about liberalism". Thirdly, "Global supply chains are a security risk". Fourthly, "the global internet is at an end" (Pappin, Globalization, 2022).

conspire against the Most-High God and his Church, as earlier exemplified by Nimrod and his cohorts.

With direct relevance to the contemporary societal conflict, the words of King David in Psalm 2:1-2, are pertinent, “Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves…against the Lord and his anointed…”.[785] The hubristic, diabolical, and indefatigable Satan always had as his agenda the destruction of the Church. Satan commenced his assault with the Divine’s zenith of creation, the federal First Couple, attempting to deprive the Divine of the glory and worship due to him. The 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith states that the highest purpose of humankind is to, “glorify God and enjoy him forever” (Shaw, 1980). Against the injunctions of the Divine, the created Angel Lucifer also sought to possess his own people, his own worship. His efforts were directed towards obtaining this while operating with all the forces of evil available to him. His initial success was instigating the antinomianism of Adam and Eve and he continues his malevolence through their contemporary ideological successors whom he holds captive (*cf.,* 2 Tim. 2:26), until their redemption as a result of the sacrificial work of the Messiah. Lucifer’s timely end is foretold in Revelation 20.

[785] Prof. Reno summarizes the situation as follows, “We are sliding towards disorder because our dominant culture is godless, leaving us vulnerable to the lure of idols”. The “idols” he refers to include “health, wealth and pleasure” (Season, 2020). To which could be added many others such as ‘statism, personal self-identity, secularism, pluralism, power and the sovereign, creative, self’. Likewise, the secularism, power and hedonism emanating from the Institutions of “Hollywood, Silicon Valley and Wall Street” (Season, 2020), in preference to the values and principles derived from the triumvirate of “Jerusalem, Athens and Rome” (Weigel, Pope, 2022).

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

> "All human conflict is ultimately theological" (A. Vermeule, 2019).

As contended in the Introduction to this study, Chapter 1, the root cause of contemporary disorder in Western society, relating to the vigorous emergence of Identity ideologies, can be traced back to certain events in the primordial Garden of Eden. The significance of validating this claim is to remedy what Yoram Harzony perceives as "an astonishing amount of ignorance"[786] surrounding existential issues challenging not only personal identity, the *imago Dei*, of individuals but established core Judeo-Christian orthodox tenets underlying the West's classical liberal democratic order. Richard Neuhaus brings attention to the fact that cultural concerns have as their essence a religious footing.[787] Hence, a Judeo-Christian apologetical and analytical consideration is required to reach a firm understanding of the problem. In this way, and relying on ancient but enduringly valid hermeneutical strategies, the diabolical tactics of the fallen Archangel Lucifer through the ages can be exposed and addressed. In the same mode, the end result of the lethal conflict Lucifer instigated in the Garden can predicted. Attended to below is a synopsis of critical issues and, following on, an examination of continuing legal, political, philosophical, theological, cultural and missiological imperatives which crucially affect the means of remedying the societal discord.

8.1 Overview

The First Couple's antinomian actions in the archetypal Edenic Garden, catalysed through the sophistry of the demonic serpent and their own license of contrary choice, resulted in a sever disruption of the serene, eternal, theocracy planned by the Creator for humankind.

The central pathogenic action of the First Couple so adversely affecting future humankind was, without doubt, the subordination of the divinely conferred *imago Dei* in favour of an esoteric Gnostic-like elitism to validate their desire to be as God - *eritus sicut Deus.* By so doing, they rejected the Fatherhood role of the Creator, while professing their own creative authority. The First Couple's declaration of autonomy, tied to a creative warrant of self-deification with a solipsistic vision of Identity and meaning, was naively purposed to enable them to explore an alternative pathway to a transcendent order, one free of the Creator's paradigms. The attempt at self-recreation, and self-veneration, on the part of Adam and Eve in searching for meaning and Identity exterior to the Creator's paradigms was inevitably

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786 Hazony, Y. Conservatism, 2022, p. 9.

787 "We think it true to say that politics is, in largest part, an expression of culture and at the heart of culture is religion" (Neuhaus, R. J., 1990).

destined for failure. The same motivation has been emulated throughout subsequent history, notably by Nimrod and his sycophants in the post-diluvian era, while continuing into the prevailing anti-Christian epoch. From time immemorial occultist practice spread endemically and metastasised into enduring orphic expositions. The medium through which arcane praxis has persisted into the Aquarian New Age of post-modernity can be identified as that of neo-Gnostic, dualist-based, fabrications inherent in astrology and an assortment of philosophical constructs and spiritual ideologies.

Eve's feminist desire to rule and dominate over her husband, coupled with Adam's pusillanimity in failing to take responsibility for his patriarchal inaction, became a portent of future social and matrimonial strife. Eve's actions find reiteration in the contemporary milieux, for the feminist usurpation of patriarchal leadership roles in family and society, related to their sociological rejection of the Fatherhood Identity of the Divine, has in the Anglo-American context, given rise to influential radical feminist construals adversely affecting the harmony of society in the areas of gender, marriage and family. Emanating from Eve's adoption of the *eritus sicut Deus* heresy, feminists birthed the sex-gender theory, albeit supported by other activists and philosophers, both male and female. An exemplar is existentialist writer Simone de Beauvoir of the French feminist cohort, who opined in her work, 'The Second Sex', that "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" [788] (1949, p. 330). By such statement she exposed her body-mind dualist proposal, an ancient heresy devoid of gender realism. De Beauvoir's theory[789] instigated the post-modern sex-gender dichotomy which was further developed by Judith Butler, Mary Daly, Pauline Johnson, Gayle Rubin and many others (Mikkola, 2019). These feminists and their acolytes dictated the narrative on sex and gender in the public space. Views of creationist supporters of binary and biological realism determining gender are not entertained in the debate, for legal, political, and social legitimacy has been conferred upon the activists' Gnostic rooted theory. Abortion, euthanasia, and eugenical practices are facets of the sex-gender ideology,[790] chiefly driven by dualistic feminist

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788 De Beauvoir's statement is one that "entirely reshapes feminist thought" for this "sentence is the seed of what would become the sex-gender split in feminist theory" (Favale, 2021).

789 In 2006, Eric Zemmour published 'The First Sex', a refutation of De Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex', severely criticising the feminization of French society. His book became a bestseller "which horrified a lot of feminists" (Lemoine, 2021).

790 Gender ideology, the purported dualism between sex and gender - between conferred biological sex at birth and claimed, self-identified, malleable, sex/gender - is very much a classic Gnostic fabrication reiterated in a post-modern environment but originating from the wiles of the demonic serpent related in Genesis 3. Weigel proposes the following solution, "The cultural crises of a Gnosticism taking its most prominent form in gender ideology, is best addressed by a reaffirmation of Biblical truths" revealing the "goodness of creation" and "human dignity" (Pope, 2022). The importance of re-establishing in society absolutist Judeo-Christian and, hence, moral, reference points cannot be underestimated.

theories asserting their powers of creation as desired by the Edenic Eve. Mary Eberstadt perceives that "humanity is at war with God over a question that reaches back to the beginning of time, namely, 'Who, exactly, should have power over creation?'" She concludes that "the culture dominant in the West today teaches… that the creation of life is ours to control – more precisely, that it is for women to control" (War, 2022). The maelstrom affecting the internal coherence of Western society is evidence of the veracity of Eberstadt's postulate. The iatrogenic harm to individuals finding concurrence with Identity actors is that they lose their sense of a sacred[791] Identity in favour of adopting a tenuous secular humanist fabrication. The further consequence is a sublation of a transcendentalist worldview substituted for one of practical atheism which, tautologically, terminates in nihilism.[792] A related offshoot of such attempt is the impossibility of creating a stable moral order from a relativistic, emotivist, and situational humanist perceptive, *sans* an underlying metaphysical, rational, and coherent sacred order.[793] Conversely, to become the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17), the new Identity that ideologues strive for, there has to be a spiritual transaction involving commitment to the Messiah and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, all of which cannot occur in a humanist operation. The actions of the First Couple initiated advent of the heretical practical atheism of secular humanism and fashioned an opportunity for subsequent sundry articulations of occultist pagan spiritualism, all in search of a new Identity, a new creation of their own manufacture endorsed through the woke activism of radical Identity politics.

The cultural influence of Judeo-Christian principles has had laudable constraints on public immorality particularly evidenced in the fields of politics and law, and which has given credence to commendable principles of a common good[794] during the modern period of constitutional liberal democracy. These principles are now facing a process of

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791 In this context, Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, emphasizes the transcendent nature of transgenderism, which he calls a "sacred journey". In other words, says social commentator, Matthew Roberts, "the LGBTQ movement has now become a quest for the sacred; an agenda no longer driven by science, common sense, or simple compassion but a transcendental vision, a desire for mystical fulfillment, and a metaphysical belief in unseen realities" (Religion, 2022). Justification for such postulates derives from Gnostic dualism of a higher reality imparting the sacred to individual expressionism *sans* an objective, absolute deity. An instance of apotheosis, originating from Edenic events, particularly the emergence of *eritus sicut Deus.*

792 Joseph Pearce emphasizes the nefarious presence of nihilism in contemporary Western culture when he states that, "its toxic nature pervades the cultural atmosphere, poisoning goodness, truth, and beauty with its corroding influence" (Modern Culture, 2022).

793 Referring to the demise of both private and public societal "transcendent reference points", George Weigel summates the dire state of affairs thus, "For if Western society is so emptied of its foundational, spiritual, and moral ballast that it cannot lead world civilization into the future, then other forces hostile to freedom and bearing distorted notions of solidarity will do so (Pope, 2022). These prescient words are being actualized in Western societies through the increasingly authoritarian and Statist endorsed political Identity ideologies.

794 *cf.*, Kant's moral imperative, leading to a universal law (Tim, 2014).

deconstruction[795] to accord with populist post-truth Identity ideologies. Simultaneous therewith is the emerging societal preference for a contextual spirituality and morality free of absolute norms[796], indicating the passing of a society enjoying the commendable parameters evident in a democratic liberalist political polity.[797] The era of post-Christian, agent-centred moral cynicism reflects a replication of the typological narcissistic and idiosyncratic *eritus sicut Deus* concept in Anglo-American society. Claims of legitimacy for this heretical concept comes through the conduit of dualistic rooted Marxist Critical Theory ideologies. The application of these hypotheses validates autonomy and autotheism in the activists' search for a replacement Identity and meaning consequent upon the impairment of ontological security arising from a repudiation of *imago Dei.* The ideologues' actions in striving for an abstruse concept of social justice - visible in race, same-sex marriage and sex versus gender theorems and which lead to critical practices like abortion, euthanasia, and eugenics – results in a devastating, internal 'clash of civilizations'. The current *Kulturkampf*, while dividing society on ideological and religion grounds, in essence reflects humankind's continuing and futile search for meaning through a secular Identity outside of the Creator's designated *imago Dei*.

The Western social reorganisation, driven in practice by Critical Race Theory, Critical Gender Theory and related ideologies, derives from a cultural Marxist platform[798] predicated upon the dualist theories of Plato and expanded by Plotinus, while continuing through the arguments of Descartes, Nietzsche, Foucault *et al*. The origin, however, stems from the esoteric and Gnostic-like Elitist actions of the malevolent serpent in the Edenic Garden, and emulated by the First Couple. Dualist theory has been adopted by devoted feminists, sundry secularists, occultists, and heretical theistic neo-Gnostics, whose precepts have continued into the era of post-modern, post-truth, anti-Christian, New Age pluralism. Embraced by academia, dualist Identity theory has in contemporary times been disseminated through multifarious and

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795 Nietzsche refers to this as "demolition" (Wood & Bernasconi, 1988, p. 1), a process evident in his sundry atheistic hypotheses (*cf.,* Nietzsche, 2001, para. 125, p. 120). 'Deconstruction' can, in a plain manner, be described as a collection of methods employed in "interrogating, re-evaluating, and often shedding Christian doctrines, values and practices that they find outdated, problematic or just plain harmful" (Henry, 2022).

796 Del Noce asserts that "Marxism succeeded in denying that values are absolute" (2014, p. xiv) – a prime principle in radical feminist thought.

797 As a replacement political theory, Yoram Hazony proposes a "conservative democracy" which would reject the "axioms of the liberal-rationalist system" but balance "limited government and individual liberties" with the principles of "religion, nationalism and historical empiricism that had maintained free government in Britain and America for centuries" (Democracy, 2019). Hazony is referring to a solution for the unfettered freedoms appropriated by existent aberrant ideologues, enforcing their secular humanist theories on the populace through Statist support.

798 Del Noce further maintains that Marxism was "instrumental in the rise of a new secular, relativistic, neo-bourgeoise society" (2014, p. xiv), the dualistic component of which is reiterated through Critical Theories manifested in the gender-sex dichotomy of radical feminist thought.

intramural structures in the humanities - such as those of religion, psychology, sociology, political science, history and philosophy.

Coupled with rampant secular humanism, neo-Gnostic dualism has given advent to influential concepts like Marx's dialectical materialism; the absurdist existentialism of Sartre and his cluster of writer-philosophers; Nietzsche's nihilism; Jung's psychoanalysis; and Freud's sexual hypotheses with a therapeutic focus on the 'inner-self'. The popularity of such concepts has caused a corresponding marginalisation[799] of cultural Judeo-Christianity adversely affecting hitherto orthodox centred norms, values, morals, ethics, and jurisprudence in the public arena. The central focus of ideological assaults by secular philosophers remains the moral legitimacy of the definitive and indubitable Judeo-Christian precepts underpinning Western culture. The moral imperative of such precepts which impart personal Identity, meaning, transcendence, rational ethical parameters and a sacred order, are repudiated by humanists of the Identity cohort. In replacement thereof, Identitarians embrace a reductionist moral relativism, and meaning of their own independent fabrication. Be that as it may, their actions offering meaning through Identity markers such as sex-gender, race and ethnicity cannot impart an enduring sense of ontological well-being, nor can it offer a scintilla of transcendence. In this pivotal respect, all philosophical challenges to the moral imperatives and legitimacy of Judeo-Christian precepts must necessarily fail and so be condemned.

The perceptive words of Pope Pius X ring true, for it is in this age of post-modernity, an offspring of modernity itself, that enduring ancient heresies and ideologies come together in, as Pius concludes, a "synthesis of all heresies". Pius states further that if an attempt were made to "collect together all the errors that have been broached against the faith and to concentrate the substance of them all into one", it would comprise a "system which means the destruction off all religion" (Modernists, 1907, #39). The continual and unrelenting malevolent heresies challenging Judeo-Christian precepts, initiated in the primeval Garden and persisting in a continuum through to the present post-truth era, will continue until final resolution in the eschaton. The struggle for orthodoxy is, in essence, a spiritual conflict,[800] "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places"

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799 French philosopher Chantal Delsol concludes that, "Christendom has fought for two centuries not to die, and in that consists its moving and heroic agony" (End, 2021). Delsol's view might be correct insofar as formalized Christianity is concerned, yet cognizance should be taken of the Messiah's determined words, "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16;18).

800 Social commentator, Rod Dreher, perspicuously states that, "disorder in American public life derives from disorder within the American soul" (Benedict, 2017, p. 96).

(Eph. 6:12). Stated alternatively, "for, indeed, heresies do not perish with their authors but, like the river Arethusa, though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another" (Browne, 1643, p. xi, #vi), as is evident in the existent epoch. A concluding word here can be attributed to the prominent academic Jeffrey Satinover, who perceives that "the conflict between monotheism (Judeo-Christianity) and paganism is not merely historical; it is a recurrent battle for the soul of man that has never ceased. It is joined now as ever "(Jungian, 1994).

Citizens of the West would, therefore, not disagree with the paradoxical words of Charles Dickens describing the confusing complexity of challenges facing his society:

> *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity … it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair".* (Tale of Two Cities, 1859, p. 35).

8.2 Legal Concerns

The changing culture[801] is a result of the underlying attenuation of orthodoxy arising from both exterior ideological forces and interior compromise on dogma. To reflect the developing humanist focused secularisation and neo-paganist beliefs of society, the Courts of justice appear to make tendentious interpretations and rulings in accordance with the prevailing populist ideology[802] with which some individual Judges appear to have been adversely influenced.[803] In particular, the Supreme Court of the United States ('SCOTUS'), being the highest juridical office, regularly interprets the Constitutional safeguards relating to freedoms of speech and religion by using a secular composition, an approach which can be termed a 'living' or 'contemporary constitutionalism'.[804] By so doing, the Court impliedly ignores the solid

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801 Political theorist, George Weigel, propounds that "public life and its expression in politics are always downstream from (prevailing) culture" (Pope, 2022). Consequently, Ivy league professors Guelzo and Hankins opine that "if the West's spiritual and moral capital is finally displaced by cultural forces that identify 'progress' with the satisfaction of all and any desires, we would not have entered some 'brave new world'" (*cf.,* Aldous Huxley) but, instead, have "encompassed our own destruction" (Guelzo & Hankins, 2021, p. 13).

802 Roger Scruton perceives the situation as follows: "the Supreme Court is now increasingly used to impose the morality of a liberal elite on the American people whether they like it or not" (Government, 2014).

803 The difficulty of fixing a context for the concept of a 'common good' is highlighted by professor Angus McClellan, when he avers that, "there is uncertainty as to exactly how far the Federal or State governments can go in establishing common good laws that limit rights for the general benefit. It is no secret that the expression, 'fundamental rights' (leading to a common good), has long been hijacked to smuggle extra-constitutional theories or personal preferences into judicial decision making" (Due Process, 2022).

804 *Cf.,* McClellan, A., Constitution, 2022.

principle of originalism, with its fixed point of reference in the Constitution.[805] This is a perturbing outcome as, traditionally, the Supreme Court is the *Promakhos,* - the first line of defence[806] against aberrant ideologies which adversely affect society. Moreover, such Court is also the *Defensor Civitatis*,[807] - the last line of defence for the Constitutional rights of all citizens. In the 1992 matter of Planned Parenthood versus Casey,[808] SCOTUS appears to have coloured their decision in support of the pro-choice abortion lobby. While the Court referred to the Constitution itself, it seems patent that "in contemporary theory and practice, the document is really an authoritative occasion for, rather than the norm of, judicial interpretation" (Hittinger, Crisis, 1996). In other words, interpretation through eisegesis rather than by exegesis has become the juridical norm, a norm bereft of the essential doctrines of judicial restraint and Constitutional originalism[809] - not to overlook key grammatical interpretive principles. In the Casey matter, the judgement of the Court revealed its lack of adherence to absolute citation loci and an understanding of the Constitutional imperative of certain checks and balances for protection of all human rights in the exercise of their freedoms. The Court concluded that "at the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life".[810] The ideological slant of the judgment, endorsing the autonomous, self-creating, individual is precisely that adopted by Identity proponents. As a result, the state supported ideology of 'Identity politics' is significantly unconducive to the common good[811] of society, resulting in the contemporary moral and ethical morass facing Western civilization. Russell Reno summates that Identity activists, in successfully reorientating society to accord with their moral and philosophical tenets, have "deregulated

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805 Originalism has "emerged as a driving force in Constitutional law" (McGinnis, O., Originalism, 2022).

806 In the present Western classic liberal political setting, Courts are expected to adhere to the rule of law concept whereby, "the noble idea of the law is a precept mandated by reason and enacted by a properly constituted authority for the common good" (Weigel, Pope, 2022) - not to enforce Statist interbranch ideological partisan policies.

807 Not to overlook the Supreme Court's role as *Defensor hominis* – a defender of the "inalienable dignity and rights of the human person" (Weigel, Pope, 2022). This role, a form of *paterfamilias,* is founded on the justice, rights, and freedoms inherent in Judeo-Christian principles pertaining to *Imago Dei* (*cf.,* Psalm 8), and adopted into sundry Constitutions, supported by the common and civil law.

808 #505 U.S., 833, 1992.

809 A caveat pertaining to the principles of originalism is sounded by Historian Forrest McDonald when he cautions that, "Being guided by the clear intentions of the Framers remains the nearest security for recovering a regime of liberty under law. However, one must remember that the Constitution contains both more and less than is visible to the naked eye". (Unintentions, 2022). Here, he seems to allow for an element of 'living originalism'.

810 #505 U.S., 833, 1992.

811 Steven Pinker makes the point that, "if everyone is ingenious in gaining prestige within their political sect by glorifying its sacred beliefs and demonizing rival sects, that may work to everyone's individual advantage but not to the advantage of the whole society in its interest in the truth and the best policies" (Q & A, 2022), that is, not for the common good of society.

society to serve the needs of the abnormal. In so doing, they have demolished the norms, disciplines, and institutions that are the best hope for the vast majority of the people".[812]

In referring to the Casey matter, distinguished legal scholar John Coughlin,[813] concluded that the judgement in the Casey issue revealed "at least two broad areas of concern regarding the anthropological foundation of the law: firstly, the relativity of all moral value; and, secondly, an incomplete account of the common good". He continues, "the notion of autonomy embedded in the Casey *dicta* lends itself to an image of the individual who is in possession of unrestricted freedom, and whose conscience constitutes its own moral legislator". Coughlin adds that therefore, "the absence of any objective moral measure makes it difficult to know what constitutes the harm". Accordingly, "all moral value is understood as contextual and relative", as is the concept of "human freedom" (2000, pp. 611-612). The situational ethics-type stance of the Supreme Court[814] is very much in accordance with post-modern relativist and eisegetical theory favoured by leftist Identity proponents. In so acting, the Court[815] validates the claim of an interbranch ideological connect between all three powers of the State in a breach of the central principle of classical liberalist political philosophy of separation of powers. Clearly, some structural reforms are required to again respect the Constitutional separation of powers doctrine and to reassert the interpretative concept of originalism (a conservative position) which law theorist Joel Alicea posits is "consistent with the natural law" (Originalism, 2022). Alicea's view is challenged by Erwin Chemerinsky in his 2022 publication, 'Worse Than Nothing'.[816] The crucial contextual concept of Constitutional originalism remains under threat through, for instance, the work of Harvard lawyer Adrian Vermeule who in his 2022 publication, 'Common Good Originalism', states that originalism "distorts the true nature of law and betrays our own legal traditions" (2022, p. 1). In a review of Vermeule's work, Princeton political scientist Matthew Franck concludes that "Vermeule's work as a whole is undone" by his "evident belief that all of our positive law is ultimately to be assimilated to what Judges believe

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812 Reno, R., Reich, 2022.

813 Simultaneously Professor of law (University of Notre Dame; St. John's Uni.; St. Bonaventure Uni.); Professor of Theology (Notre Dame) and Professor of Canon Law (Rome, Italy).

814 The fundamental principle of Constitutional interpretation is that of 'Originalism', which is the "notion that a constitutional provision should be interpreted by its meaning at the time it was adopted" (Haun, W. J., Originalism, 2022). The post-modern ideologically slanted relativist decisions which sometimes emanate from the Supreme Court in contemporary times, contradict the core requirement of Originalism. It is for this reason that scholars, such as Professor Larry Solum, add a further element to the definition of originalism, namely that Judges should be, "constrained by the meaning of those words" (McGinnis, J. Originalism, 2022).

815 Legal commentator, Aaron Sibarium, states that although a "cornerstone of the rule of law is an impartial judiciary, some judges have come to see themselves not as impartial adjudicators, but as agents of social change believing that they cannot be neutral in the midst of moral emergencies" (Legal, 2022).

816 Chemerinsky, E., 2022, 'Worse Than Nothing: The Dangerous Fallacy of Originalism'.

is reasonable in pursuit of the common good" (Constitutionalism, 2022). A sited, progressive, view can be referred to as 'living Constitutionalism' (Waluchow, Constitutionalism, 2018), and has resulted in a plethora of inconsistent and questionable juridical outcomes. Should Vermeule's contentions become the main exegetical approach, then that in itself indicates how far-removed legal theory and "legal traditions" have become from the fundamental exegetical principles of Constitutional contextualism, with its imperatives of literalism and historicism. Legal theorist, James Allen, summates the situation thus, "the choice is between being locked in by Constitution makers (however long ago they were doing that making) or by those doing the unconstrained interpreting today". He concludes, "I will side with the originalists".[817]

It is not only in the American Constitutional environment that the concept of originalism is a prime exegetical factor, for relevance of such principle is material in other Anglosphere jurisdictions. In the little-known Commonwealth member State, the Kingdom of Lesotho, a Constitutional crisis arose during August 2022 when the Council of State was called upon to advise the Monarch to adopt a path of action based on either the "linguistic text of the Constitution or the alternative pragmatic interpretation weighing political, legal, economic, and social consequences to promote the general public good".[818] In a United States Constitutional context, the latter proposal would be referred to as 'living originalism'.

Partisan support by the US Supreme Court,[819] and parliaments in other Western jurisdictions, for the secular and neo-pagan ideologies of motley activists cause societal confusion arising from the negation of Constitutional rights of those with differing convictions.[820] Central to the disorder are attempts to overthrow established cultural religious norms constituting the ethical values of society and the entrenched freedoms of all citizens. Reflecting the natural law, the Apostolic tradition sustaining society is displayed politically and legally through statutory laws and judicial decisions regulating good moral order in public affairs. Due to political, legal, and

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817 Allen, J., Age of Foolishness, Intro., 2022.

818 Ndebele, L., Lesotho, 2022.

819 During March 2022, a forthcoming vacancy on the SCOTUS bench resulted in President Biden nominating Ketanji Brown Jackson to fill that position. During the congressional hearings, Jackson was asked to define a woman. Her response was most perturbing as she replied that she did not know the answer as she was not a biologist (*cf.,* Kearns, Woman, 2022). Patently, Jackson has succumbed to Identity ideology which holds that the idea of a woman is constructed, not born. In other words, she acknowledges the right of gender self-identification, irrespective of biological sex allocated at birth. In the same vein, when asked when human life begins, she answered, "I don't know", which indicates her support for abortion. Jackson was subsequently appointed to the Supreme Court. Hence, the Supreme Court will continue to be affected by ideological juridical opinions, that is, those definitions of Identity detached from reality.

820 An extensive, January 2022, national survey of American adults reveals that, "84% say Justices should not bring their own political views into the cases they decide". The report adds that, "only 54% have a favourable view of the Supreme Court" (Pew, Public, 2022).

institutional support for secularism, the ethical roots of Western civilisation remain under threat of marginalisation until a reversion to the preceding religious, moral, and democratic ethos of society is re-established.[821] An Editorial in the Washington Examiner newspaper of 8th June, 2021 read, "The Courts must now intervene to prevent the resurrection and institutionalization of this Ideology. Failure to do so would place a national seal of approval on fashionable but loathsome racism and discrimination" (2021).[822] While the Editorial refers to the attempted institutionalisation of Critical Race Theory in society, the same directive equally applies to Critical Gender Theory and to Critical Social Justice Theory, all of which derive from the neo-Marxist dualistic concept of Critical Theory. To achieve the desired result of enforcing non-partisan Constitutional safeguards is easier said than done. The reason is that interpreters of the law, the Judges, are appointed by incumbent Administrations. Therefore, it is only a matter of time before the ultimate arbiter of Constitutional justice and fairness in the US, SCOTUS, is further influenced by, and representative of, an even more leftist administration than that of President Biden. Anticipating future internal political conflict, as has arisen in the present situation, James Madison prophetically opined in Federalist Paper #10 of 1787, concerning the proposed Constitution of the USA, that, "It is in vain to say that enlightened Statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened Statesmen will not always be at the helm". Madison adds that if the "obnoxious individuals" of society have both the "impulse and the opportunity" then, "neither morals nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control" (1787). Madison's observation was prescient for there is little that can effectively stand against a situation where the governmental authority, "actively subverts the order it governs with an attempt to frustrate rather than realize the end for the sake of which order exists". This is particularly so in a society "where its governing institutions are dominated" by an ideology which "directs individuals to live contrary to the natural law".[823]

Exacerbating the extant situation is the bias of a common ideology pervading all three branches of government hindering conservative, cultural Christian based, outcomes. The

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821 Yoram Hazony posits that "political responsibility should be based on a biblical understanding of divine authority and human action" (Esther, 2016). This connection has been lost in the pursuit of political power and unrestrained individual freedoms, particularly by progressive politicians supporting Identity ideologies.

822 While Court intervention, through a non-partisan and objective interpretation of Constitutional rights and obligations, is essential in defeating Statist ideological imperatives, political professor D. E. Burns raises the point that, "American practicality will always be the bane of intellectuals who wish to turn American political thought into ideology" (Liberal, 2019). Until a critical mass of opinion demonstrates against the enforced Identity ideologies permeating society, however, the primary recourse will continue to be through Courts of law.

823 Feser, E., Disorder, 2022.

effect of the progressive's bias is evident in the difficulty of redressing patently incorrect seminal legal judgements which have distinct ideological slants. Gene Hamilton, a prominent lawyer with a public interest law firm frequently challenging judicial decisions and coercive laws adversely interpreting Constitutional jurisprudence, makes the following observation, "Modern abortion jurisprudence exists only because Courts – including the Supreme Court of the United States – have engaged in policy-based, outcome-orientated analyses to achieve a desired result. But Courts are not super-legislatures invested with the authority to create law and invent rights" (Life, 2021). Hamilton's comments carry weight for law professor, Russell Hittinger, earlier concluded that the salient issue to be addressed is "the Court's motivational analysis which first emerged in connection to religion but now spreads to other matters of legislation informed by substantive moral purposes" (Crisis, 1996). In a similar mode, legal theorist Patrick Garry makes a piercing criticism of a populist inclined Court when he states that "for the past sixty years, the progressive left has used the Courts to enforce its vision of how society ought to look and function".[824] These are concerning claims as the Court's function is to interpret existing laws and to administer justice, not to create laws and "invent rights" in order to define public moral order.[825]

To summate, the Supreme Court of the United States made landmark judgements in the following select cases:

- Roe versus Wade in 1973, permitting non-therapeutic termination of a fetal human being on demand;
- Obergefell versus Hodges in 2015, empowering same-sex marriage and forcing all States to recognise such marriages;
- Bostock versus Clayton County in 2020, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual Identity (including homosexual and transgender identifiers) in any public sphere.

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824 Garry, P., Freedom, 2022.

825 Prof. George's remark that "laws cannot make men moral" for "only men can do that" (Moral, 1993, p. 1), and only within themselves, certainly has merit. Nonetheless, this does not dismiss the need for laws compelling acceptable behaviour, which exhibits uniform civic virtues, in the public space for the common good. Much the same as the Mosaic code defined antinomianism and subjected non-compliance therewith to sanctions, so, too, laws of the modern era define lawlessness and the penalties therefor. Whether these laws uphold public morality, especially in the private zone, or are just or unjust given variable public sentiment, is a polemic matter, but they do, in practice, have a restraining effect on certain social behaviours. Robert George's view is that, "there is nothing in principle unjust about the legal enforcement of morals or the punishment of those who commit morals offences" (Moral, 1993, p. 1). George is correct for otherwise the Creator could be accused of being unjust in the promulgation of the Mosaic code, which accusation would be an oxymoron given his divine attributes (*cf.,* Gen. 18:25).

All three matters set the standards for the secular humanist idea of a tenuous social justice. Regrettably, the SCOTUS rulings are not subject to further appeal and are rarely re-heard, resulting in a situation where only SCOTUS can overrule its previous judgements. But then again this is a complex matter due to the entrenched legal doctrine of *stare decisis* and the difficulty of first obtaining a Writ of Certiorari[826] from SCOTUS to hear the matter. With respect to Roe v. Wade, during December 2021, SCOTUS heard an appeal brought by the Attorney General of Mississippi in Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health, 19-1392, in which the issue of the legality of State prohibition of applicable Federal abortion law was adjudicated. The primary issue was "whether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional" (Howe, A., May 2021). The Court delivered judgement on the 24th June 2022, and held that "Roe and Casey must be overruled. The Constitution makes no reference to abortion and no such right is implicitly protected by any Constitutional provision".[827] When the Constitution is unclear or does not expressly address the issue at hand, the Court then inquires as to whether or not the concern under consideration – generally a right – has been "deeply rooted in the nation's history and tradition".[828] In the case of abortion, the Dobbs[829] decision makes it clear that the Court did not find that to be the case. The Dobbs appeal was a direct exegetical challenge to the legitimacy of the Court's[830] prior notions of constitutional interpretation as exercised in Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion. Reverting instead to the hermeneutical principle of originalism,[831] which the Court in Roe had ignored, the Court justified the demise of the Roe matter. Constitutional law professor, John McGinnis, observed that, "the majority of the Court was clear that the Constitution's text should ideally be understood today as the Framers would have understood it".[832] The same principle applies to interpretation of scripture, with the emphasis on the context of the narrative to determine the original meaning.

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826 Certiorari is generally "associated with the writ that the Supreme Court of the United States issues to review a lower Court's judgement. A party seeking to appeal to the Supreme Court from a lower Court decision must apply for a writ of Certiorari" (Cornell, Certiorari, 2022), as there is no right of automatic appeal direct to the Supreme Court.

827 SCOTUS, 19-1392, June 24, 2022.

828 Quinlan, M., Dobbs, 2022.

829 Law professor Michael Paulsen refers to the Dobbs decision as possibly, "the most important, magnificent, rightly decided Supreme Court case of all time" (Dobbs, 2022).

830 Roe v Wade exemplified the problem of, "unelected Judges overturning the will of popular majorities" - a situation which Yale law professor, Alexander Bickle, referred to as a, "counter-majoritarian difficulty" (Haun, W. J., Originalism, 2022).

831 A criticism of strict originalism is that the vital concept of the common good of society is ignored. However, Legal theorist Joel Alicea in a 2022 Journal article, convincingly demonstrates a close interconnectedness between natural law (in which is contained the idea of a common good) and originalism (*cf.,* Alicea, J. J., Moral Authority, 2022).

832 McGinnis, J., Republic, 2022.

Now that Federal warrant for abortion has been repudiated, the individual States are free to pass statutory regulations vis-a-vis abortion *sans* Federal imperatives. Thus, the number of States sanctioning fetal termination will diminish rapidly or at least impose severe restrictions on the practice. Such a situation had earlier occurred in Texas during August 2021 with the State passing Senate Bill #8 (becoming Law #S.B.8: the 'Heartbeat Act'), prohibiting abortion upon detection of fetal heartbeat, usually at 6 weeks gestation. The Bill was immediately challenged by pro-choice advocates, including the Biden Administration, but the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals declined to intervene thus implicitly providing its imprimatur to the Bill. The abortion lobby then appealed to SCOTUS[833] and a significant outcome was revealed on 1st September, 2021 to the effect that the Court denied the emergency relief sought by the pro-choice appellants (Editor, Choice, 2021), in a 5/4 majority decision. This result represents the first successful appeal to SCOTUS against ruling abortion laws since implementation of the Roe ruling, about 50 years ago. Texas was consequently the first State to successfully pass a law severely restricting abortion and to defeat a series of legal challenges, right up to the highest Court. The consequence was that some 50,000 fetal liquidations performed annually in Texas would be drastically reduced in favour of live births.[834] Predictably, President Biden's administration immediately issued a White House Statement condemning the Texas law while enunciating all the specious arguments used by feminists to justify terminating the life of a pre-born child (Biden, Sep. 2, 2021). The Biden Administration then instructed the Department of Justice to launch a Court motion (United States of America v. State of Texas),[835] seeking to overturn the Texas 'Heartbeat' law. On September 22, 2021, America First Legal ('AFL') who opposed the Department of Justice motion, released a statement to the effect that they will:

> *"Defend the Texas Heartbeat Act against the Biden Administration's frivolous and politically motivated lawsuit. If the Biden Administration wants to use the Department of Justice as a tool for litigating its ideological grievances, AFL will fight its efforts at every step. AFL will not relent in defense of life and democratic self-rule, and we will protect the sovereign rights of Texas citizens to protect the lives of the unborn"* (Miller, S., Biden DOJ, 2021).

Subsequently, in a decision on December 10, 2021, SCOTUS upheld the Texas "Heartbeat" legislation.[836] And on the same date, SCOTUS dismissed the Federal Government's

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833 #594, U.S, 2021, #21A24.
834 In the first month after final legitimization of the Texas 'Heartbeat' Bill, reported abortions declined by 60% (Weber, Texas, 2022).
835 Case 1:21-cv-00796-RP.
836 SCOTUS, #21-463, Dec. 10, 2021.

intervention in the matter.[837] On April 26th 2022, a final challenge by abortion providers against the Act in the US Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit was defeated when the Appeal Court "dismissed all challenges to the Texas Heartbeat Act's private enforcement provision" (2022, #21-50792). The upshot is that individual States were now empowered to pass their own legislation, emulating the successful Texas "Heartbeat" law and free of Federal interference despite the then applicability of Roe versus Wade. The genius of the Texas 'Heartbeat' law (Senate Bill #8), and that of local ordinances passed by certain individual cities such as Lubbock in Texas, is that they cannot be overruled by Federal or State laws for they are linked to city by-laws voted in by local residents, not by officials.[838] For instance, Lubbock, a city of 253,000 residents passed an ordinance that legalized the city as "a sanctuary for the unborn". According to a January 24, 2022, report in the 'Washington Times', the "pivotal success" of an ordinance prohibiting abortion within city limits is that, "it is not enforced by government, but rather authorizes private citizens to sue those who 'perform, aid or abet illegal abortions'".[839] Therefore, "By adopting this private-enforcement scheme, the city of Lubbock made its ordinance immune from typical pre-enforcement lawsuits against local government officials because neither the city nor any of its officials has any role in enforcing the law, so they cannot be subject to lawsuits that challenge the constitutionality of the ordinance". It is reported that "40 other jurisdictions" have passed such "sanctuary measures" (Richardson, 2022). The end result is that a Court injunction against enforcement of the ordinance cannot be obtained for the respondents would not be identifiable in advance. The respondents would not be the State of Texas or identifiable Local officials but, instead, be unknown citizens until after the event. Leader of the sanctuary city movement, Mark Dickson, states that, "We have said from the beginning that the abortion bans we have drafted are 'bulletproof' from Court challenge". His statement arises from the withdrawal of litigation against Lubbock by Planned Parenthood, the major US abortion provider, no doubt realizing that they had no chance of success (Richardson, 2022). Not all Western jurisdictions could enact such laws, for the peculiar nature

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837 SCOTUS, #21-588, Dec. 10, 2021.

838 In March 2022, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that "State officials lack authority to enforce the Texas Heartbeat law". The Court held that the Heartbeat law "may be enforced only through civil enforcement lawsuits filed by private citizens". The consequence is that there are no identifiable State officials who could be sued or interdicted from providing abortion, only nameless citizens who might later exercise their rights against the abortion providers. In other words, "the Heartbeat Act is not subject to pre-enforcement challenge because there are no State officials that enforce the Statute, and therefore no one for abortion providers to sue in a pre-enforcement lawsuit" (Hamilton, Ruling, 2022).

839 Despite legal sanctions against abortions after detection of fetal heartbeat, two abortion providers nevertheless facilitated abortions. Legal action has been instituted against the persons involved with this facilitation. These defendants will have no viable legal or legitimate defense against the charges (Maxwell v. Connor, Feb. 2, 2022, #22-1046-431; with further reference to Weldon v. Dave, Jan. 26, 2022, #22-01-014).

of American federalist democracy, applicable right down to local level, is somewhat unique to the USA. However, with the federal demise of the legitimacy of the Roe ruling in June 2022, the matter of abortion has been referred back to State level where the pro-life struggle against abortion continues.[840] In the result, it is now no longer necessary for States to enact convoluted circumventions to bypass Roe's Federal imperatives for that 1973 decision has been voided. Pursuant to the Dobbs decision, in August 2022, Indiana became the first State to pass direct legislation severely restricting abortion.[841] In contrast, Kansas was the first State through a popular vote to enact laws protecting the right to abortion.[842] Regardless, there is still a great need for action at a city level creating sanctuary cities for the unborn.

A disquieting feature of initial challenges to the Texas Bill restricting abortion was that a coalition of 25 Churches opposed the passing of the pro-life Bill, with 70 further Churches applying to join the pro-choice coalition. As a Reporter pithily commented, "Anyone who supports abortion already gave up on scripture" (Stonestreet, Texas, 2021). A correct summation, for denial of the inerrancy of scripture is a chief indicator of existent apostasy and a tocsin for pathological reprobatory. The assault on living, pre-born, fetal children is far from over, however, as the Biden Administration submitted legislation to Congress attempting to codify abortion rights into Federal law, thus having national import, which legislation would effectively nullify the Texas State Heartbeat Bill and any others like it. The Bill (H.R. 3755), deceptively labelled as the "Women's Health Protection Act of 2021", is, according to a September 14th, 2021 statement by the 'Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood', an "Orwellian-termed Bill that has nothing to do with 'health' or 'protection' or women, but everything to do with pushing the very limits of human depravity by codifying legalized abortion up until the second before birth" (Smothers, 2021). The Bill was passed by a majority in the House of Representatives but defeated in the Senate. Apart from one member, every Democratic Representative voted for the Bill and every Republican voted against the Bill. A remaining concern of the abortion debate is the issue of mail-order, or otherwise obtained, chemical abortion medication administered in private. Currently, "medication abortions account for more than half of American abortions".[843] This is a battle still to be fought in earnest.

A pivotal facet of exegesis, namely, a consideration of the original context of the Constitutional, made possible the overturning of the Roe matter in June 2022. Just as a literal and historical

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840 To discourage abortion, the State of Georgia passed legislation allowing tax relief to expectant mothers (Giatti, I., Georgia, 2022).
841 Rodgers, A., Indiana, 2022.
842 Kousser, T., Kansas, 2022.
843 Cook, M., Medication, 2022.

interpretative view of the scriptures results in an orthodox comprehension, so too an understanding of the Constitutional Founders' intent results in a sustainable and justifiable judgement - the issue of context and the text itself being essential exegetical practice. The 1973 Roe judgement was founded on an eisegetical view of the Constitution, ignoring the original, literal, and historical context in preference for an ideological and relativist decision.[844] As a result, many millions of fetal deaths unnecessarily occurred. With the indefatigable animosity that this issue generates, the implications for societal instability are significant, further indicating the schismatic effects of Identity Ideologies permeating Western culture.

It is in the area of same-sex marriage, due to the Obergefell[845] ruling that no clear short-term opportunity appears to exist for an overthrow, thereby perpetuating threats for the foreseeable future to the cohesiveness of the nuclear family unit and to orthodox dogma defining marriage. In July 2022, the Biden Administration introduced legislation ('Respect for Marriage Act'), attempting to codify same-sex marriage contrary to the extant 'Defense of Marriage Act' which defines marriage as between a male and a female. The Administration clearly attempts to legally entrench same-sex marriage due to concerns arising the Dobbs decision. Nonetheless, in his concurring opinion in the Dobbs matter, Justice Clarence Thomas remarked that the Supreme Court should, "reconsider all substantive due process precedents", which includes Obergefell.[846] What Judge Thomas is in fact saying is that decisions like Obergefell would not survive an exegetical process of applied Constitutional originalism, just as occurred in Dobbs.

Similarly, there seems to be no realistic prospect of vacating the Bostock decision as it is inextricable connected to Statutory law, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This civil rights law makes it unlawful for any employer to "fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual or to otherwise discriminate against any individual… because of race, colour, religion, sex or national origin" (Bostock, 2020). The broad principle emanating from this decision is that any discrimination because of sex (including claimed gender) is unlawful. Hence the meteoric rise

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844 Law professor, Peter Lawler, writes that, "no one can deny that the decisions in Roe (1973), Casey (1992), Texas (2003), and Windsor (2013) are judicial activism" (Absolutes, 2014), and so devoid of originalist contextualism, a prime requisite of Constitutional exegesis.

845 It is important to note the dissenting judgement of Chief Justice John Roberts in this matter. His dissent was supported by two other senior judges, C. Thomas and A. Scalia. Roberts' brought to attention the fact that the, "Court is not a legislature. Whether same-sex marriage is a good idea should be of no concern to us. Today, however, the Court takes the extraordinary step of ordering every State to license and recognize same-sex marriage. For those who believe in a government of laws, not of men, the majority's approach is deeply disheartening". Robert adds that the Court's interventionist approach (it might be considered '*ultra vires'* – outside its purview), makes, "a dramatic social change that much more difficult to accept" (Roberts, Hodges, 2015). Here, the Court has usurped not only the function of the legislature, but also of the will of the majority of the populace through the electoral process.

846 SCOTUS, Dobbs, 19-1392, June 24, 2022.

of institutionalised transgender rights which cause much consternation.[847] It is perturbing that these SCOTUS rulings, which fundamentally affect public order, arise out of a context promoting and ensuring State support for a secular humanist society free of all religious influences. More such irrational juridical decisions can be expected. The pivotal SCOTUS judgements in Abington School District versus Schempp[848] and Lemon versus Kurtzman[849] are what created the post-modern and post-Christian secular milieux in which the same-sex and abortion rulings were decided. Fortunately, it is due to sterling efforts by public interest legal action groups like the Alliance Defending Freedom (US), America First Legal (US), First Liberty Institute (US), Thomas More Society (US), the Human Rights Law Alliance (Australia), the Christian Institute (U.K.) and many others, that challenges are brought against legal rulings contravening Constitutional safeguards. These groups support persons and entities unable to offer legal resistance to secular activists who have significant sources of gratis legal funding to promote their agenda. As an indication, on August 24, 2021, America First Legal ("AFL"), representing the State of Texas, succeeded in the Supreme Court when the Biden Administration acted unlawfully in blocking certain Migrant laws. The lead counsel for AFL, and a paladin of applied constitutionalism, Stephen Miller, concluded as follows, "This is a tremendous victory for our laws, our Constitution and our sovereignty – all three of which are under withering assault from the Biden Administration" (2021). The fanatical leftist tribes thrive under President Biden with his incandescent support for extreme ideologies so adversely affecting society, just as they did under the previous leftist Administrations of Carter, Clinton, and Obama (all former Presidents of the Democrat political party). Doubtless, the demagogic administration of Biden is obsessed with vigorously imposing their parochial, irrational, Identity

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847 With respect to such a conundrum, Prof. George raise the issue, "does this mean that a morals law cannot possible be unjust?" He responds that a law upholding a "defective understanding of morality" (Morals, 1993, pp. 1-2), is unjust because it is immoral. This does not imply that simply because a law might prescribe morality, it is *ipso facto* or necessarily unjust. Therefore, it can validly be asserted that laws enforced and promulgated by leftist regimes, for example abortion rights, the right of same-sex marriage, transgender rights and other politically stimulated Identity laws, can, on sundry grounds, be categorized unjust and hence rejected.

848 374 U.S. 203, 1963.

849 406 U.S. 602, 1971.

and related ideologies upon society[850] and this amounts to a form of populist authoritarianism[851] albeit by a powerful political and corporate[852] cabal.[853] In this context, controversial Weimer Republic - Third Reich jurist, Carl Schmitt (1888 – 1985), in 1922 outlined the question of sovereignty, what he called the "highest power", as follows: "Sovereignty is he who decides on the exception" (Schmitt, Political, 2005, p. 5). By referring to a 'state of 'exception', Schmitt indicated "any kind of severe economic or political disturbance that requires the application of extraordinary measures" (2005, p. 5, Translators note #1). In dictating "extraordinary" ideological "measures", through the three branches of Federal government, coupled with extensive corporate and media support, it can be said that Biden's administration has arrogated unto itself a form of "sovereignty" under guise of pursuing social justice and the common good, while simultaneously compromising Constitutional rights and freedoms of the majority[854] of the citizens.

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850 Political theorist, Albert O. Hirschman, coined the term "futility thesis" to describe anticipated change in society through "purposive social action" (1991, p. 40). He concludes that, "any attempt at change will be abortive or will be cosmetic or illusory, as the deep structures of society remain wholly untouched" (1991, p. 43). Thus, "the demonstration or discovery that such action ("purposive social action") is incapably of making a dent at all, and leaves the promoters of change humiliated, demoralized, and in doubt about the meaning and true motive of their endeavours" (1991, p. 45). Such actions often have the "unanticipated consequences of human action (1991, p. 72), which can be a wide resistance by the majority populace. A further constraint affecting social action is that of confrontation with reality, for "social policies are shown to have no grip whatsoever on reality which is ruled by 'laws' that, by their very nature, cannot be affected by human action" (Hirschman, 1991, p. 75). Such a situation has emerged in the post-modern setting of Identity ideologues who distain, for example, the reality of biological sex allocated at birth. Therefore, the lifespan of such aberrancy will be limited in scope and duration, eventually amounting to an ideological "futility thesis", a futile theory. In support of this contention, reference can be made to Tyler Cowen's article in the reputable Bloomberg News Report to the effect that "Wokeism has Peaked". Cowen posits that, "Wokeism will remain a highly influential movement, and it will probably continue to spread globally, but in the USA at least, Wokeism and the woke will ebb" (Wokeism, 2022).

851 Francis Sempa refers to the actions of the Biden administration as "democracy despotism" (Despotism, 2022).

852 Harvard professor, Daniel Bell, predicted that the "impulsions of new ideologies would be economic development and national power", which ideologies would be "parochial, instrumental, and driven by political leaders" (Ideology, 1960, p. 403).

853 Professor M. Olson, acknowledging Lenin's text ('What is to be Done? 1929), states that the communist elite, "only needed to reply on a committed, self-sacrificing, and disciplined minority, rather than on the common interests of the mass of the proletariat" (1971, p. 106), to achieve their aims. The same principle equally applies to the numerically narrow Identity activists successfully polarizing society at large.

854 Olson expands on the concept of the effective dynamism of small groups, by deducing that, "small, centripetally organized groups, usually call on and use all their energies, while in large groups (like the majority of the populace), forces remain much oftener potential (for effective action)" (1971, p. 54). That is to say, the energy and determination of small groups is far more efficient in advancing an agenda than large, more apathetic, groups.

8.3 Authoritarian Ideological Statism

The present agenda of the Democratic party amounts to a "totalitarian threat to our constitutional system" (Gottfried, 2021). In their drastic agenda to appease leftist actors is the observation that "the party has become openly aggressive against its pro-life members" (Lipinski, 2021). Perturbingly, the Democrats proposed to entrench power as a one-party state through legislation such as Bills H.R. 1 and H.R. 4 which would have the effect of federalising elections to their advantage. The party has unwavering support from giant technology and social media companies who monopolize social communication and have the ability to stifle dissenting views (Gottfried, 2021). The motive of the Statist US Administration apparently appears to be one not dissimilar to the psychologically defined mental illness referred to as 'Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy' (Rand, 1993), also referred to as 'Factitious Disorder', but in a corporate sense. This disorder can be described as a situation whereby a mentally unstable caregiver (the Biden Administration), projects an illness (social injustice) onto a vulnerable person (citizens) under their custody, claiming that they need continued treatment and care under their strict supervision. These actions result in emotional and psychological harm (social turmoil) to the vulnerable person - except that in this case it is occurring at a political and institutional level with great harm to democratic, republican, liberalist political principles and to the inalienable, constitutional, rights and freedoms of individuals.[855] The repressive leftist inclinations of the Biden administration tend towards despotism, in a process of political *Gleichschaltung*[856] (thereby endorsing the veracity of Godwin's law). The process is evident in the administration's illiberalist attempts to entrench power by converting, in effect, the state into a one-party entity with all three sectors governing society endorsing a common ideology. In so doing, President Biden's administration engages in a flagrant act of interbranch accommodation, circumventing Constitutional 'checks and balances' of the separation of powers doctrine so necessary for a healthy democracy - a situation which Arnold Kling refers to as "ordered liberty" (2022). The corollary of this interbranch cohesion, supported by a

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855 In this context, Luigi Taparelli's principle of the subsidiarity of the electorate is defeated by authoritarian Statist dictates. Subsidiarity is the principle that, "decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level or closest to where they will have their effect. For example, in a local area rather than for a whole country" (Cambridge, Subsidiarity, 2022). Stated alternatively, the individual, not a State or Federal government, should be the arbiter of seminal decisions affecting the individual, through a democratic electoral process.

856 *Gleichschaltung* ("co-ordination"), can be described as, "the act, process, or policy of achieving rigid and total coordination and uniformity (as in politics, culture, communication) by forcibly repressing or eliminating independence and freedom of thought, action, or expression" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Originally applied to Adolf Hitler's Nazi Social Democrats' totalitarian control and co-ordination over all aspects of German society during the period from 1933 to the end of World War 2 (Strupp, 2013). As an indication of total control, the Nazi flag and the German national flag were identified with each other, an action not unlike Biden's directive to US Embassies worldwide to display the Rainbow flag alongside the American national flag.

significant sector of society, powerful corporates, and the vast mainstream media ecosystem, amounts to a form of utopian[857] ideological nationalism[858] - the antithesis of the ambient liberal democratic polity.

The actions of Biden's Department of Justice in pursuing the President's ideological agenda comprises a distinctly unconstitutional overlap of organs of State, namely, the Executive and Juridical, in enforcing the ideological agenda of a progressive Government. The Administration's pro-choice agenda in support of unrestrained abortion is indicative of a nefarious activism promoting extreme secular and humanist ideologies which incessantly descend upon the population like a derecho. These ideologies can be further elucidated through the following summary of a few select politicised actions constituting coercive compliance by organs of State. The actions are not only against interests of good moral order and internal stability of society, but against constitutional safeguards such as separation of powers and First Amendment freedoms:

- The partisan use of the Department of Justice ("DOJ"), Criminal Division, and FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) powers to control free speech rights of parents concerned with the rise of Critical Race Theory and other aberrant ideologies in education (Office of the Attorney General, Memorandum of Oct. 4th, 2021). Senator Ted Cruz, and other members of the US Senate's Judiciary Committee, addressed a letter to Attorney General Garland claiming that his canard "directive to the FBI runs a serious risk of conflating legitimate and meritorious protest by concerned parents with criminal conduct". Senator Cruz added that these actions are patently "intended to intimidate parents across the country into silence" (Oct. 8th, 2021);
- The appropriation of the DOJ apparatus to prevent the effectiveness of State electoral integrity laws – Biden's purpose being to entrench a one-party system in favour of the Democratic Party;
- The Attorney General, at Biden's behest, eviscerating long standing Federal Border protection laws in order to promote a policy of open borders which historically leads to more votes for the Democratic party by illegal immigrants;

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857 Mancur Olson explains that "if the benefit that would come from establishing an (ideological) utopia is infinite, it would be rational for even members of large groups to contribute voluntarily to the achievement of the group goal" (1971, p. 161, note 94).

858 Social commentator, Moeletsi Mbeki submits that "nationalism is a social and political movement that is driven by a deep sense of grievance" (2022). This is a valid point for Identity ideologues are ultimately driven by a motive of social injustice thus desiring a re-culturalization of society to reflect their idiosyncratic idea of social justice.

- The attempt by the Biden Administration to codify the Democratic party's open borders policy into national-wide Federal law through a proposed Bill.[859] The effect would be a merit-free immigration policy, "conferring permanent residence, a path to full citizenship, access to welfare, the voting booth and chain migration".[860] To which statement can be added, 'a long-term gratitude to the Democratic Party, thus ensuring countless future votes and entrenched political power';
- The vigorous enforcement of irrational Statist laws regarding transgender identifiers (predominantly biological men claiming to be women). The administration deems transgender identifiers as meeting criteria defining their opposite binary gender and so entitled to all rights and privileges relating to such gender;
- The extraordinary efforts of the Biden Administration, through federalist organs, to oppose pro-life State enactments in order to appease abortion providers and pro-choice advocates. (AFL, Oversight, 2021);
- The Biden Administration's termination of the prohibition against Federal, Title X, funding of family planning organisations that refer patients for pro-abortion advice (Foley, Title X, 2021);
- The Democratic Party's Attorney General for California, Kamala Harris, (now Vice-President to Biden) engaged in an "egregious abuse of prosecutorial power" by persecuting journalist David Daleiden who exposed abortion conglomerate Planned Parenthood's pernicious commercial trade in fetal body parts. After seizing Daleiden's evidentiary materials and bringing criminal charges against him, the Attorney General's office "illegally colluded with Abortion providers" by handing the documents over to the National Abortion Federation who instituted civil legal action against him based on the material provided by the State (Dorman, 2021). Reporter Al Perrotta graphically described the situation as follows: "Kamal Harris abused her power to protect her financial benefactors who were chopping up unborn babies and selling then parts for profit" (2021);
- The Biden Administration's extreme leftist gender manifesto issued on October 22, 2021, with application not only nationally but internationally ("all around the world"), is purposed to ensure that, "all people, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to realize their full potential". The Administration claims that this strategy is "both a moral

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859 "Procedures for Credible Fear Screening and Consideration of Asylum, With-holding of 2 Removal, and CAT Protection Claims by Asylum Officers, 86 FR 46906 (Aug. 20, 2021) (the "NPRM" or "proposed rule")".

860 Miller, NPRM, Oct. 19th, 2021.

and strategic imperative".[861] The import is, for instance, that natural born men self-identifying as women (transgenderism) are legally entitled to all the privileges, including restricted rights of access to female gender only facilities. Again, an authoritarian imposition of an ideological agenda of the executive branch fostered upon a dissenting society;[862]

- The U.S. Department of State issuing Passports "with an 'X' Gender Marker", so compelling International recognizance of the Biden epicene Gender ideology (U.S. Dept. State, Press Statement, Oct. 27, 2021);
- Biden's Democratic House Representatives proposals to "erase language that expresses the reality of familial relationships". Claiming the need for 'inclusivity' the proposal aims to exclude vocabulary such as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and such like. Biden's justification is to make transgender identifiers, who do not fit the binary categories, feel included in the public square. However, once the binary biological category is eliminated, it becomes "difficult to define or defend mothers and fathers - along with their parental rights – in legal terms" (Ells, 2021). Ergo, the question of custody and rights of children and their parents, and the integrity of the whole nuclear family, becomes most tenuous.
- Biden's nomination of a radical abortion proponent, Dr. Robert Califfs, as Commissioner of the Federal Food and Drug Administration. It is anticipated that Dr. Califfs will stimulate home-use chemical abortions through self-medication pills without medical oversight and will make "every mailbox, post office and pharmacy in America function as an abortion center" (Foley, FDA, 2021). The unfettered promotion of self-induced abortion is in disregard for the health and well-being of women in an isolated process with potentially dangerous, if not fatal, consequences;
- The machinations of President Biden in attempting to 'stack' the Federal Supreme Court Bench with like-minded ideologues is alarming. The result will be an undemocratic and tendentious integration of ideological based policies between the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government, contrary to central Constitutional principles. The three independent branches would then commonly support, promulgate, and enforce secular humanist strategies. Forbes Magazine

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861 White House, October 22, 2021.

862 Through his political policies, President Biden exhibits all the elements of moral turpitude and can therefore be considered the antithesis of a great leader. Cultural historian, Jacob Burckhardt, describes the characteristics of a great leader as an "irreplaceable human being", who is a person of "exceptional intellectual or moral power, whose activity is directed to a general aim, that is, a whole nation, a whole civilization, namely, humanity itself" (Burckhardt, Reflections, 1943, p. 272). Biden and his circle clearly lack the element of "moral power" by succumbing to populist Identity ideologies.

confirms that, “Biden is moving swiftly to appoint liberal Federal Judges to the Bench” due to pressure by “Progressive groups” (Durkee, 2021). The Judiciary Act of 2021 law proposed by the Democratic Party Chairperson of the House Judicial Committee, Jerrold Nadler, and others, would have the effect of expanding the size of the Supreme Court from the present nine Judges to a total of 13 (Calamur, 2021), with all four newcomers selected by the Biden Administration. The obvious purpose of the Bill is to ensure the Court could then “strike down almost any legal challenge to the Administration’s legislative priorities (Calamus, 2021). There is already in existence a fragile balance between so-called right-thinking Judges and progressive Judges on the SCOTUS full bench of nine persons, so pivotal decisions go either direction. Should Biden’s Administration manage to appoint new additions to the bench of this august body during his tenure, then the portent for legally countering regnant radicalism through successful Constitutional challenges appears to have a somewhat stygian quality;

- Biden’s nomination of Saule Omarova, an “unreconstructed Marxist” to be Comptroller of the Federal Reserve - in charge of the dominant US currency (McCarthy, A. C., Omarova, 2021) in the world’s leading capitalist economy;
- A Public interest group advancing protection of civil and religious liberties, Liberty Counsel Action (“LCA”), in a press release on February 3, 2022, revealed that, “Fifty-five Federal departments and agencies have created fifty-seven rule changes” to record and monitor those who seek, *inter alia,* religious exemption from dictatorial Government imperatives enacted contrary to Constitutional protection of freedoms. LCA spokesman, Matt Staver, stated that, “the Federal government has started its own database on Americans of faith and we cannot allow this to happen” (Liberty, Database, 2022);
- President Biden’s continuing reliance on partisan Executive Orders to impose ever-increasing, draconian, Identity ideologies upon the populace, thereby by-passing debate in Congress. To wit, on June 15, 2022, Biden issued an Executive Order titled, “Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex individuals”. The Order authorizes Federal bodies to take actions overriding, “State laws protecting parental rights, young children, and girls’ sports from extremist sexual identity and gender ideology”. (Hamilton, Orders, 2022).

The hegemonic[863] and Marxian agenda of the Statist[864] Biden Administration in adopting and enforcing mass Identity ideologies contrary to the approval of the majority of the populace, is clear indication of a tyrannical penchant (*cf.,* Reno's "Rainbow Reich"), characteristic of neo-Marxist, actors.[865] The Democratic Party[866] has arrogated unto itself the moral high-ground in the context of law, justice and social justice while promoting relativist morality, secularism, social and human engineering, pluralism and multiculturalism while ignoring the concept of a 'common good'.[867] [868] The Democrat's purpose, in no uncertain terms, "is to establish, in effect, a one-party state".[869] However, partisan, parochial, and ideologically slanted justice cannot be considered natural justice for the common good.[870] Such political activities are a continuing manifestation of Nimrod's humanist desire to establish his own kingdom, to be the highest authority in competition with the Creator, and follows the First Couple's aim to 'be as God', *eritus sicut Deus* (Gen. 3:5), that ancient Edenic heresy.

Demonstrably, it is in the political and legal arena that the struggle for cultural change is fought and should aberrant ideologies so adversely affecting society not be challenged at a political level - where legislation and juridical decisions ensue - then the mortification of an extant culture can follow. The renowned social theorist, Philip Rieff, deduced that, "unless a culture is defeated politically… it will reassert itself politically later if not sooner' (2006, p. 1). A fresh political tactic is needed in order to defeat or moderate a post-modern societal philosophy

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863 Ideological hegemony is a strategy firmly promoted by the Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. For Gramsci, "hegemony is both brought about and sustained by subtle manipulation of the 'popular consensus' in any given society. This is achieved by the intellectual class through that society's educational, religious, cultural, and civic institutions" (Dooley, M., Gramsci, 2022). This strategy is exactly what has transpired in contemporary Western culture and is very much in accord with Dutschke's "the long march through the institutions" (*infra*.).

864 Rod Dreher submits that, "soft totalitarianism, exploits decadent modern man's preference for personal pleasure over principles, including political liberties" (Lies, 2020, p. 10). Hence the rather contained resistance to aberrant Identity ideologies.

865 In 1952 Professor Eric Voegelin astutely anticipated the emergence of a totalitarianism which he defined as the "existential rule of Gnostic activists". The postulates of Identity ideologues are based on Gnostic concepts and can therefore be regarded as neo-Gnostics. The result, predicts Voegelin, is the "end of progressive civilization" (1952, p. 132). The authoritative Statist penchant of the Biden Administration, fully supportive of Identity ideology, actualizes Voegelin's forecast.

866 Approximately 79% of Democratic Party elected politicians are considered leftist, while less than 6% of Republican Party politicians are likewise leftist (Pew, Red v. Blue, Nov., 2021).

867 Social justice leading to a harmonious social order, and thus public good, cannot be achieved through extreme leftist ideologies. This proposition is supported by Professor Matthew Rose when he concludes that such extremism, due to its "moral vision of life", is thus "evil in principle because it destroys the foundations of social order" (Rose, World, 2021, p. 22). The 'foundations' referred to are the cultural Christian tenets underlying Western culture.

868 In the prevailing deep political schism of US politics, with the vast majority (85%) of politicians seen as leftist (Progressive), achieving a 'middle ground' solution for the common good of society appears highly unlikely (Pew, Blue v. Red, Nov. 2021).

869 Arkes, Hammer et al, Better Originalism, 2021.

870 Isaiah 59:14a., "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away, for truth has stumbled in the public squares and uprightness cannot enter".

which manifests itself through "ironic detachment, rejection of moral certainties, rebellion against cultural norms and a strategy of self-management" (Reno, Charisma, 2007). The "rebellion against cultural norms" is described by Rieff as "Deathworks", meaning, "an all-out assault upon something vital to established culture". Rieff elucidates that "Deathworks are battles in the war against second culture and are themselves tests of highest authority. Such tests…bring civil war…they intensify the permanent *kulturkampf* and lead to bloodletting" (2006, p. 7). An apt description of the existential nature of the political and social crisis over the "vital" Judeo-Christian background, the "cultural norms", in the "established culture" of Anglo-American society.

Events in the political arena invariably have consequence in the legal[871] arena where battles for Constitutional rights, social justice and moral order are fought. At any given stage, numerous legal challenges[872] are at work struggling to counter the imposition of intemperate ideologically based legislation. In the US, much success is achieved at State level but due to the Federalist dispensation, national changes can only be made upon interpretative rulings by SCOTUS. In the UK, transformation only occurs when Parliament through a majority vote, pass resolutions reinstating a semblance of moral order. Politicians and the Courts are reflective of society and it seems that solutions are to be located in the exercise by Anglo-American citizens of their democratic rights to electorally select those political candidates for the highest political offices, which in the US is the Congress (House of Representatives and Senate) and the Presidency. Furthermore, representative political candidates need to be convinced of the imperatives of orthodox Judeo-Christian values being reflected in the culture. In this manner, adverse legislative and juridical imprimatur supporting the executive branch on ideological matters can be vitiated in favour of Politicians and elected public servants holding to the Constitutional principles of a sharp separation of powers.[873] Conventional values

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871 A disturbing development is the support by sundry U.S. Bar Associations who utilize their substantial members' fees to support ideologically focused social causes. It is from this cohort that future Juridical officers are appointed or elected. The Bar Associations biased support is challenged (*cf.,* SCOTUS, 21-800/2022), by public interest legal firm, AFL, whose General Counsel Gene Hamilton, states as follows, "Powerful mandatory Bar Associations, awash in resources from compulsory Bar dues, have taken up the mantle of advocating for extreme positions that are contrary to the rule of law and American values" (Hamilton, Bar Associations, 2022). It is patent that one of the foundational pillars, the objective and value-neutral Rule of Law, of the classic liberal democratic tradition is under threat of compromise in favour of irrational populist Identity ideologies.

872 For instance, in February 2022, America First Legal ("AFL") reported that they are currently legally challenging Federal and State radical legislation in the areas of, *inter alia,* abortion, compulsory vaccine mandates contrary to religious objections, woke indoctrination of school children, and "unconstitutional rationing of free Covid-19 drugs based on race". The President of AFL, Steven Miller, states that, "There is only one way to stop the constant onslaught from the radical left: take them to Court" (AFL, Newsletter, February 2022).

873 Professor of politics, D. E. Burns, states that what is required to defeat leftist ideology is, "statesmanship, pure and simple" (Liberal, 2019). Burns is correct, right-thinking non-partisan

and moral checks in the public square would fittingly be re-established, corresponding with constitutional, humane, and rational norms. Until the emergence of true representative democracy with accountability of the executive and the enforcement of constitutional limits objectively interpreted and permitting practice and articulation of vital freedoms, the cultural conflict will continue. Denouement of the conflict does not bode well for right-thinking citizens, for it will inexorably lead to an enduring fractionising and repression of society. Stated otherwise, "unless the elected representatives of the people can compel the Court (SCOTUS) to refrain from invalidating political activity merely on the basis of the citizen's moral or religious motivation, the task of reform is blocked" (Hittinger, Crisis, 1996).[874] As is patent from the Texas "Heartbeat" matter, a possible solution is the further empowerment of individual States with authority and jurisdiction to nullify Federal laws and regulations with which they disagree. Central Federalism could thus be attenuated to a further degree, the effect of which would be to vitiate aberrant and abhorrent Federal legislation, partisan, and ideological biased Presidential Executive Orders and juridical decrees. The success of this process became evident in the Dobbs ruling, in June 2022, when authority to pass legislation regulating abortion devolved to the individual States.

8.4 The Future of Woke Ideology

Taking into account growing public resistance to the radical ideologies promoted by leftist Federal and State Administrations, as supported by the mass media ecosystem and allied with high profile, formidable corporate entities, the question to be raised is whether or not woke ideology is on the wane in Western society. At first flush it appears that Identity ideology is at its peak,[875] firmly entrenched socially, politically, legally and theologically (that is, in some ostensible Jewish and Christian institutions). The ubiquitous nature of the ideology reflects an

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politicians of the highest order, and well respected, are required to bring influence to the political arena.

874 In this regard, it is noteworthy that conservative members of SCOTUS, elected prior to the Biden Administration, bring some balance to the nine-member Bench. To exemplify, in the 2020 case of Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo (SCOTUS #592 U.S. 2020, 20A87), the import of which was that before the Roman Catholic case, "religious objectors had to follow a 'neutral law of general applicability'- meaning that religious objectors must obey the same rules that everyone else must follow. The new ruling did not technically abolish this rule but it redefined what constitutes a 'neutral law of general applicability' so narrowly that religious objectors could now prevail in Court". This case, therefore, "revolutionized the Court's approach to lawsuits where a plaintiff, who objects to a State law on religious grounds seeks an exemption from that law". In 2021, SCOTUS, in the case of Tandon v. Newson (593 U.S. 2021, 20A151), "clarified that all lower Courts are required to follow the new rule laid out in the Roman catholic Diocese case" (Millhiser, 2022), thereby reinstating, to some extent, Constitutional religious freedom rights.

875 Social commentator, Caroline Glick explains that, at present, "Progressives are re-writing American history. They are taking aim at God, believers, and at the nuclear family. There is no area of human endeavour that progressives have not politicized" (Progressive, 2022).

incredible achievement by a parochial, numerically minor, fringe group of activists. However, defiance in the public arena, legal challenges, political opposition by mainly Republican (and some Democrat) politicians, orthodox Jews, traditional Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox adherents, dedicated Protestants and right-thinking, conservative, individuals generally, is becoming more vociferous.[876]

A February 2022 article by economics professor, Tyler Cowen, in the Bloomberg News report, acknowledged some positive achievements of Identity politics through the "raising awareness of racism and social injustice in society" (Cowen, Peaked, 2022). Still, Cowen makes prescient observations pertinent to the diminution of Identity ideology's influence in society, as follows:

- In February 2022, the School Board election in the far-left city of San Francisco, California, resulted in three members of the Board being "recalled by a margin of more than 70%". The reason being that the electorate, the parents, decried the renaming of some schools "in a more politically correct manner, rather than focusing on reopening all the schools". Strong objection was also made to the Board's "introduction of a lottery admissions system for a prestigious high school, in lieu of the previous use of grades and exam scores";
- In the traditionally progressive (Democratic) State of Virginia, in 2021, the electorate appointed a Republican Governor, a Republican dominated House of Representatives, and a Republican Attorney-General. The electorate particularly expressed their opposition to the teaching of Critical Race Theory, an iteration of Identity politics, in schools. They likewise objected to Covid-19 mask requirements;
- Tyler Cowen brings attention to the issue of Joe Rogan, a 'Spotify'[877] icon. Despite his strident denunciations of woke ideology, the "fact that he has not been 'cancelled' ('de-platformed'), is another sign that the power of the woke has peaked" (Peaked, 2022).[878]

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876 During March 2022, AFL filed an "Amicus Brief" was filed with SCOTUS in support of a school football coach, Joseph Kennedy, who was fired from his position by the Bremerton School District for silently praying after matches on the field, in the State of Washington (Kennedy v Bremerton, #21-418, SCOTUS). The Court action was successful. The 'silent majority' is rising up to defend their rights and freedoms, especially that of religion.

877 Spotify is a leading music streaming service with over 400 million monthly users.

878 Social commentator Charles Cooke points out that the Democratic Party, the primary promotor of Identity politics world-wide, is acting against the interests of the majority of citizens. He states, "almost the entirety of the American press, academia, and entertainment industry have spent the last five years assiduously adopting race and gender essentialist ideology that pretty much everyone outside of those institutions absolutely loathes. The Democratic party has followed suit". The consequence, according to Cooke, is that "these bizarre ideas are met with confusion and horror once released into the general population". Cooke concludes that slowly, "the wagon (of

In an earlier (June, 2021) Bloomberg News article by Professor Cowen on the same topic, he questioned the veracity of 'Conquest's Second law of Politics'[879] which proclaims that "any organization not explicitly and constitutionally right-wing will sooner or later become left-wing". He points out that the "left's approach is easier to incorporate into mission statements, company slogans, and corporate human-resources policies" than "explicit right-wing views". Yet his does not diminish the fact that "societies are more right-wing than they appear" and, therefore, "all that left-wing talk does not have to result in an entirely left-wing society". Cowen concludes that "numerous U.S. institutions have maintained or even extended a right-wing stance" but the left is "simply more prominent in mass media, so Conquest's Second law appears to be truer than it really is" (America, 2021). And during June 2022, a significant victory for realism, fairness, and the traditional political order was achieved when FINA[880] - the International Aquatics Federation – ruled by a majority of 71% that, "transwomen who had experienced male puberty (after the age of 12 years) were ineligible to swim against biological women in FINA competition or set FINA world records" (FINA, June 2022; *cf.,* Hayton, 2022).

In neighbouring Canada, wide-spread 2022 protests against Premier Trudeau's authoritarian radical leftist policies took place. Initiated by a 'Trucker's protest' consisting of kilometres' long truck convoys into the capital city, protests developed into a mass resistance indicating a growing disenchantment of the State's radical policies. The trucker protest was:

> *"justified at a time of needless Covid repression; the abrogation of Charter freedoms and customary civil liberties; an unending series of draconian, job-killing government mandates; the incommensurable level of officially-sanctioned violence; the retroactive financial reprisals against an innocent donor group of law-abiding citizens; and the behaviour of a despotic Prime Minister who has desecrated the station of his office and wilfully blurred the distinction between political dissent and terrorist activities"* (Solway, Requiem, 2022).

The situation exacerbated into an international furore with the truckers blocking entry routes from Canada into the USA and the reverse. Prime Minister Trudeau "blames Americans for the civil unrest causing gridlock along the US – Canada border and in Canada's capitol city of Ottawa". Trudeau complained about the "American and indeed global influences on the

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Identity politics) to which the Democrats have hitched themselves is becoming a suicide machine" (Democrats, 2022).

879 Professor Vogel posited three laws of politics. The first law is: "Everyone is conservative about what he knows best". Second law: "Any organization not explicitly and constitutionally right-wing will sooner or later become left-wing". Third law: "The behaviour of any bureaucratic organization can best be understood by assuming that it is controlled by a secret cabal of its enemies" (Conquest, 2018).

880 FINA: *Fédération internationale de natation* - International Swimming Federation.

protest" (Pearce, T., Trudeau, 2022). During February 2022 similar protests took place in Canberra, Australia's capitol city with thousands of protestors demonstrating against the country's leftist over-reactions in relation to Covid-19.

The Biden Administration debated whether or not to declare countries like Finland, the U.K. and Sweden, "human rights abusers". The reason? These countries refuse to enforce drastic prohibitions on "conversion therapy" which might have the effect of dissuading individuals to proceed with gender transition. And further, Sweden has "banned gender surgeries for minors"[881] with other countries following suit. These protests are symptomatic[882] of something deeper, and encompass resistance to all of the leftist policies fostered upon an unwilling majority populace. Leftist politicians clearly overlook the fact that they are elected to serve the people, to do their bidding as it were. In countries like the USA, Canada, Australian, New Zealand and in Europe, the politicians exercise powers not allocated to them constitutionally, nor by the majority of the electorate. It is only a matter of time before such progressive politicians get elected out of office due to their despotic actions and for "reacting to protestors with such contempt" (Miller, S., Fascism, 2022).

Prominent Harvard professor Niall Ferguson, lamenting the endemic radical ideologies permeating tertiary education, avowed to "Help start a new college because Higher education is broken". He claims that "Institutions dedicated to the search for truth have ossified into havens of liberal intolerance and administrative overreach" (Broken, 2022). Ferguson and his partners have launched a totally new education institution, the University of Austin. Additionally, organizations like the 'Heterodox Academy', a 5,300 strong collection of right-thinking academics and intellectuals opposed to the radical leftism of tertiary colleges, have emerged with a stated purpose to positively influence education. All members endorse the following statement, contrasting their stance with ideologically slanted, parochial, academic institutions, "I support open enquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in research and education" (Heterodox, 2021). This commitment is necessary as a 2020 survey indicated that 62% of students "agreed that the climate on their campus prevented them from saying things they believed in" (Heterodox, 2020). Ergo, far from being under-represented in education, right-thinking students and educationalists are increasingly revealing themselves, with names of Heterodox Academy members, for example, publicly identifiable on the website. As the situation currently stands, and using the prestigious Harvard University as an example,

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881 Sapir, L., Exporter, 2022.

882 Victor Davis Hanson perceives that the protests "have now become iconic of far larger issues" for the truckers' resistance to compulsory vaccination requirements, indicates that this issue may be the "proverbial straw that breaks the back of a once compliant citizenry" (Storm, 2022).

a 2020 survey revealed that among academics at such institution, “very liberal and liberal” professors constitute 80%” of staff while conservative professors amount to some 20%”.[883] It is the constitutional right of free speech that is most vulnerable to the ‘cancel culture’ phenomenon so adversely affecting tertiary education. Amongst the most prominent culprits are students and intimidated academia of the so-called “ivy league” universities. In a mould-breaking October 2022 article in the ‘Texas Review of Law and Politics’ by Federal 5th Circuit High Court Judge James C. Ho, the Judge declared his boycott of hiring Law Clerks from Yale University Law School. Judge Ho’s concluding words need repeating:

“Any school that refuses to stand up against ‘cancel culture’ – and instead caters to it, and even engages in it – is not a school that is interested in educational diversity. And it is not a school I want to have anything to do with. I hope others will join me. But I will not live by the lie”.[884]

At least 13 Federal Judges and one 11th Circuit Appellate Judge have undertaken on record to support Judge Ho’s position.[885]

In some quarters, gender-critical feminist resistance is discernible against the ascendent power of transgender theory, with conventional feminists claiming that all the historic social gains for women have been lost to biological men irrationally identifying as women. During February 2022, author Hadley Freeman stated that “debates about (trans)gender rights are also debates about women’s rights, because activists are asking, essentially, for the abolition of women’s (biological) sex-based rights”. She adds that there is therefore, “a clear clash between gender-based rights and women’s rights” (2022). The clash will become even more exacerbated as the transgender minority attempt to capture the media narrative on gender, to the exclusion of feminists generally. Freeman (‘UK Columnist of the Year’), addressed this issue in April 2022, when she pronounced that an end is upon the widespread endorsement of transgender athletes participating in sports events restricted to the opposite sex. Freeman concludes:

> *“In the end, it wasn’t one person who pointed out that gender extremism wears no clothes. There were so many: therapists, academics, parents, authors, athletes, politicians, barristers, journalists, scientists, feminists, gay activists, all shouting over*

883 Bikales, Harvard, 2022.
884 Ho, J. C., Cancel Culture, 2022, p. 24.
885 Shapiro I., Boycott, 2022.

the years that this ideology would hurt women, children, gay people and trans people. And this was the week that the spell began to break" (2022).

In August 2022, Tavistock Clinic, the primary sponsor of transgenderism and the only gender clinic in the U.K., was forced to close by independent Reviewer, Dr. Hilary Cass. During her investigation into "transgender medicine for children', she acknowledged that the protocols were not "a safe or viable long-term solution" for children. A few months later it was reported that some 1,000 families, on behalf of their children, were entering litigation against the Clinic, claiming medical negligence.[886] Similar complications beset gender clinics in "Sweden, Finland and France".[887]

Tyler Cowen predicts that, "Wokeism is likely to evolve into a sub-culture that is highly educated, highly white and feminine" and will probably not "vanish from public life". The ideology will become even more entrenched in American universities while being "even more out of touch with mainstream America" (2022). Support for this prediction is found in the statement by Victor Davis Hansen who says, for instance, that, "Canada is now governed by absurdism and is symptomatic of an ailing Western elite" (Storm, 2022), that is, the elite[888] political cabal imposing aberrant Identity ideologies on an unwilling populace. Resistance against the leftist ideologies devastating Western cultures is increasing internally and externally for diverse reasons. A factor to be noted is that the obsessive focus of the Biden Administration on internal Identity ideologies and issues such as climate change and unrestricted migration, and the concomitant neglect of geo-political concerns has resulted in the attenuation of the U.S. military capabilities and resolve. The shambolic disengagement of U.S. military from Afghanistan in 2021 is a case in point. The military power vacuum has not gone unnoticed by pretenders Russia, China, and Iran. One war commentator opined that "there is no better time for Russia to attack (Ukraine), while Europe is weak and the Americans are distracted" by an internal ideological struggle (Roussinos, 2022). Russia proceeded to invade Ukraine in early 2022. Putin himself said that "prosperous leading powers have other pressing social problems, challenges and risks in ample supply, and many among them are no longer interested in fighting for influence since, as they say, they already have enough on their plates" (2021). This statement highlights the West's attitude in focusing on internal social issues while neglecting to protect its civilization, with its liberal democratic political culture, against external threatening factors which have now emerged on the global stage in

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886 Berrien, H., Gender Clinic, 2022.

887 Cook, M., Castle, 2022.

888 Carl Trueman elaborates that the elites, those of the "political, educational, cultural and business" contingent, have "all decided both to repudiate the past and press home the pathologies of the modern, expressive, sexual self, with all the power available to them" (Plastic, 2022).

the form of Russia and China. To predict a *Götterdämmerung*[889] of Biden's progressive and repressive regime is perhaps premature, but attenuation and resistance is certainly occurring at all levels. Russell Reno opines on the situation: "We are not about to see Harvard renounce progressive dogmas. But the wind is blowing in new directions. To the dismay of today's liberal establishment… a creative minority is turning to the right".[890]

Chief U.K. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks refers to the present uncertainty plaguing Western society, "something new is taking shape but we do not know precise what".[891] To close, the emotive words of poet Matthew Arnold can similarly be applied to the complexity, hopelessness and insecurity affecting society in the post-Christian era:

"Wandering between two worlds,
One dead, the other powerless to be born".[892]

8.5 The Mission of the Church

The Christian Church is God's vehicle on earth being charged to "make Disciples of all men" (Matt. 28:19), and which disciples would, in turn, exhibit and promote principles and values, in accordance with canonical imperatives, throughout society. It is incumbent upon devout followers of the Redeemer-Messiah to lead to discipleship, in terms of their Kingdom mandate, sufficient members of society so as to enable them to make representations to their Politicians and thereby ensuring just and equitable laws.[893] There exists no feasible alternative for, as the coeval situation exhibits, secular society through Identity politics has significantly influenced the Church[894] and Synagogue to its detriment.[895]. The mandate to bring hope to society is percipient in the Book of Esther when Mordecai encourages Esther with the words, "And who

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889 *Götterdämmerung* – the complete downfall of a political regime.
890 Reno, R., Harm, 2022.
891 Sacks, J. Creative, 2014.
892 Arnold, M., Stanzas, 1852
893 Political theorist D. E. Burns sums up the strategy as follows, "One of the remarkable signs of hope for American liberalism" is a "growing number of charter and religious schools throughout the country (who) are rediscovering this indispensable civic mission" (Liberal, 2019), namely, to influence society through propagation of Judeo-Christian principles. Cultural influence commences at 'grass roots' level of society.
894 Carl Trueman, pointedly summarises the situation as follows, "moral relevance in the modern world is a cruel and fickle mistress. However much Christians accommodate themselves to her demands, sooner or later she will want more. Christian morality and the morality of the world simply cannot be reconciled in the long term" (Fate, 2022). The sooner the Church realizes that there is no compromising God's word for the sake of an ideologically defined social justice, the better (Matt. 10:34).
895 The Church is a *sui generis* species, a sacred entity, quite unlike any other on earth. Consequently, the Church should not reflect any political polity whether to the left, centre or right, for it is a spiritual body with a supernatural and theistic, not secular, constitution (Matt. 22:22; Jn. 18:36).

knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:4). Wanting nothing of Caesar's kingdom (Matt. 22:22) but, instead, striving to fulfill the commands concerning the Redeemer-Messiah's kingdom, Christians are called to bring 'light' to all facets of society (Matt. 5:14-16). This entails living an authentic Christian life while influencing the political arena which itself then leads to laws affecting and reflecting the values of society. The perceptive words of Yoram Hazony, President of the Herzl Institute in Jerusalem, state "we need to recover the biblical view of human action in public affairs if we are to restore a culture of political responsibility" (2016). Immanuel Kant's view of the essential interconnectedness between politics and morality highlights the necessity of a Judeo-Christian influence on the political landscape. Kant perceived that "true politics can never take a step without homage to morality" (1957, p. 128). Kant elaborated that, consequently, "everything evil that stands in the way (of peace) derives from the fact that the political moralist begins where the moral politician would correctly leave off…" (1957, p. 124). Kant is correct, for a politically engineered morality can only amount to a secularised amoral fiction with an inability to provide moral transformation of society. This is evident from the ideological machinations of the Biden regime, resulting not only in an absence of peace but, instead, an environment of cultural and moral turmoil.[896]

Families are the basis of society and they are at the forefront of the leftist attack in the areas of race, sex-gender, abortion, fatherhood, pornography, and many other similar challenges. Disciples of Christ can influence[897] the politics and ethical articulations of society by starting at 'grass roots' level so that the local politicians and representatives in Congress can modify insidious laws through a continuum process. In this respect, similarity can be found with the proposals of Petrarch in the 14th century urging Christian scholars to familiarise themselves with secular literature and philosophy in order to influence society for the common good. The result of such strategy was the spread of "virtue and eloquence among the future leaders[898] of society" (Hankins 2021). The principal function of the Church is, through the supremacy of the Redeemer-Messiah, to create a new and alternative culture, a counter-culture, distinct from

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896 Christopher Dawson (1899 - 1970), perceives the devastating consequences of the demise of verifiable, non-relativist, "moral authority" in contemporary Western society as follows: "our generation has been forced to realize how fragile are the barriers that separate civilization from forces of destruction. Barbarism… is an ugly underlying reality which may erupt with shattering force whenever the moral authority of a civilization loses its control" (Religion, 1991, p. 24).

897 Legal scholar William Haun proposes that the issue of religious liberty is paramount for the common good of society. The pivotal benefit, he says, that "religious liberty provides to self-government is limiting state power by orienting the public square towards transcendent, enduring moral truths" (2020).

898 In a similar context, professor George Panichas perceives that, "leadership that succumbs to the absence of norms, in effect admits to a failure of nerve, the result of which is everywhere in evidence as sham leaders come to fill the void" (Leadership, 2022).

the prevailing secular culture through the work and power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the Divine's protological intent. The result of cultural Christian influence in politics can be seen in a microcosmic sense through the defence of customary values by lawmakers in many US States passing legislation in resistance to Federal legislation. For example, teaching of Critical Race Theory ideology is prohibited in the public education system in certain States due to pressure on School Boards from irate parents. In 20 States to June, 2021, legislation has been proposed or passed to eliminate CRT ideology on the basis that it is racist, unconstitutional, anti-American, divisive and against principles of fairness. The underlying reason for Legislators proposing or passing such laws is the direct result of right-thinking citizens, comprising religious factions in the main, encouraging their elected representatives to enact such legislation (Ruiz, 2021). President Abraham Lincoln forcefully stated:

> *"With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces judicial decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed"* (Lincoln, 1858).

It remains incumbent, as always, on convinced Christians, to influence society for the purpose of enjoying religious and other freedoms so necessary for the propagation of the Gospel. In June 2021, a poll by Rasmussen Reports ascertained that roughly "82% of Americans say religious freedom[899] is key to a healthy society" (Gryboski, 2021). Assuming the accuracy of the poll, there is yet opportunity for right-thinking citizens to successfully resist progressive attempts to restructure society into one of their own penchant, quite contrary to the established doctrines upon which the culture of society is built. Hittinger points out that if the "new constitutional order is (not) profoundly reformed, citizens of rightly formed conscience will find themselves in a crisis" (1996). Needless to say, the aforegoing position in no way supports the ideology of integralism which proposes a dominant religious flavour to a national identity, thereby integrating political power with religious authority.[900] Integralism inevitably leads to a compromise of the traditional Western liberal principle of separation of Church and State.[901] Still, without imparting religious authoritarianism through a form of integralism, it remains essential for the common good of society to be founded upon Judeo-Christian precepts, themselves derived from the natural law order.

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899 In John Witte's view, religious freedom is "regarded as the cornerstone in the edifice of human rights" of the Western tradition (2022, Liberty, p. 7).

900 *Cf.,* Waldstein, E., What is Integralism Today? 2018.

901 The issue of separation is in practice, a "delicate balance…which has troubled mankind for centuries" (Abram, M., Separation, 2022).

In the manner of prophets of old, like his ancestor Jeremiah, the stark warning of prominent Jerusalem-based, Israeli-Jewish philosopher Yorum Harzony, is appropriate here:

"It used to be that the public religion of America was Christianity. If America is going to change, it is going to change because you decided that Christianity is going to be restored as the public culture of the United States. Hope lies in the tens of millions of Bible-believing Christians in this country (i.e., U.S.A.) who have the ability to teach America to repent. They have the ability to teach these basic ideas to America again. And, while the U.S. is at the very end of what decadence can sustain…it will be God who decides whether our nation is destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah in sacred scripture or spared due to repentance, as was Nineveh in the book of Jonah".[902]

The invocation of the Divine's assurance in 2 Chronicles 7:14-20 comes to mind: "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land".

Despite attempts by leading social and political theorists, like Thomas Sowell ('A Conflict of Visions', 2007), Steven Pinker ('The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature', 2002), George Lakoff ('Moral Politics', 1996) and others to explain the 'Ideological Origins of Political Struggles' (the sub-heading to Sowell's book), the rise of the current social conflagration cannot fully be understood in secular terms.[903] The reason is that the underlying cause is a spiritual[904] antinomianism derived from the adoption of secular humanist ideologies originating in the Garden through the First Couple's declaration of independence from their Creator, coupled to the ongoing search thereafter for fresh Identity and meaning. Contrasted with a multifaceted orthodox religion, an ideology bereft of rationality and moral equivalency appeals to leftists for it "offers an easy way out of the messy reality that is Christianity. It offers the comfort of a single idea that rules everything. This idea is a god that looks good but it is a false god". In a like way those, "who do not belong to the ideology or dare to criticize the group must

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902 Harzony, Y., Address to National Conservative Conference, USA., September, 2022.

903 Professor Joshua Mitchell, declares that, "Only by seeing the distorted pseudo-Christian roots of Identity politics can the defenders of tradition – and of justice tempered and supplemented by mercy – truly take up the challenge of our time" (Identity, 2019). Mitchell is referring to the challenge of overcoming a deviant ideology displacing existent Western culture and the classic liberal democratic political tradition, in which it thrives.

904 Social theorist R. R. Reno declares that the "woke revolution, like so many modern revolutions, manifests a spiritual disease and, since this is so, our deepest resistance must be spiritual" (Gnostic, 2021). The spiritual crisis facing the Church amounts to what Prof. Eric Voegelin refers to as, "a crisis of Western civilization", for Judeo-Christian precepts underpin such civilization (1952, p. 51). Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Church to resist the spiritual forces assailing the Church and preserve present society.

be targeted, bullied, vilified and excluded" resulting in the "enforced implementation of the good idea" (Longenecker, D., 2021). Such is the orthodoxy and orthopraxis of contemporary ideologues. The greatest challenge to freedom of religion is the State[905] for it presumes to "embody public life" but in fact, "poses (a danger) to religion" for it irrationally allows a situation to exist whereby, "the American people can no longer publicly express their obligations to the Creator". As a result, says Richard Neuhaus, "it is to be feared that they will no longer acknowledge their obligations to one another – nor to the Constitution in which the obligations of freedom are enshrined" (1992).

Nonetheless, the authentic Church of the Redeemer-Messiah should remain confident that "the romantic realism of our faith can overcome the Equality Act and other assaults on families, sanity and culture" (Arrington, 2021). "Romantic realism" is indeed a fitting description of the Christian faith, for it exhibits the required triumvirate of faith-love-hope (*cf.,* 1 Cor. 13:13), in the salvific purposes of the Messiah of Israel. Even so, the Church could rightly be criticised as being complacent, poltroonery even, and seemingly immobilized by the pernicious influence of secular humanism, powered by esotericism in the post-modern and post-Christian cynicistic context. By its very mandate, a characteristic of the Church is its transcendent outlook but, simultaneously therewith it becomes imperative for the Church to adopt a practical approach – and approach which Reinhold Niebuhr at times of mortal conflict, described as 'political realism' (Immoral Society, 1932, p. 275). This is not the time for the Church to remain anodyne, but instead to exhibit fortitude as there are grave issues at stake for humankind. The nefarious ideological assaults upon individual[906] Identity, fatherhood, motherhood, the nuclear family and society as a whole, amounts to nothing less than an attempted menticide of personal ontological status derived only from Judeo-Christian precepts. Existentially speaking, the Church cannot compromise[907] its Apostolic tradition in favour of 'seeker friendly' and attenuated Christian fashions[908] such as evolutionary Christianity and moralistic therapeutic

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905 Cognizance should be made here of Professor Darel E. Paul's comment that, "True freedom is not freedom from government but freedom from all that enslaves body and spirit" (Prohibition, 2022). However, the combination of Statist support for Identity ideologies which not only deny intrinsic freedoms but which also "enslave body and soul", creates a critical threat to both the ontological status of individuals and the 'common good' of Western society itself.

906 Individual Identity emanates from the Fatherhood of God concept, with the nobility, dignity, sacredness and transcendence of all persons imbued in the Edenic Garden (Gen. 1:26-7).

907 Rod Dreher summates the apostate Christian position as follows: "Christian talk about 'reaching the culture' without realizing that, having no distinct Christian culture of their own, they have been co-opted by the secular culture they wish to evangelize" (Benedict, 2017, p. 102).

908 Progressive, liberal, and other theologically compromised Christians, establish their Identity and ontological position through "political values relating to social justice issues" (Yancey, 2021, pp. 4). On the other hand, conservative Christians - those adhering to orthodox doctrine - remain rooted for their Identity in the core dogma of *imago Dei*, emanating from the Fatherhood of God Identity (Yancey, 2021, pp. 3-6).

deism in order to appease the culturally secular majority of society. Pastor Shane Idleman perceives that "when pastors lack boldness, it affects all areas of preaching for, as a result, the 'gospel' they preach is often a watered-down, non-offending, powerless message", quite unsuitable for leading others to the "difficult truths of salvation". In this regard, the haunting words of T. S. Eliot come to mind,

> *"We are the hollow men*
> *We are the stuffed men*
> *Leaning together*
> *Headpiece filled with straw…".*[909]

The consequence of "hollow men" finds forlorn expression in Eliot's conclusion when he writes that, "the wind shall say, 'Here were decent godless people'".[910] Moses' encouragement to Joshua prior to entering the promised land remains relatable for Christian leaders today, "Be strong and courageous" (Deut. 31:7). All Christian leaders have a duty to execute their divine task boldly and need to embrace that role, unlike the cowardly General Barak in Judges 5 who demurred at his appointed task. Boldness is crucial for, as Shane Idleman asserts, "Only the pulpits have the power to change America".[911] This statement needs a caveat for it is, rather, the spiritual power and sovereign salvific purposes of the risen Lord that can "change America", and the world, through his willing Church proclaiming his gospel.

Undoubtedly the *bête noire* of Christianity as of all major monotheistic religions, is the rampant corruption of a secular culture. Cultural theorist Mary Eberstadt claims that "the religious divide of our time is between those who think they can compromise with the sexual revolution without compromising their faith" (2022), and those who remain steadfast to Judeo-Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Compromise with Identitarianism inescapably results in both institutional and moral failures, as has been revealed in Chapter 6.4.3. An apathetic[912] and vapid Church is liable to lose its credibility in society for despite the heretical origins of secular humanism and the reiteration thereof through many millennia, the Church has regularly understood this enduring heresy as an ephemeral phenomenon. Like many other heresies from time to time, it was perhaps hoped that it would

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909 Eliot, T. S., Hollow Men, 1925.
910 Eliot, T. S., Choruses from the Rock, 1934, Part 1., p. 30.
911 Idleman, S., Power, 2022.
912 In his study of group dynamics, Princeton political scientist, Mancur Olson, points out that, "Liberalism (and Marxism) makes the rationalist assumption that men, given the opportunity, will naturally come to political consciousness of interests, of self or of class". He concludes, however, that this view is incorrect as, "the error that people will be utilitarian and rationalistic enough to engage in class action is proven by the widespread political apathy" (1971, p. 105).

fade away. Unfortunately, history reveals the ongoing presence and ever-increasing potency of both secularism and paganism. In a persuasive study titled, 'Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times,' the authors Van Den Broek and Hanegraaf orate that:

> *"one openly fights an enemy only as long as one fears that they still might win. In this respect as well, history seems to repeat itself. Like the Christian Church before it, modern rationalism, once safely consolidated, could afford itself the luxury of exchanging active combat for a more comfortable solution: silence. Believing in the inevitable progress of human rationality, esotericism could simply be ignored in the confident expectation that still surviving remnants would eventually wither and die by itself"* (1998, p. ix).

The authors go on to say, "we witness a new interest in historical alternatives to the dominant components of Western culture. It is only natural that the study of Gnosis and hermeticism profits from this widespread reorientation" (1998, p. ix). The "dominant components" referred to constitute orthodox monotheistic religion, particularly Judeo-Christianity. The "historical alternatives", on the other hand, are Greek-Enlightenment rationality (1998, p. viii), intersecting with ancient Hellenist Gnosticism to become the dominant underlying spiritual structure behind the rise of humanism and pagan eclectic spirituality in variegated iterations. Yet, it is not possible to escape the obvious seminal influence that Judeo-Christian values and norms have had on society. So much so that even certain prominent atheists and agnostics are mourning the expiration of such influence especially in the areas of ethics, absolute truths, order and uniform morality.[913] They desire a return to the constancy of age-old norms. Scottish philosopher Niall Ferguson who refers to religion as "magical thinking", lamented that atheism does not have, "an evolved ethical system" and goes on to say that "evolution alone does not get us to be moral". His solution is to "adopt the inherited wisdom of a two-millennia old religion". In Ferguson's view, society cannot be based on atheism for it is "a very dangerous metaphysical framework" (2021; *cf*., Van Maren, 2021). Plainly Ferguson is correct for secularism, in its form of practical atheism, does not have a rational moral philosophy or eternal truths and nor do any humanist ideologies. Instead, in secularist environments truth is culturally constructed and varies according to prevailing popular ideology. In any event materialism cannot give valid advent to any form of coherent non-materialist principles, particularly a defined, rationally construed and ethically valid concept of uniform morality acceptable in a human society. Consequently, there is no other explanation for the existence of morality other than the primacy of a natural law emanating from the Divine (*cf.,* Rom. 2:15).

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913 Nicholas Babich claims that the present era is becoming "more and more reminiscent of the world before the Gospel" (Modern, 2022).

On the question of the natural law, C. S. Lewis propounds that it is not "one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgements. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained. There never has been and never will be a radically new judgement of value in the history of the world". Lewis adds that all ideologies consist of elements of the natural law but which have been, "arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation" (1953, pp. 28-29). Phrased another way, truth cannot be categorized as truth unless it is of a transcendent character. Ergo, truth cannot be socially constructed or relativistic, plastic or sited. And so purported morality has to be validated through a deconstruction of the natural law precepts, emphasizing instead reframed humanist values suited only to idiosyncratic hypotheses, without coherence, as adopted by Identity actors.

UK intellectual, Douglas Murray, describes himself as an, "uncomfortable agnostic who recognises the virtues and values the Christian faith has brought". Murray criticises the organised denominational Churches by averring that:

> *"the Church is not doing what so many of us on the outside want it to do, which is preaching the Gospel, asserting its truths and its claims. When one sees it falling into all the latest tropes, one thinks 'well, that's another thing gone just like absolutely everything else in the era.' I am a disappointed non-adherent"* (2021).

A sorry view of the Christian Church, ironically from an agnostic viewpoint. In the USA, Charles Murray, in like manner believes that "the American republic is unlikely to survive without a resurgence of Christianity" (2021). Naturally Murray is referring to ethical parameters relating to the 'common good', itself the public virtue attendant upon the articulation of Judeo-Christian norms derived from the natural law tradition (*cf.,* Rom. 2:15), redacted in the Mosaic code and the law of Christ (*cf.,* Gal. 6:2).

It appears that in this post-modern, New Age era within the 'Age of Aquarius', the institutionalised Church has substantially lost the 'battle of ideas' for the time being. The intensifying secularisation of society, the rise of pluralistic and syncretistic pagan,[914]

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[914] Philosopher René Girard ((1923 – 2015), states that, "at the heart of European (ideological) conflicts, the world's future would depend on the face-off between the Passion and archaic religion, between Christ and the Greeks" (2010, Battling, p. xxii). Girard is perceptive, for the ancient Hellenistic heresy of Plato's Gnosticism underlies not only the negation of *imago Dei,* the advent of secular humanism, practical atheism, and sundry paganist practices, but manifests in the contemporary Identity crisis in Anglo-American culture. In the finale, the "face-off" is between the legitimacy of the risen Redeemer-Messiah and heretical antinomians led by the antichrist and his sycophants, as related in Revelation 19 - 22.

spiritualised, non-religious systems and veneration of the sacred, inner-self[915] now dominating the narrative in the public square. It is clear that Western society has, by and large, abandoned the desire to be identified in any way with an institutionalised, denominational, and formal Church, the passing of which has been long visible.[916] The vigorous advent of an increasingly secular culture was presciently illustrated by René Guénon (1886 - 1951), considered "one of the twentieth century's most important traditionalist thinkers" (Rose, 2022). In his 1927 text, 'The Crisis of the Modern World', Guénon determined that:

> *"Men no longer recognise any effective authority in the spiritual order or any legitimate power in the temporal. The 'profane' presume to discuss what is sacred, and to contest its character and even its existence. The inferior judges the superior, ignorance sets bounds to wisdom, error prevails over truth, the human supersedes the divine, earth overtops heaven, and the individual sets the measure for all things and claims to dictate to the universe, laws drawn entirely from his own relative and fallible reason"* (Guénon, Crisis, 1942, p. 99).

Despite the contracting influence of the established Western Church, influencing new generations[917] of unbelievers[918] should continue unabated for the Church has up to now mainly been relying on the comfortable momentum of institutionalized Christendom to influence society. Come what may, hope always remains for not only will the Messiah build his Church according to his insuperable providence, but he has demonstrated the indestructability of his soteriological agenda contrary to all the deterring forces of evil,[919] through the victory achieved by his bodily resurrection. G. K. Chesterton pointed out that, "Christianity has died many times

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915 Yale psychiatry professor Jeffrey Satinover refers to the post-modern era as the "era of the psychological man" which he explains as the era, "psychology – in one of its various incarnations of psychoanalysis and psychiatry included – has become the primary means whereby we try to understand the meaning and purpose of our existence" (Meaning, 1994).

916 A 2022 survey of US Pastors discovered that "just 37% hold to a Biblical worldview" for the "majority (62%) possess a hybrid worldview known as syncretism" (Barna, Worldview, May 2022).

917 Cultural scholar Jordan Ballor makes the point that, "Christians in all times and all places must grapple with, and articulate anew, what responsible Christian action looks like. Each generation will need to rediscover the natural law, rightly understood" (Natural Law, 2022). Ballor makes a valid analysis for without a foundation of natural law, the political, legal and cultural iterations of Western society will be vulnerable to eradication.

918 *Cf.,* Matthew 28:18-20, the so-called 'great commission'; Eph. 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them".

919 René Girard, in a 2009 conversation with Cynthia Haven concerning, *inter alia,* the Identity of the eschatological antichrist, posits that, "there is something very insidious about the antichrist who is a seducer. So, it must not be someone like Stalin or Hitler since they failed miserably. And the antichrist doesn't seem to work by force. But I think you can see that it's a certain modern spirit – the spirit of power, the idea that man has become totally master of himself, and that he doesn't have to bow in front of powers greater than himself, for he is going to triumph in the end". The solution, Girard suggests, is to not "surrender to the spiritual decadence of our time but to rise above the world around us" (Haven, 2009).

and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave' (1925, p. 290). A similar sentiment was articulated by René Girard when he confirmed that, "the primacy of victory is the triumph of the weak" (2010, p. xxiii). Girard's conclusion is compelling for in Christ the weak will be victorious. As St. Paul likewise observed "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). From a theological point of view, humans will continue to seek God, for, firstly, eternity is in their hearts (*cf.,* Ecc. 3:11) and, secondly, as eruditely (and romantically) stated by theology professor David Hart:

> *"the human longing for God persists from age to age. A particular cultural dispensation may succeed for a time in lulling the soul into a forgetful sleep, but the soul will still continue to hear that timeless call that comes from within and from beyond all things, even if for now it seems like only a voice heard in a dream. And, sooner or later, the sleeper will awaken"* (2013; *cf.,* Col. 2:13ff.).

Just as Israel was identifiable amongst surrounding pagan nations through its exclusive sacredness, and so too the Church of today should be identifiable through its distinctiveness and transcendence over the circumambient secular humanist and pagan morality. Perhaps the parting words here should be those of Harvard professor, and noted apologist, Christopher Dawkins (1889 – 1970) who, in discussing the legacy of St. Augustine, concluded that though Augustine lived in an "age of ruin and distress", he instead "looked beyond the aimless and bloody chaos of history to the world of timeless realities from which the world of sense derives all the significance which it possesses" (2009, p. 184). St. Paul would agree for the Church is comprised of sacred citizens of heaven, those "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (*cf.,* Eph. 2:19) who have been seated "with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

8.6 Validation of Applied Jewish Hermeneutical Exegesis

As claimed in the original Introduction to this treatise, the utilisation of Second Temple period Palestinian Rabbinical hermeneutical and exegetical methods of midrashic *darash,* indubitably substantiate the declaration that, far from being a novelty, the contemporary Identity crisis in the search for meaning originated in the Edenic Garden. And, furthermore, verify that the search for a secular new Identity has endured throughout ensuant history. The search continues into the post-Christian era through popular philosophical, ideological and anthropological hypotheses. This deduction stems from the *motif* of *eritus sicut Deus* continually finding application through the ages in a variety of reiterations until manifesting in a fresh demonstration, a re-capitulation, in the post-modern milieux. A further but final application, a repetition, will occur during the eschaton. At such time, antinomian humankind will again rise in futile rebellion against the Divine, the Redeemer-Messiah (*cf.,* Rev. 20:7-10),

in fulfilment of apposite prophetic passages commencing in early Genesis and culminating with the events recounted in St. John's Apocalypse. In this dramatic manner, the Creator's protological purposes for his universal Church will be fulfilled and the blessed advent of the eternal order will be inaugurated. The desecrated Garden will be reconsecrated, and the Divine will once again fellowship with his children in a theocratic utopia, as originally intended (*cf.,* Rev. 22:3).

To validate the postulate of a continual prophetic pattern of the enduring significance, and the pre-eminence, of the sacred Garden *leitmotif* through the eons, as recounted in the two canons - indicating the perfection, dominance, and totality of the Trinity's redemptive plan[920] - a Rabbinical midrashic *darash* of pertinent aspects, from inception in the primordial Garden through to eschatological realization in the Garden of the eternal order, is expounded. The *darash* demonstrates irrefutably that the primary contention, as stimulated by the meta-narrative herein, namely, that the social, political, legal, ideological, philosophical and theological Identity conundrum facing contemporary Western civilization does, in fact, have its roots in the antinomian events of the Edenic Garden. The summarized *darash* is as follows:

- The pivotal events determining the soteriological and eschatological outcomes of humankind were initiated in the aborigine Garden at Eden (*cf.,* Gen. 1- 3);
- The *dramatis personae* comprising the archetypical couple, namely, the First Adam and his wife Eve, the diabolical serpent, and the Creator Father were located in the Garden, as were the typological Trees (*cf.,* Gen. 2 -3);
- The temptation and testing of the First Couple took place in the Garden (*cf.,* Gen. 3), when confronted by Satan's evil agent, the serpent. In like manner, the Second Adam, the Redeemer-Messiah Jesus of Nazareth, was tempted and tested by Satan in the wilderness garden (*cf.,* Matt. 4:1-11), and then further confronted by Satan's evil forces, acting through human agents, in the Garden of Gethsemane *(cf.,* John 18;1);
- The punishment of death for sin was exacted on the First Couple in a Garden (*cf.,* Gen. 3:16-17). So too was the punishment of death for vicarious sin exacted on the Messiah in a Garden (*cf.,* John 19:41);
- The First Couple experienced the sentence of exile from the Father's presence in a Garden (*cf.,* Gen. 3), and in the same fashion the Redeemer-Messiah experienced

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920 Pope Benedict XVI describes this concept as follows: "God and divine action permeate the entire Biblical account of human history" (Benedict XVI, Interpretation, 2008).

exile from the Father's presence (*cf.,* Matt. 27:46) in a Garden where he was buried *(cf.,* John 20);

- The purpose of the Messiah's death, in a Garden, was to inaugurate a romance with his Bride, the Church, to be consummated in the eternal order. King Solomon's typological romance with the Shulamite woman was similarly inaugurated in a Garden (*cf.,* Song. 5:1). The woman's invitation to the King, "Let my beloved come to his garden" (Song. 4:16), for consummation of the marriage in a Garden, symbolises that of the Church's romantic invitation to King Messiah from his expectant Bride, "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come'" (*cf.,* Rev. 22:17; 22:20), in order to consummate their relationship in the Garden of the eternal order (*cf.,* Rev. 22:17, 20);
- The Creator's relationship with his sanctified first humans, Adam and Eve commenced in the Edenic Garden (*cf.,* Gen. 2:7, 22), and his search for them there (*cf.,* Gen. 3:9) was a demonstration of his *agape* love. This love was articulated in a matrimonial, intimate, relationship epitomising the Creator's later relationship with his sanctified people Israel (*cf.,* Deut. 6:10-15; Ezek. 16:8), and further evoked by the Messiah's *agape* relationship with his sanctified Bride, the Church (*cf.,* Rom. 5:5; 1 Jn. 4:19; Rev. 19:7; Rev. 21:9);
- The First Couple was promised redemption to eternal life through the coming Messiah in the Edenic Garden (*cf.,* Gen. 3:5), just as the Church was promised redemption to eternal life through the Messiah's resurrection in a Garden (*cf.,* Jn. 19:41);
- In the eternal order (*cf.,* Rev. 22), all is re-established as originally purposed. The sin, the devastating antinomianism, of the First Adam that arose in the Edenic Garden is defeated by the resurrection of the Second Adam in a Garden, recounted in John 19. The bucolic Edenic Garden scene, as firstly proposed, is restored for all eternity as is the *imago Dei* of humankind, never again to be corrupted;
- The emblem of immortality that originated in the Garden of Genesis 2:8, "in the middle of the Garden (was) the Tree of Life", finds a final thematic recapitulation and fulfilment in the Garden of perpetual paradise for, "on each side of the river stood the Tree of Life" (Rev. 22:2);
- The reign of God's people was anticipated in Genesis 2 with the First Couple ruling over creation in the Garden; and reiterated in the new situation of 1 Cor. 6: 2-3, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (*cf.,* 2 Tim. 2:12), through the 'new creations' (Gal. 6:15); and finally concluded in the Garden of the eternal order where they will "reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).
- In the Divine's conclusive and flawless drama of redemption, the Redeemer-Messiah is represented by the metaphor of the Tree of Life (*cf.,* Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2), in the

Edenic Garden, which tree can be directly identified as the Fig Tree of Genesis 3:7, John 1:48 and so on, and impliedly in Ezekiel 47:12 and Revelation 22:2. The Tree, aptly described as an "eschatological symbol of hope" (Vangemeren, 1995, p. 64), was first evident at the beginning of life on earth (*cf.,* Gen. 2:9) in a Garden, and is ultimately evident in the beginning of life in the garden of the eternal order (*cf.,* Rev. 22:2);

- The consummate, complete, thematic, typological, and symmetrical pattern of salvation, from the beginning of human history to its eschatological conclusion, is to be anticipated for, after all, the Redeemer-Messiah is "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:12-13). As a Christophany, the Redeemer was with the First Couple in the Garden from the beginning for according to Genesis 3:8, "they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day". This scripture to be read with John 1:1, for, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The Apostle John confirms that, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:3-4). It was Messiah who gave life to Adam and Eve in the Garden, and it is he who gives eternal life to all his people in a Garden (*cf.,* Jn. 19:41). He continues to give life to his people (*cf.,* Jn. 3:16; 4:10-14) and will do so until immanentization of the eschaton. At the end of time, the Redeemer-Messiah is found together with his people in the Garden of the eternal order as, "the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it (the Garden), and his servants will worship him" (Rev. 22:3).

8.7 Finale

The ultimate purpose of this study is to irrefutably authenticate that, irrespective of disruption to the theocratic Edenic utopia designed by the Creator for inauguration of human society, his impervious, providential, omnipotent and immutable strategy for gathering 'a people for his name'[921] would eventuate. Society in general, and Judeo-Christians in particular, can take comfort from compelling evidence, as recounted and validated herein, that the Creator, whose natural law principles underpin Western society, will not entertain forces of darkness prevailing against his Kingdom intent. Truth, as exemplified in the Messiah-Redeemer and his Word, will once again return to the public arena for although, "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter" (Isa.

[921] *cf.,* Romans 9:25.

59:14), the Creator's soteriological and eschatological program for humankind will prevail. It is submitted that this inevitability has been ratified here.

In the interim, although the concerned people of God's household may rightly feel they are despised in society and overcome by the multiple challenges of this world - as did the Psalmist who exclaimed, "My foot is slipping", and, "anxiety was great within me" (Ps. 94:18-19) - encouragement for the Church comes from the Redeemer-Messiah. The Messiah confirms the transcendental nature of his people's high calling, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (Jn. 15:18-19). In this manner, Jewish brethren are comforted by the age-old mighty affirmation of faith of the nation of Israel, the *Shema Yisrael*, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4-5).

Wherefore, the words of the Messiah-Redeemer, the Great Creator of humankind, ring out the promise to his expectant people at such times of great distress, "Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me" (Rev. 22:12). He reassures those who stay faithful that they will "have the right to the Tree of Life and that they may enter the city by the gates" (Rev. 22:14). And, as been the practice for millennia, the desperate righteous of the universal Church of the risen God cry out to their Saviour, "Come, Lord Jesus",[922] "the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'".[923] "O Lord, our hearts are restless until they rest in you".[924]

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922 Revelation 22:20.
923 Revelation 22:17.
924 St. Augustine, Confessions.

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