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**GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION
AT THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD**
**The New Long Dark Night of Industrial Civilization's Disintegration
and a Humble Vision-Dream of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love**

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I AM AN ECO-SOCIAL PHILOSOPHER and Catholic theologian focusing on what the German Catholic philosopher Romano Guardini called, in the title of his 1950 book, "The End of the Modern World." I diagnose the end of Modern World – originally Western but now globalized – as the interwoven ecological, social, and spiritual breakdown of Modern Industrial Civilization and in both its liberal-capitalist and its scientific-socialist forms. I also agree with ecology writer Elizabeth Kolbert that "The Sixth Extinction" (title of her 2014 book) of life on our home-planet Earth has already begun.

In addition, I see the end of the Modern World as including the breakdown of Modern Western Psychological Spirituality, a bourgeois interiority that became spiritually alienated from our loving Creator's co-creative presence within Nature and History. Correlatively, I explore the current global emergence of a regeneratively Postmodern Ecological Spirituality that is already sowing creative seeds for a global and regeneratively Postmodern Ecological Civilization.

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My Ph.D. is from the University of Chicago in the field of Ethics and Society, where I pursued interdisciplinary studies in Philosophy with Paul Ricoeur, Social Science with Gibson Winter, and Theology with David Tracy. I was also a Fulbright Scholar studying church and society in Chile during the last year of the democratic-socialist government of Dr. Salvador Allende, which the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet violently overthrew with strong US support.

Lastly, I have published 20 books and countless articles. One of my recent books is titled *Postmodern Modern Ecological Spirituality*. A new book that I am writing is tentatively titled *The Ecological Failure of Modern Western Philosophy*.

A new long dark night is descending upon us.
Its cause is the Modern World's dying and its dying Industrial Civilization.
Yet this night is made even darker from the still-expanding
global ecological devastation being inflicted by
the new Global Oligarchy, with its hyper-masculine Techno-Science,
its death-dealing Philosophy of Nihilism, and its financial support for
the New Right's cruel politics of idolatrous nationalism,
misogyny and racism, libertarian-authoritarian dictatorships,
and venomously degraded religions.

However,
in the midst of this dark night's many dangers,
people from all spiritual traditions
can begin to overcome all those destructive pathologies
by nurturing a humble vision-dream of
Ecological Spirituality's
Radical Love.

The absence of love brought many tragedies that might have been averted. Instead of the golden rain of love, a black cloak of indifference fell upon the people. And thus, people have lost the eyes of love and can no longer see clearly ... Here are the origins of the disintegration of all values and the destruction and sterilization of conscience.

Alberto Lattuada, OCCHIOQUADRATO, 1941¹
(Italian filmmaker reflecting on growing up under Mussolini)

We know now that the Modern World is coming to an end ... Nature is rising in the very form which subdued the wilderness – in the form of power itself ... Love will disappear from the public world ... We seem to be rushing toward ... a global catastrophe.

Romano Guardini
THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD, 1950

Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species – man – acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world ... This chain of evil ... [constitutes] man's war against nature.

Rachel Carson
THE SILENT SPRING, 1962

In Istanbul in 2019 ... Ekrem İmamoğlu, the opposition candidate, won the race for mayor of Istanbul while demonstrating the power of positive emotions in politics ... no one could have predicted the success of his platform of "radical love."

Ruth Ben-Ghiat
STRONGMEN, 2021

¹ Cited in STRONGMEN: MUSSOLINI TO THE PRESENT, Ruth Ben-Ghiat (W.W. Norton, 2021), p. 259.

THE NEW GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGE FOR WORLD RELIGIONS

SIXTY YEARS AGO ON 28 OCTOBER 1965, the Catholic Pope Paul VI issued a document that carried the Latin title, *Nostra Aetate*, meaning "In Our Time." Produced by the Catholic bishops of the world who had gathered for the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, it reflected on the unity of our global human family and celebrated the goodness found within all world religions.

Nostra Aetate called for "dialogue and collaboration with the followers of all world religions." Today, more than ever, we desperately need that dialogue and collaboration to face together a new and overwhelming global challenge for all world religions. That challenge is the still-expanding global ecological devastation of our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth Life, including our Sacred Human Earth Life.

The immediate cause of this global ecological devastation is mis-guided technological attacks that are 1) still expanding the global climate crisis and 2) rapidly extinguishing living species across our planetary Biosphere. Thus, those technological attacks are devastating our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth life, including our own Sacred Human Earth life.

In its section 3, *Nostra Aetate* calls in particular for Christians and Muslims

*... to work together for mutual understanding and to preserve, as well as to promote together for the benefit of all humankind, social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.*²

² For copies of this document in various languages, including Arabic, see https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

Presumably, the Catholic bishops might have repeated that same statement for all world religions. But, in fact, they used those explicit words only about Christians and Muslims. Perhaps that was an oversight, but it is also an insight. For Christianity and Islam, which are both Abrahamic religions along with the older tradition of Judaism, have the most powerful global networks of educational systems and charitable services.

Important religious initiatives to face this overwhelming global challenge have already begun within global Christianity and global Islam. We see powerful articulations of that initiative in two world-significant documents from these two powerful spiritual traditions:

- LAUDATO SÍ – ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME, issued in 2015 by the Catholic Pope Francis ³
- AL MIZAN – A COVENANT FOR THE EARTH, issued in 2024 by the Islamic Foundation for Ecology & Environmental Sciences and its many partner Islamic organizations ⁴

I propose that Christianity and Islam, in cooperation with other world religions, are now called to play a leading role together in our global human family's global response to the overwhelming challenge of global ecological devastation.

In the following pages, I describe that challenge and what I analyze as its deep causes. At the end of these pages, I propose one small spiritual response that all of us can make as a creative seed for much larger institutional responses.

³ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

⁴ <https://www.almizan.earth>

THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD

A NEW LONG DARK NIGHT is now descending upon us. The dying of the Modern World, including the dying of its anti-ecological Industrial Civilization, is precipitating this new long dark night.⁵ The German Catholic philosopher Romano Guardini, writing during the mid-20th century, foresaw this dying. He named it "*The End of the Modern World*." ⁶

Today, however, we know much more about this "End of the Modern World." We know that, because of the still-expanding global ecological crisis, it could lead to the collapse of all human civilizations and to what Elizabeth Kolbert has called "The Sixth Extinction" of life on our home planet Earth.⁷ Further, that extinction could come suddenly through global thermonuclear war, or gradually through continuing global ecological devastation, or through both.

Although the Modern World is dying, we need to remember that the Modern World is bequeathing to us life-giving gifts, including techno-scientific gifts, all wondrously given to our human family and to our wider ecological family of creatures. We need to preserve these life-giving gifts and even expand them.

One of the Modern World's important life-giving gifts has been democracy. However, a new social class called the Global Oligarchy is trying to destroy that gift. Another example of the Modern World's life-giving gifts has been the explosion of techno-scientific knowledge, especially new healing technologies for medicine. But not all modern forms of Techno-Science have been life-giving. The new Global Oligarchy has also been constructing death-dealing forms of Techno-Science that

⁵ On the dying of the Modern World, its Industrial Civilization, and its bourgeois Psychological Spirituality, see Joe Holland, POSTMODERN ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY (Pacem in Terris Press, 2017).

⁶ Romano Guardini, DAS ENDE DER NEUZEIT (Auflage, 1950), translated into English as THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD (Sheed & Ward, 1956).

⁷ See Elizabeth Kolbert, THE SIXTH EXTINCTION, 10th Anniv. Edition (Holt Paperbacks, 2024):

Over the last half a billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the Sixth Extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. (From the cover summary)

are inflicting global ecological devastation, cruel social suffering, and venomous spiritual degradation.

Those modern death-dealing distortions of Techno-Science come not from Techno-Science itself, but from modern elimination of ancient *organic-circular economies*. Those ancient economies primarily functioned in an organic-circular process, drawing from Nature our Sun's life-giving energy and feeding on Sun-nourished life forms across our Biosphere, while simultaneously nourishing Nature through comprehensive recycling to support organic ecological regeneration. For example, the economies of many First Nations in the Americas enhanced Nature's organic vitality, rather than extinguishing it, as modern Industrial Civilization so often does.⁸

Modern Industrial Civilization, in both its capitalist and its communist forms, has instead constructed *mechanical-linear economies*. They draw on the dark energy of ancient dead life, buried deep within Earth for thousands of years (fossil fuels), or they draw on the hyper-dangerous and hyper-expensive energy of nuclear fission.

Again, while ancient organic-circular economies fed on living life across the surface of our planetary Biosphere, modern mechanical-linear economies feed on long-buried dead life. Also, while ancient organic-circular economies were guided by traditional spiritual wisdom, modern mechanical-linear economies have been guided by secularist or atheist materialism.

To repeat: pre-modern organic-circular economies excelled at regenerating life through recycling. Modern linear economies have excelled at degenerating life by producing what I will broadly call "garbage" (all forms of pollution). They pollute on such a scale that the vastness of that garbage now threatens our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth Life, including our Sacred Human Earth Life. The former were *economies of life*, but the latter have now become *economies of death*.

⁸ See Lyla June Johnson, ARCHITECTS OF ABUNDANCE: INDIGENOUS REGENERATIVE FOOD AND LAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND THE EXCAVATION OF HIDDEN HISTORY. Dissertation, 2022 at <https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/handle/11122/13122>.

THE NEW GLOBAL OLIGARCHY & GLOBAL ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION

TODAY, THE NEW GLOBAL OLIGARCHY forms an elitist global network of predominantly male hyper-rich and hyper-powerful owners and investors. Its network is a complex and shifting alliance linking authoritarian political elites and authoritarian economic elites, especially from fossil fuels, communications, high-finance, and high-tech.⁹

Within the dying Modern World and its dying Industrial Civilization, many in the new Global Oligarchy act like they are self-made gods. Beginning especially with fossil fuels, and now especially through hi-tech and hi-finance, this new Global Oligarchy is using its gargantuan hyper-wealth and hyper-power to inflict cruel social suffering and unsustainable ecological devastation.

Also, to expand their hyper-wealth and hyper-power, many oligarchs are now also promoting the New Right's idolatrous nationalism, misogynist-racist politics of fear and hate, repressive libertarian-authoritarian dictatorships, and venomous deformations of religion.¹⁰

⁹ On the new Global Oligarchy today, see Chrystia Freeland, *PLUTOCRATS: THE RISE OF THE NEW GLOBAL SUPER-RICH AND THE FALL OF EVERYONE ELSE* (Penguin Press, 2012); David Lingelbach & Valentina Rodriguez Guerra, *THE OLIGARCHS' GRIP: FUSING WEALTH AND POWER* (de Gruyter, 2023); Peter S. Goodman, *DAVOS MAN: HOW THE BILLIONAIRES DEVOURED THE WORLD* (Harper-Collins, 2022); Marjorie Kelly, *WEALTH SUPREMACY: HOW THE EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY AND THE BIASED RULES OF CAPITALISM DRIVE TODAY'S CRISES* (Berrett-Koehler, 2023).

For an earlier insightful analysis, see Thomas Frank, *PITY THE BILLIONAIRE: THE HARD-TIMES SWINDLE AND THE UNLIKELY COMBACK OF THE RIGHT* (Henry Holt, 2012).

Note that, because there are particular exceptions to my description of this new Global Oligarchy, I use the phrase Global Oligarchy as an ideal type for this new political-economic class.

¹⁰ On the New Right today, see Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *HATE IN THE HOMELAND: THE NEW GLOBAL FAR RIGHT* (Princeton University Press, 2020); and Cas Mudde, *THE FAR RIGHT TODAY* (Polity, 2019).

For the US New Right's earlier stages, see Richard A. Viguerie, *THE NEW RIGHT: WE'RE READY TO LEAD* (The Viguerie Company, 1980); Alan Crawford, *THUNDER ON THE RIGHT: THE "NEW RIGHT" AND THE POLITICS OF RESENTMENT* (Pantheon, 1980); Arnold Forster & Benjamin R. Epstein, *DANGER ON THE RIGHT: THE ATTITUDES, PERSONNEL, AND INFLUENCES OF THE RADICAL RIGHT AND EXTREME CONSERVATIVES* (Random House, 1964).

The racism of white supremacy is a central theme uniting diverse streams of the New Right across its Western network. See Chetal Bhatt, "White Extinction: Metaphysical Elements of Contemporary

The Electronic Revolution made possible the new Global Oligarchy's advances in Techno-Science.¹¹ But instead of allowing the Electronic Revolution to develop in a decentralizing and ecological manner, the new Global Oligarchy has centralized control over the Electronic Revolution in its own hands. It then mis-designed the Electronic Revolution to exploit private consumers and public governments, and thus make itself hyper-rich and hyper-powerful.

Most seriously, the Global Oligarchy's mis-design of electronic Techno-Science is now devastating the ecological sustainability of our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth Life, including our Sacred Human Earth life. So destructive is that anti-ecological mis-design that some global oligarchs are even planning to abandon our home-planet Earth (after they trashed it). One famous global oligarch plans to use hi-tech to colonize Mars. Another plans to construct hi-tech villages in space.¹²

DEEPER ROOTS OF THE MODERN WORLD'S MIS-DESIGN OF TECHNO-SCIENCE

CERTAINLY, THIS NEW GLOBAL OLIGARCHY is guilty of selfishness and greed. But their mis-design of Techno-Science for the Electronic Era also has two older historical roots, both Western, that have long corrupted the Modern World's philosophical foundation.

Western Fascism," *THEORY, CULTURE, & SOCIETY*, 2021, Vol. 38(1), 27-52. Chetal Bhatt also proposes that the philosophically voluntarist Nihilism of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is equally central to the Western New Right.

On white supremacy in the United States, see Robert J. Jones, *WHITE TOO LONG: THE LEGACY OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY* (Simon & Schuster, 2020). On Libertarian Dictatorships, see Quinn Slobodian, *CRACK-UP CAPITALISM: MARKET RADICALS AND THE DREAM OF A WORLD WITHOUT DEMOCRACY* (Henry Holt, 2023).

¹¹ On the Electronic Revolution, see the now-classic book by Alvin Toffler, *THE THIRD WAVE* (Bantam, 1981). The author, originally a Trotskyist Marxist later turned libertarian, nonetheless provided an insightful analysis of the Electronic Revolution's significance for human history. See also the earlier and richer historical-philosophical analysis by the late Marshall McLuhan, *UNDERSTANDING MEDIA: THE EXTENSIONS OF MAN* (McGraw-Hill, 1964).

¹² See Mary-Jane Rubenstein, *ASTROTOPIA: THE DANGEROUS RELIGION OF THE CORPORATE SPACE RACE* (University of Chicago Press, 2022), pp. 12-24. On more terrestrial escapes, see Douglas Rushkoff, *SURVIVAL OF THE RICHEST: ESCAPE FANTASIES OF THE TECH BILLIONAIRES* (W.W. Norton, 2022).

High-Medieval Catholic Hyper-Masculinism

The first deeper root is what I call the high-medieval "*hyper-masculine*" paradigm for Techno-Science. We can trace that root to its source in high-medieval European Catholic clerical intellectuals' creation of universities – later to become the Modern World's central institution. (The claim that the medieval Roman-Catholic intellectual tradition was hostile to Technology and Science is a modern bourgeois fable.¹³)

Medieval Roman-Catholic clerical intellectuals mis-designed those early universities as hyper-masculine institutions *by excluding women*.¹⁴ Sometimes, it became worse than exclusion, as in the vicious Catholic and Protestant elites' burning of so-called female witches during Europe's late-medieval and early-modern periods. (As many as 60,000 women may have been killed in that slaughter.)

Centuries later, many universities continued to exclude women (even when secularized), with women only recently entering universities in large numbers. That exclusion of women from the Modern World's central institution determined that modern Techno-Science, and most professions, would develop with a one-sided hyper-masculine imagination of time and space. In Chinese symbolism, it was all *Yang* with no *Yin*.

Hyper-Masculinism is worse than Patriarchy. Classical Patriarchy *subordinated* women. Modern Hyper-Masculinism *excludes* women. It is not surprising, therefore, that the new Global Oligarchy cultivates a hypermasculine "*macho*" culture for its hi-tech industries, and that it produces a sterile Techno-Science that crushes ecological reproduction. Also, the New Right's Hyper-Masculinism, which many global oligarchs fund, adds brutal reinforcement through its hateful misogyny.

As a result, the cultural imagination of most university-trained scientists and engineers, as well as of many in other professions, has typically favored *autonomous*

¹³ See Nicholas Spencer, *MAGISTERIA: ENTANGLED HISTORIES OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION* (One World, 2023).

¹⁴ See David Noble, *A WORLD WITHOUT WOMEN: THE CHRISTIAN CLERICAL ORIGINS OF WESTERN SCIENCE* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

(spatially non-relational) and *linear* (temporally non-regenerative) techno-scientific designs. They have not factored into their techno-scientific designs Nature's organic webs or regenerative cycles. In contrast, Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous women, have for thousands of years nourished an Ecological Spirituality that cherishes Nature's organic webs and regenerative cycles.¹⁵

Early-Modern Scientific Atomism

The second deeper root arose during the 17th Century. It comes from Europe's early-modern Scientific Revolution. Early-modern "natural philosophers" – as scientists were then called – appropriated for their New Science's philosophical foundation what I call the erroneous "*Atomist Cosmology of Mechanical Materialism*."

¹⁵ See, for example, Robin Wall Kimmerer, *BRAIDING SWEETGRASS: INDIGENOUS WISDOM, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND THE TEACHING OF PLANTS* (Milkweed, 2013).

There was also in the early medieval period a Celtic Catholic Church that was Indigenous. See Joe Holland, *REMEMBERING INDIGENOUS KELTIC CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY*, Occasional Paper 2024, Pacem in Terris Center for Catholic Social Teaching, at <https://paceminterris.net/papers>, and John Philip Newell, *SACRED EARTH, SACRED SOUL: CELTIC WISDOM FOR REAWAKENING TO WHAT OUR SOULS KNOW AND HEALING THE WORLD* (HarperOne, 1989).

European Indigenous Celtic and Germanic Ecological Spirituality survived within the populist side of medieval Catholicism, despite the Neoplatonist flight from matter and women cultivated by elitist Roman-Catholic monastic leaders continuing the Roman imperial traditions. But, in early-modern Europe, the Protestant Reformation and the early-modern Scientific Revolution tried to strip Nature of any spiritual dimension, and they also heightened cultural masculinization.

For example, the early-modern English Chancellor Francis Bacon, son of a devout Calvinist mother and still considered the foundational prophet of modern Techno-Science, wrote of the newly emerging modern forms of Science and Technology as "The Masculine Birth of Time," and he defined Nature as a "feminine" object to be exploited, "put on the rack", and forced to reveal "her secrets." See Carolyn Merchant's now classic work, *THE DEATH OF NATURE: WOMEN, ECOLOGY, AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION* (Harper & Row, 1980).

In addition, the modern bourgeois form of Roman Catholicism also gradually lost its eco-spiritual roots, and its modernized spirituality collapsed into inner-directed psychologized forms. Yet Indigenous Eco-Spirituality continued to survive within other Christian traditions across the African, Arabic, and Greek, and Slavic regions. It is also now re-emerging across the post-colonial Global South, where Indigenous roots are still strong.

However, male elites of both classical and modern Western civilizations have waged, and still wage, genocidal persecutions and wars against Indigenous Peoples, and they have constantly tried to extinguish their profound Eco-Spirituality. See Robert A. Williams, Jr., *SAVAGE ANXIETIES: THE INVENTION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

Those natural philosophers retrieved that Cosmology from the ancient Greek philosopher *Epicurus* (341-270 BC), who taught the anti-religious and mechanical-materialist doctrine called Atomism.¹⁶ Defining his atoms as the most basic material of the Universe, Epicurus insisted that atoms had no relation to each other (except via physical force). Thus, Epicurus described every "atom" (from the Greek *atomos*, meaning an uncuttable particle) as autonomous.

If you ever wondered where modern atomized individualism comes from, this is it. By the way, the English word "individual" comes from the Latin *individuum*, which means something that is "undividable." The classical Roman philosopher and senator Cicero explicitly used *individuum* (undividable) as his Latin translation for Epicurus' *atomos* (uncuttable). Thus, we can trace our contemporary use of the word "individual" back through Cicero's *individuum* to Epicurus' *atomos*.

However, the early-modern philosophical-scientific appropriation of Epicurus' Atomism was a hyper-masculine distortion of Epicurus' ethical teaching. He had called for individuals to *withdraw passively from society*, and he had urged everyone to *live simply in harmony with Nature*. Therefore, he and close friends gathered in an isolated Nature-based "garden" (his small estate outside Athens). Epicurus' ultimate philosophical goal for himself and his friends was simply to achieve psychological "tranquility" (*ataraxia* in Greek).

In contrast, modern bourgeois intellectuals constructing the social philosophy of Liberal Capitalism, and more recently its late-modern forms of Libertarianism and Neoliberalism, have called for hyper-masculine individuals *to be aggressive in society, to conquer Nature, and to constantly expand their material possessions*. Liberal intellectuals have also urged everyone to aggressively pursue their "self-interests," to compete with each other within a "free market," and to keep government from interfering with their "freedom."

But that hyper-masculine philosophical construction of the modern liberal-libertarian-neoliberal *homo economicus* (economic man) was a dangerous fantasy. It

¹⁶ Catherine Wilson, *EPICUREANISM AT THE ORIGINS OF MODERNITY* (Oxford University Press, 2008) and Stephen Goldblatt, *HOW THE WORLD BECAME MODERN* (Norton, 2011).

reduced the human person to an atomized individual and undermined the human person's social nature. It also blocked out the classical philosophical teaching that government's fundamental purpose is to promote the common good.¹⁷ Finally, that liberal-libertarian-neoliberal fantasy also repressed our natural awareness that human persons and human societies are nested within the concentric circles of Nature's ecological systems.

(In contrast, Catholic Social Teaching has long rejected the fantasy of *homo economicus* and, today, it also insists that "integral ecology" weaves together social ecology and environmental ecology.¹⁸)

At the opposite economic pole from Liberal Capitalism (or Liberalism or Libertarianism or Neoliberalism), Scientific Socialism (Marxism) similarly reduces human persons to atomized individuals. But Marxism, again in a hyper-masculine manner, then tries to massify atomized individuals from the industrial working class into a "mass" revolutionary force. ("Mass" and "force" are key concepts for modern Physics.) Thus, Marxism also has its deep philosophical ground in Epicurus' mechanical-materialist Atomism.¹⁹

Therefore, both Industrial Capitalism and Industrial Communism share philosophical grounding in the mechanical-materialist Atomism of Epicureanism. But the bourgeois intellectual constructors of both these modern ideologies rejected Epicurus' gentle and Nature-loving philosophy and substituted for it their hyper-masculine aggressiveness, their mandate to conquer Nature, and their anti-spiritual, anti-human, and anti-ecological deformation of Techno-Science.

Epicurus also taught that atoms combine into aggregates in artificially *mechanical* fashion because, according to him, every atom in the matter of the Universe is autonomous. He claimed that mechanical force is all that holds things together, even life forms. Further, Epicurus saw his atoms' mechanical combination as *rationally*

¹⁷ See Angus Sibley, *THE "POISONED SPRING" OF ECONOMIC LIBERTARIANISM* (Pacem in Terris Press, 2011).

¹⁸ See again Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, *LAUDATO SI'*.

¹⁹ Karl Marx wrote much of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Berlin on Epicurus.

and spiritually meaningless, because his Philosophy of mechanical-materialist Atomism is also militantly anti-religious and even anti-rational. Thus, Marxism's atheist Materialism and Liberalism's secularist Materialism both remain anti-religiously faithful to Epicurus' anti-religious Materialism.

However, in his ethical system, Epicurus did allow for *instrumental reason* to calculate the quantitative intensity of material forces, which he saw as causing either pleasure or pain in the human body. That Epicurean calculus of human pleasure and pain is the philosophical foundation for the modern ethical school of materialism known as Utilitarianism, which is the ethical system implicitly undergirding both Industrial Capitalism and Industrial Communism.

Because Epicurus allowed instrumental reason only for calculation of *quantitative material forces*, that is why the modern deformation of Techno-Science excludes from its method any guidance by *qualitative spiritual wisdom*. Therefore, Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), the English mathematician and founder of Process Philosophy, rightfully named this modern philosophical reductionism (stripped of guidance by any spiritual wisdom) as "*Scientific Materialism*."

Overall, the liberal (or libertarian or neoliberal) and Marxian fantasy of *homo economicus* – again with both drawing on Epicurus' mechanical-materialist Atomism but with modern hyper-masculine reframing – are but two examples of the countless ways that modern bourgeois elites embraced Epicurus' mechanical-materialist Atomism and wove it in distorted form into their modern ideologies.

Modern bourgeois elites, by following that hyper-masculine reframing of Epicurus' atomist-mechanical-materialist Philosophy, have precipitated what I describe as the "*Culture of Atomization*," promoting individualism. I also describe it as the "*Culture of Mechanization*," promoting conformist mass society, and the "*Culture of Materialism*," generated by the competing materialist ideologies of Industrial Capitalism and Industrial Communism. However, and again, that hyper-masculine and atomist cultural drive undermines the dignity of the human person, disintegrates organic human community, devastates natural ecology, and dissolves both rational and spiritual meaning.

By accepting the Modern World's foundational philosophical errors, the new Global Oligarchy has been mis-designing the Electronic Revolution according to the modern techno-scientific biases of Hyper-Masculinism and non-relational and non-regenerative Atomism.

As a result, their mis-design of electronic Techno-Science is now devastating Nature's relational webs and regenerative cycles. Consequently, the future of our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth Life (in which we humans participate) suddenly appears bleak and frightening.²⁰

Thus, the new Global Oligarchy, by expanding its libertarian-authoritarian distortion of the Electronic Revolution, is desperately trying to keep alive the dying Modern World and its dying Industrial Civilization. To do that, however, this new Global Oligarchy needs to block awareness of the Modern World's foundational philosophical errors and the Modern World's mis-design of Techno-Science.

To that end, this new Global Oligarchy continues to escalate the Modern World's ecological, social, and spiritual devastation. Instead of preparing for a fresh and regenerative Global Ecological Civilization, the new Global Oligarchy is now forcing its misguided electronic Techno-Science into integral-ecological devastation of our Loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth Life, including our Sacred Human Earth Life.

Unless stopped, this new Global Oligarchy will continue to escalate what we have seen Science writer Elizabeth Kolbert identify as "*The Sixth Extinction*" of biological life across our garden planet Earth, which includes our human life.²¹

²⁰ For one example of a new global oligarch's hi-tech embrace of hyper-masculine and atomizing individualism and conquest of Nature, and one drawing on a philosophical architect of Italian Fascism and Nietzschean Nihilism, see the TECHNO-OPTIMIST MANIFESTO, by Mark Andreessen, hi-tech inventor, entrepreneur, and venture capitalist, at <https://a16z.com/the-techno-optimist-manifesto>.

²¹ See again Kolbert, SIXTH EXTINCTION.

THE SPIRITUAL DISEASE OF VENOMOUS RELIGION

DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY, the French Catholic philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950) intellectually challenged the French Old Right's deformation of Catholic Christianity in order to support French Fascism. He called it "*Christian Fascism*" and described it as a "*spiritual disease*." Mounier also proposed that this "spiritual disease" reaches "deep into the human psyche," and he even wondered if it might be "demonic."²²

Many people are now rightfully fearful and angry at the Modern World's still-growing ecological devastation, social cruelty, and spiritual deformation – all consequences of the new Global Oligarchy's techno-scientific degeneration of human ecology and natural ecology, on which human society depends.

In response to that populist fear and anger, many new global oligarchs have embraced the New Right's deformation of religion, which cruelly mis-directs populist fear and anger toward innocent scapegoats. I call this deformation "*venomous religion*," and I see it as infected with the same spiritual disease that Emmanuel Mounier condemned.

As the adjective "venomous" indicates, the New Right's spiritual disease is poisonous. While claiming the mantle of Christianity or other religions, it supports cruel and even murderous anti-social and anti-ecological policies. Those policies cause horrendous suffering and death for vast numbers of our loving Creator's beloved creatures, who make up our Sacred Earth Life, including millions of our loving Creator's impoverished and vulnerable but still beloved human creatures.

The New Right's venomous religious forms, to which some in the new Global Oligarchy have turned, are deadly deformations of authentic religion in two ways. First, they highlight only certain religious themes that fit with the Global Oligarchy's anti-ecological and anti-social ideology. Second, they ignore or still worse

²² See Joe Holland, EMMANUEL MOUNIER ON COMMUNITARIAN PERSONALISM, Occasional Paper 2024, Pacem in Terris Center for Catholic Social Teaching: <https://paceminterris.net/papers>.

condemn prophetic themes that are hostile to their hyper-masculine and atomizing 'freedom.'²³ Thus, while the New Right's Venomous Religion provides the new Global oligarchy with a comforting pseudo-spirituality of individualistic consolation, it also unleashes demons of idolatrous nationalism, ethno-racist hatred, and vicious misogyny, just as it supports ecological devastation, social cruelty, and spiritual degradation.

Within the United States, some global oligarchs have turned to a degradation of Calvinist Christianity, which has become the strongest US New Right religious stream.²⁴ The second strongest US stream is the New Right's degradation of Catholic Christianity.²⁵ Across the planet, other New Right intellectuals, politicians, and activists have been constructing other deformed versions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

In summary, as we look out historically at the dying Modern World and watch the gradual collapse of its anti-ecological Industrial Civilization, we see this new Global Oligarchy, with its destructive philosophy of Nihilism, still increasing its already hyper-wealth and hyper-power. We also see this new Global Oligarchy supporting the New Right's misogynist-racist scapegoating and its destructive politics of idolatrous nationalism, libertarian-authoritarian dictatorships, and venomous religions.

Most importantly, we see this new Global Oligarchy continuing to expand its mis-designed electronic Techno-Science to ecologically, socially, and spiritually devastate our loving Creator's beloved ecological community of Sacred Earth Life, including our Sacred Human Earth Life.

²³ See Emma Goldberg, "Seeking God, or Peter Theil, in Silicon Valley," New York Times 2025-02-11 at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/11/business/silicon-valley-christianity.html>.

²⁴ See Elizabeth Neumann, *KINGDOM OF RAGE: THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN EXTREMISM AND THE PATH BACK TO PEACE* (Worthy Publishing, 2024). For the most extreme version, see Julie J. Ingersoll, *BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM: INSIDE THE WORLD OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION* (Oxford University Press, 2015). For a prophetic Calvinist critique, see David A. Ritchie, *WHY DO THE NATIONS RAGE: THE DEMONIC ORIGIN OF NATIONALISM* (Wipf & Stock, 2022).

²⁵ See Mary Jo McConahay, *PLAYING GOD: AMERICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND THE FAR RIGHT* (Melville House, 2023). The subtitle focuses on bishops but is misleading. As the book shows, the initiative and main support comes not from bishops but from elite lay Catholics who have played prominent roles in the New Right movement.

A HUMBLE VISION-DREAM ABOUT ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY'S RADICAL LOVE

A GAIN, THE MODERN WORLD and its Industrial Civilization have entered their terminal death throes. Further, the new Global Oligarchy is escalating ecological devastation, social cruelty, and venomous religion. As a result, a new long dark night is descending upon us, and many people now see the future as devoid of hope.

Yet even though the outer world may seem without hope, we can turn inward to *our human family's inspirational spiritual imagination*. If this spiritual imagination grows ecologically and globally, our human family will generate powerful spiritual energy for regenerating our loving Creator's beloved ecological community of Sacred Earth Life, including our Sacred Human Earth Life (even if we do not yet fully know what forms this spiritual energy will take).

Therefore, let us begin by imagining *a humble vision-dream about our human family's ancient tradition of Ecological Spirituality*, as found especially in the eco-spiritual traditions of ancient Indigenous Peoples, from whom we have all descended.

LET US DREAM that our global human family's many spiritual traditions, despite their many problems, will *become prophetic voices* in our great struggle to protect our loving Creator's threatened Sacred Earth Life and, within it, our threatened Sacred Human Earth Life.

LET US DREAM, from within the womb-like darkness of this new long night, that our global human family's many spiritual traditions will *gestate a regenerative global wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love*.

LET US DREAM that this regenerative global wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love will *call us to love our loving Creator and to love our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Cosmic Creation*, including our loving Creator's beloved Sacred Earth Life and, within it, our beloved Sacred Human Earth Life.

LET US DREAM that this regenerative global wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love will help us *to resist the new Global Oligarchy* – with its hyper-masculine and atomist-mechanist-materialist Techno-Science, its destructive philosophy of nihilism, and its support for the New Right's idolatrous nationalisms, misogynist-racist fear and hate, repressive libertarian-authoritarian dictatorships, and spiritual disease of venomous religions.

LET US DREAM that this regenerative global wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love will *guide our human family out of the dying Modern World*, out of its collapsing anti-ecological Industrial Civilization, and out of the new Global Oligarchy's intensification of ecological devastation, social cruelty, and spiritual degradation.

LET US DREAM that this global wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love will open for our human family *an integral-ecological pathway toward a regenerative, humanistic, and democratic Global Ecological Civilization*, that will be inspired by the powerful energy of this same ancient Ecological Spirituality.

LET US DREAM that this global Ecological Civilization will celebrate *the sacred character of our loving Creator's Cosmic Creation*, which includes our ecological community of Sacred Earth Life and, within it, our Sacred Human Earth Life.

LET US DREAM that this regenerative global wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love will teach all of us in our global human family, including global oligarchs, *to let go of selfish and greedy desires for wealth and power*, and thereby overcome the demons of individualism, philosophical nihilism, misogyny and racism, hyper-masculinism, idolatrous nationalism, and venomous religion.

FINALLY, LET US DREAM that this global regenerative wave of Ecological Spirituality's Radical Love will teach all of us, including global oligarchs, *to live with loving and humble care for our loving Creator's deeply-threatened ecological community of Sacred Earth Life, including our deeply-threatened ecological community of Sacred Human Earth Life*.

