

Paracosm

Misadventures in Unreality

By

Andrew Spano

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A Note on the Style of this Text

Because of the nature of the topic here, which has at its core the idea of a parallel imaginary universe called *the paracosmos* (which is a *paracosm*), I must shift, as we do on a keyboard, between the euphemistic or proprietary uses of certain words and phrases in that universe, and their primary, denominative meaning as we would commonly find them.

As a result, there is what even I would consider to be the overuse of quotation marks around certain instances of these words and phrases that in the paracosmos are either euphemistic, misappropriated, or have been repurposed for some ulterior, or even overt propaganda effect. For example, a critical phrase here that always appears in quotation marks is “in the future,” which I describe as the magical abracadabra incantation that makes anything that is at present impossible (often for such good reasons as the laws of physics) possible ... “in the future.”

Reference to state, economy, polity, and culture is confined for the most part but not entirely to the West, and particularly to North America and Western Europe. The main reason is that these are the regions I know best in an academic sense, but also because they are the originators of the prototype of the paracosmos that has been adopted globally, even, to a significant extent, in Asia and Africa. Certainly almost anything said about the regions I know best can be extrapolated in an effective way to certain limited but relevant dimensions of some other cultures.

I should point out that some cultures, as well as the common culture present among the many unique cultures of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), may find the bias here toward Western culture less relevant. Furthermore, though closer to home, I think the Islamic world in its indigenous states, while not free of the issues discussed here, is, by and large, less susceptible to their negative effects by inclination and design. With this said, it seems to me only a matter of a few decades at most before we will all be struggling with the dominance of an imaginary world created by digital technology that has its highest ethical aesthetic mandatory consumerism.

I should also apologize in advance for using the adverb “however” over 100 times throughout the text. In the paracosmos it becomes necessary to

separate the discourse, or ultimate intention and meaning, of a statement in its deep structure from its perhaps unconscious, idiomatic, automatic, or even deliberately misleading meaning.

I have employed italics when using my own neologisms, when words are used in a particularly technical sense, or are subject to a specialized nomenclature or argot. Parts of the text to which I wish the reader to give particular attention are also presented in italics. If the quoted author also uses italics, or I have italicized a passage, I do not note a distinction.

I have dispensed with footnotes in the process of documenting sources quoted or mentioned, or that support a particular concept or statement of fact. I also do away with explanatory notes under the assumption that what is not either self-explanatory, or explained in the text, should not be in the book anyway.

Instead, I use a variant of the Chicago in-text, parenthetical citation style meant to be referenced with the extensive bibliography, which contains only works that are cited. Therefore, the reader will always find a full bibliographic entry in that section which can be used to track down the resource if necessary. In the case of something accessed online, I give the actual author-title-publication metadata in the bibliography rather than a URL, as Web addresses are always changing.

Throughout I try to use short, simple sentences and paragraphs in the style of good journalism in order to make the book more readable, clear, specific, and even aphoristic. Words and phrases foreign to English are not given in italics except when they fall under the uses of italics mentioned above. The reason is that the practice begins to look ridiculous, adding nothing to the understanding of these words or phrases. On the other hand, if these words are in need of translation, it is provided.

As for pronouns, the singular human subject-noun in most sentences here is simply referred to by the sex-neutral term "subject," meaning that the pronoun that follows will be "it." This is not meant to dehumanize the creature, only to keep the discussion clinical and impersonal. Sometimes, though, when the singular subject-noun is not "the subject," I will employ, relatively at random, a male or female pronoun without any particular intention except an attempt at a natural flow of the narrative.

Inasmuch as it is possible, when pathologies are mentioned, I intentionally use qualifiers such as “a person diagnosed with” to avoid the name-calling that goes on in the media when someone is disliked and is called “crazy” or “a narcissist” (meaning, “I don’t like you”).

Also, I try to avoid referring to such a person by the metonym, such as “a schizophrenic” or “a chronic depressive.” Rather than characterize even a hypothetical person this way, which is dehumanizing, I will use the qualifier above. However, there are times when one simply must say, for the sake of judicious shorthand, “neurotics,” “psychopaths,” and “the NPD,” particularly when referring to the class or to the phenotype.

Finally, there are three terms used throughout this book that are best introduced here so that the reader may derive greater benefit from their use as they occur in different contexts later on. They are terms drawn from the works of Sigmund Freud to whose ideas this text owes much in terms of its grasp of the complex and subtle subject matter.

Reaction-formation. Reaction formation is an unconscious psychological defense mechanism aimed [at reducing] anxiety about an internalized drive, belief, feeling, or behavior which is manifested by an overt behavior or stance that is the direct opposite.

Displacement-substitute. Displacement is the defense mechanism by which individuals cope with acute anxiety by transferring emotions about a stressor onto other objects or activities that are less psychologically threatening.

Object-constancy (or permanence). Object permanence is the capacity to represent objects as persisting in time and space independently of perception.

(Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development; Encyclopedia of Animal Cognition and Behavior; Springer, 2024)

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Preface

[C]aret tibi pectus inani
ambitione? caret mortis formidine et ira?
somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?
[Has every other vice
Fled with that one? Is your heart free of worthless
Ambition? Free from horror, indignation at death?
Do you laugh at dreams, miracles, magical terrors,
Witches, ghosts in the night, and Thessalian portents?]
--Horatius Flaccus (Horace), Epistle 2, ll. 206-9; A. S. Kline, trans.

This book can be blamed on a knee injury. Let me explain.

It (the book) began as an introduction to another book already written, but presently unpublished. That tome is the result of several years of labor, and still requires some revision. In the process of revision, and because it took a few years to write, the need seemed to arise for an introduction updating some of the material in a certain light, and that introduced some of the reading and research I have done subsequent to completing it that I thought would enhance the effectiveness of the general argument.

So, I began writing what I expected to be a few pages of introduction satisfying the purposes above. Coincidentally, the knee injury required me to take it easy, which basically meant not climbing the five flights of stairs to my flat several times a day, and leaving off of my usual extensive walking.

I was not happy about staying in like that, but I also saw it as an opportunity to write the new introduction and get a start on the revision without feeling guilty that I was not paying a bill or buying potatoes.

As the manuscript grew, and my knee healed, I found myself trapped indoors not by a torn ACL, but by what I was now calling a “preliminary” which, if you are not familiar with big, pretentious works of philosophy, is a kind of mega-introduction laying out the main parts of the argument to follow, and perhaps educating the reader about a topic with which he or she may be unfamiliar in its style of argument and supporting references.

Now I find myself in the awkward position, albeit with a mostly healed knee, of writing a preface to what was supposed to be an introduction, that turned into a preliminary (which the book already had), and that subsequently transformed into yet another massive tome, and so on.

Verily, as Ecclesiastes 12:12 warns, “And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is no end*; and much study *is a weariness of the flesh*.” Therefore, I found myself adding one more volume to the never-ending discourse on discourse.

This matter of updating the material in a certain light revealed itself to be something of an *existential need*, rather than a brightening up of the dark study.

In all of my books on the discourse of discourse until now, I have felt that I was slightly ahead of the tsunami of the prevailing hegemonic discourse as we receive it from the now almost entirely official mass media sources of a kind of globalist juggernaut of power, money, entertainment, consumerism, technocracy, and neocolonial military incursions (which should not be glorified with the gravitas of the term of “war”).

I realized in writing the introduction that became a book, though, that despite the fact that my mission is to follow the development of this discourse almost hour by hour, it was still getting well ahead of me even as wrote.

It is now moving so fast that if one stands still, it roars past one in a speed smear of psyops and propaganda that leaves the head spinning and the dust suspended permanently in air, like the wake of Roadrunner character in the old Looney Tunes cartoons.

Consequently, the balance of this book is spent in supporting the main idea:

The paracosmos is a symptom of a diseased imagination infected with consumer propositions. This imagination is guided by an undeveloped and misdirected will dependent upon an authoritarian hegemony. The modus operandi of this hegemony is to inculcate, indoctrinate, and debilitate to promote and sustain its prerogatives.

Is this deluge some kind of conspiracy? All I can say about that, is that the

word I just asked about is dead. Its only practical use is in the legal definition which we find in the federal and state statutes and case-law of the United States and elsewhere (e.g. *Whitfield v. United States*, 543 U.S. 209, 2005).

I am under no illusion that I have written anything with the world-historic significance of the *Communist Manifesto*, *Mein Kampf*, *Leviathan*, or the *Rights of Man*. Instead, I see my writing as a form of over-educated journalism with immediate significance to the individual reader.

I also hope it reads something like an intellectual potboiler or page-turner. This is a skill I learned trying to make school-committee meetings exciting to the readers of newspapers when I was a journalist.

However, I *do* think that I am on to something here about this moment in the history of global discourse seen almost entirely from the perspective of individual psychology and theoretical linguistics. The game has begun. The junta is going for broke. I hope this book helps make some useful sense out of it that the reader can employ in self-examination and analysis of the *Zeitgeist*.

It seems to me that the people of so-called developed nations with stable access to electricity and imports have, en mass, crossed the border from *realia* to *irreality*. I am not sure when that happened, but it does seem to me that it did happen in leaps and bounds so that it was thrust upon us before we could think about it. This book is intended as a shock to defibrillate that thinking process.

It is better to start this process in an armchair than by treading the path to bewildering tragedy and catastrophe – the classic foil of the numbness caused by consumerism.

The problem is that a significant collective of citizens, perhaps even the majority, particularly in the great hegemonic states, have embraced as “real” an imaginary world of digital gadgetry and medical wizardry where anything is possible, if not in an hallucinatory present, then “in the future.” Such delusional thinking, by citizens and their putative leaders, can only result in decisive and immediate disaster.

Paracosmos versus Paracosm

Which brings us to the immediate matter of the book's title and the nouns used frequently throughout it in two forms: *paracosm* and *paracosmos*. More is said about these terms later on. For now, let it suffice for both to refer to Jean Piaget's theories of early childhood development (the Four Stages of Cognitive Development, see below), in particular those applied to the development of reality processing and world-building, as well as to the muddled provenance of the term paracosm.

The idea of a paracosm as a part of a child's development of an effective sense of reality is discussed here in the context of Piaget's Four Stages:

Sensorimotor: Birth to 18-24 months; Object permanence

Preoperational: 2 to 7 years old; Symbolic thought

Concrete operational: Ages 7 to 11 years; Logical thought

Formal operational: Adolescence to adulthood; Scientific reasoning

Of particular importance is development in the first stage of object permanence, which is here called *object-constancy*. According to Piaget & Inhelder (2000), in early childhood, the child must construct a *permanent* cognitive representation of the universe in order to function in it autonomously. The child's construction of reality, as he calls it, refers to *how the universe really works* in an objective sense; it must be represented in some accurate way, otherwise, a misrepresentation of its will cause developmental difficulties if not also mental illness.

While parents and society certainly contribute to this development, they can also interfere with it, or even thwart it in some deliberate sense for objectives other than what the child's organic needs are. Later pathologies may even develop into chronic ones, malforming a working model of the immediate universe it occupies.

In association with the operatory nucleus of thought there develop a great number of activities structured at various degrees according to the ease with which they succeed in assimilating reality.

Causality and chance are the two essential poles between which they are distributed The obstacle to these operatory forms of causality is that reality resists deduction and involves a greater or lesser element of uncertainty. (III. Representation of the Universe: Causality and Chance)

It is the contention of this book that while a child's imperative is to "assimilate reality" through the apprehension of the mechanism of cause and effect, or conduct and consequence, *it is not necessarily the agenda of society* to facilitate that assimilation in such a way that the child would develop sovereign autonomy of thought and action in later stages of development. Most difficult for the child to grasp is the interplay between causality and chance, as lessons about the former do not seem to apply to the latter, causing cognitive dissonance. It is also the contention of this book that the resulting cognitive dissonance is exploited, rather than reconciled, to enforce a sense of *learned helplessness* in the child (Peterson, Seligman, and Maier, 1995).

Who would want to exploit a child's development? To oversimplify the matter, education now consists of the troika: *inculcate, indoctrinate, debilitate*. Without such early intervention, the child may develop into an autonomous adult with independent self-determination (sovereignty) who cannot be controlled by the consumer apparatus and its authoritarian hegemony, thus depriving both of riches and power.

Modern technological society has decayed and been corrupted to the point where its prerogative is to *exploit* reality's tendency to "resist deduction" (logic, foiled by "chance") in early childhood development in favor of the formation of a more malleable and dependent (helpless) being. The intention of this regime is to preempt the organic construction of reality Piaget describes, and replace it with an artificial construct that can be manipulated: a paracosm or the paracosmos, for the sake of stabilized economic profit benefiting an oligarchic elite and its supporting ideologies.

Such conditioning is accomplished primarily by creating an environment where statements about reality are invalid because the subject and predicate of those statements are drawn from disjunctive existential categories.

In particular, the child is taught that reality is unreal (or unreal), and that

irreality (unreality) is real. By the systematic violation of Aristotle's Rules of Thought: $A = A$, $A \neq B$, the child internalizes the doctrine that $A \neq A$, and that in reality $A = B$. In this way a boy may be a girl, a human may be a dog, war may be peace, ignorance may be strength, freedom may be slavery, and God and religion may be "evil."

Such an inversion of truth-value in thought is made possible because effective deduction (and later induction and abduction) requires two qualities the child initially lacks: functional (predicate) logic and the experience of reality-testing.

Exploiting this deficit, the combined juggernaut of the consumer apparatus and authoritarian hegemony *inculcate, indoctrinate, and debilitate* to the point where a false "reality" is installed as the world-paradigm of the child's mentality in place of the organic, and objective, reality of cause and effect balanced against the acceptance and understanding of chance and chaos.

In this book the resulting ersatz reality is referred to as the *paracosmos*. Therefore, the difference between *the* paracosmos and *a* paracosm is indicated in the differing application of the articles; *the* paracosmos is a unitary but amorphous mental and imaginary construct shared by subjects inculcated into its paradigm, whereas *a* paracosm is a term used in psychology to refer to a child's voluntary and spontaneous generation of an imaginary "play" world.

The provenance of the term *paracosm* can most prominently be found today in a paper by Stephen A. MacKeith titled "Paracosms and the Development of Fantasy in Childhood" (1984). However, there is some confusion if not contention as to who actually originated the term in the 1970's.

The claim is made in *Psychology Today* (Poulson, 2013) that, "The term Paracosm was coined during a study in the mid-1970s undertaken by British psychiatrist Stephen A. MacKeith in partnership with Robert Silvey," though Silvey's name no longer appears prominently in database citations of the article mentioned above. Also, a Web page last edited on 16 December 2011 titled "Paracosmic Immersion" on *Cyborg Anthro Wiki* has this to say about it:

The term "paracosm" was coined by Ben Vincent, a participant in

Silvey's 1976 study and a self-professed paracosmist. The concept was first described by a researcher for the BBC, Robert Silvey, with later research by British psychiatrist Stephen A. MacKeith, and British psychologist David Cohen.

Cohen enters into the matter later with the publication of *The Development of Imagination: The Private Worlds of Childhood ...* (Routledge, 1992), with Stephen A. MacKeith as coauthor. Perhaps a precursor of the concept of paracosm can be found in Singer (1966).

In part because of this confusion, and the fact that "paracosm" is not in the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Dictionary of Psychology* (as of this writing), I defer to the less common but more specific and applicable term *paracosmos*.

I believe the definite-article form of this word is more in line with what Piaget means by a child's construction of reality, though enhanced here in the sense of the *formation of an imaginary world in the adult* that is the result of an inculcated, indoctrinated, and debilitating pathology of schizotypal solipsism.

In contrast, the child's healthy use of a paracosm can be a kind of "sandbox" experimental laboratory where present and future reality functions are practiced in preparation for their application in the real world.

Examples include, for instance, a child having an imaginary "friend" in preparation for cathexis with exogamous children from other family units when socialization becomes imperative, such as in the school setting (Taylor, 1999). A child may consider a doll a "baby" and include it in the dramatic personae of its fantasy world while "playing house" with an intense sense of the reality of the play. Meantime, the child may be mimicking motherhood functions observed in maternal care for a younger sibling, or through observation of social roleplaying, and so on, in preparation for that reality later in life.

Rare pathology exists when a child, often through abuse or neglect, retreats into an imaginary world where such antagonists are artificially absent (Taylor, *op. cit.*). If processing reality is allowed and facilitated by caregivers, however, rather than being preempted and commandeered for ulterior

purposes or through neglect and/or abuse, the child will develop a healthy sense of reality processing that will serve him later in life as an adult.

The child, however, does not grasp the notion of chance or of irreversible mixing until he is in possession of reversible operations to serve him as references. Once these reversible operations have been formed, he then understands the irreversible as a resistance to *operatorial deductibility*. (Piaget, op. cit.)

In trying to make sense of the phenomenon of the pathological development of the paracosmos, this book also makes dynamic use of two works: *Tertium Organum* (1928 translation) by Pyotr Demianovich Ouspenskii, a.k.a. Peter D. (P. D.) Ouspensky; and *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* (an 1899-1900 translation) by Immanuel Kant. The short-titles used for these works are *Tertium* and *Dreams*. Why these particular books are employed becomes quite clear in the matter of the discussion of the nature of the paracosmos.

As for the size and scope of this book, I quote from Kant about his *Dreams* and its use of the voluminous work of Swedenborg:

While thus robbing the reader of some of the moments which otherwise he might have put into the study of the exhaustive discussion of the matter, without, however, being much benefited, I have taken care, nevertheless, of his sensitive taste by leaving out many of the wild chimeras ... reducing its quintessence to a few drops. I expect for that just as much gratefulness from the reader, as a certain patient believed he owed to this doctors because they made him eat only the bark of cinchona, while they might easily have compelled him to eat the whole tree. (pp. 64-5)

The main thesis is that when we embrace irreality as reality itself, we pay the price of subordinating reality to the status of irreality. By irreality I mean a certain species of unreality, a difference explained in some depth throughout the book. The reason we must subordinate reality is because if we do not, then it will serve as a constant foil to the paracosmos that has been invented *for* us by those good as doing just that.

We prefer irreality because in such a realm we do not die. We hate reality because its only certainty is that we will die. Therefore, the hegemonic

managers of this regime see to it that no extraordinary effort is made to inform the public about reality-based discourses running contrary to the prevailing discourse of irreality in the paracosmos.

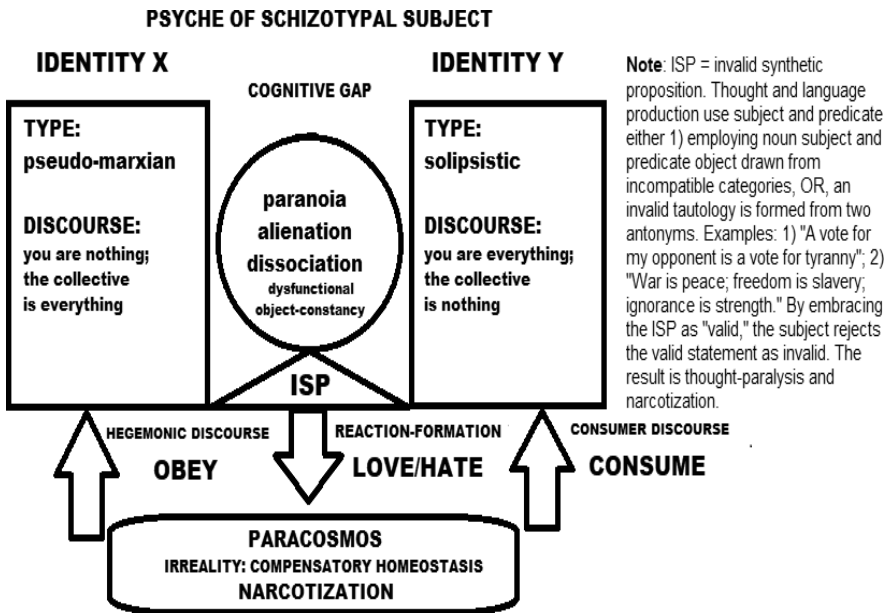
I have tried to support the more literary and conjectural efforts here with enlightening, solid, and credible peer-reviewed papers which, so far, have not been retracted for p-value hacking or plagiarism.

I think I am dropping this track at the right point in the energy level of the rave. My hope is that even though it is well past midnight, you have enough stamina and enthusiasm to dance till dawn.

--Andrew Spano

Beograd, Srbija, 2024

Schema of the Schizotypal Psyche of the Solipsistic Subject



The diagram above is a schematic summary of the thesis of this book. Below is an explanation of the diagram. Of course, a simple schema cannot build out the entire argument, and a summary explanation of it cannot replace a thoughtful investigation of the matters it raises. But it can help us better understand the matter and what is to follow in this text.

To do so now is also useful in giving the reader an overview of the gestalt of the matter so that it can be carried into the complexity of the argument to encourage an understanding of it prior to the point where it comes together in the narrative.

But first something must be said about what I see as the necessity of this book within the context of what might be called the larger public discussion of the effects of digital mass media on the prevailing psyche of the subject.

The intention of this book is to help ignite dialogue about the etiology of certain behaviours that seem to be affecting us socially, culturally, intellectually, and, perhaps, existentially. They have become of nearly universal

concern in contemporary cultures dependent upon digital technology. The hope is that the argument moves us closer to comprehensive understanding of a complex of psychological forces involved.

The main argument reflected in the above diagram is this: While the solipsistic subject is neither schizophrenic nor narcissistic, and is, therefore, “normal,” it is possessed of a schizotypal psyche or personality that has been induced not by the presence of digital technology mostly in the form of the various uses of microprocessors, but in *how that tool is used and applied, and by whom, and for what purpose.*

The ultimate result of this manufactured personality is a critical need in the subject for emotional homeostasis in the form of identity. Unable to resolve this feeling itself, the subject turns to an imaginary world called in this book the *paracosmos*, which is a hypertrophic extension of what is known in child psychology as a paracosm, or a child’s imaginary world.

While I am not in the habit of quoting myself, I should bring to the fore a part of the following narrative bearing upon this matter of the schizotypal nature of the subject’s solipsistic state. First and foremost, we are not discussing abnormal psychology, which would be the case in a discussion of schizophrenia. That pathology has symptoms shared by many others, particularly the symptom of psychosis but also a symptom as common as depression.

On a significant plane, the solipsistic subject’s schism is *imaginary*. This is not to say that it does not have a *real* effect on the subject’s wellbeing, however, as it has had the effect of transforming the realia in which the subject finds itself into a realm of *symbolic* values preventing it from seeing reality in such a way that it might benefit from insight into that the true nature of it.

These values correspond to Lacan’s tripartite schema of the *imaginary*, *symbolic*, and *real* orders of the functions of the psyche and their relationship to objects, ideas and others:

In his twenty-third seminar, Jacques Lacan framed the *sinthome* as a radical unknitting of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. He offered *le sinthome* not as a mere technical addition to the battery of psychoanalytic tools, but as a concept of paramount

importance, for its unique adequation to what he found to be a significant change in the conventional relation of subject to culture and of ego to other. (MacCannell, 2008)

Note that Lacan uses the term “*sinthome*” as a kind of conflation of the Freudian *syndrome* with the standard medical *symptom*. The syndrome and the symptom add yet another schism to the subject’s already divided self, where it might give the simultaneous impression of being aware of one category of phenomena while being unaware of another.

The characteristic ignorant “blindness” in the solipsist – even those with certified high intelligence, university degrees, and professional accomplishments – may be blamed in the subject’s inability to truly understand its world because its perception of that world is impaired and partial; reaction-formations and displacement-substitutes have camouflaged realia with symbols that are projections of the subject’s own repressed unconscious contents. Interacting with such persons when one is the target of such a projection gives one the eerie feeling of interacting with an automaton.

There is also the subject that has *partitioned* its mind, so that it might have great insight into the nature of quantum mechanics, but not a clue regarding human relationships, politics, cultural and social matters, and so on. In this way the high-functioning solipsist may resemble a point on the autism spectrum, even perhaps being erroneously diagnosed as “having” autism. However, the neurological mechanisms involved in autism are not in any way a part of the Lacanian *sinthome*.

Once thus established, the self-referential (solipsistic) identity, may derive egoic satisfaction from spectacles of “selflessness” (or “virtue-signaling”) through ideological altruism, thus uniting the disparate identities on a deep-structure level. Meanwhile, on the superego’s surface level, *guilt* is the expression of the underlying conflict (except in those with the psychopathic symptom).

Therefore, the true nature of the X-Y schism that it is a *false* one, a *sinthome*, a hide-and-seek game the subject plays with reality. The imperative that the schizotypal solipsist use the plural pronouns “they/them” for singular subject nouns belies the phenotype.

This condition did not issue *ex nihilo*, however; it has been coached, coaxed, tutored, cajoled, teased, badgered, and injected into the subject's paradigm of the world through social intimacy, the education system, and the relentless content feed of its digital gadget.

This last source of responsibility provides a vector of the viral imperatives of the consumer apparatus and its authoritarian hegemony. These imperatives are to *inculcate* and *indoctrinate* the subject with the preferred discourse of the consumer apparatus and its authoritarian hegemony, in order to *debilitate* it into *learned helplessness* (Seligman, 1995), so that it must become dependent upon them for semiotic narcotization.

The reality of the solipsistic subject's schizotypal *sinthome*, then, is that 1) the personality is ultimately unitary even in so-called cases of schizophrenic "multiple personality disorder," 2) The subject derives pleasure and satisfaction from signaling its fealty to putatively altruistic ideologies, and 3) identities X and Y depend upon each other for existence and so must maintain each other in equilibrium or go out of existence – a fate the subject's emotional template interprets as dissolution of the ego.

What significance does this parallax have for our understanding of the pathological solipsist? And what is the etiology of this pathology? A related question pertains to two characters in this narrative that are with us throughout: an authoritarian hegemony and a consumer apparatus. These are broad strokes, meaning they pose the danger of being employed as the rhetorical fallacy of the straw man.

However, it is not possible to be more specific about these two cultural, sociological, and nomological values without turning this narrative into a polemic. Therefore, we must accept that yes, there are authoritarian types of political powers of interests operating in our lives, as there have been throughout history; and yes, economy has typically been driven by the "demand side," or the consumer – particularly under the neo-Keynesian system now almost universally employed of debt-funded consumerism and even governance.

In this book, I mean no more or less than that, except to add that both are united by the financial system which supplies the debt, with the compliance of the governments that are meant to regulate it through their cen-

tral banks. These are, at least in my mind, the trivial facts of present-day economy. What is more to the point of this book, though, is the symbiosis between the schizotypal solipsist and the powers of hegemony and consumerism.

Again, here is a reminder of the main idea of this book: *The paracosmos is a symptom of a diseased imagination infected with consumer propositions. This imagination is guided by an undeveloped and misdirected will dependent upon an authoritarian hegemony. The modus operandi of this hegemony is to inculcate, indoctrinate, and debilitate to promote and sustain its prerogatives.*

Herein lies the argumentative part of this book. I argue (though not stridently, I hope) that the system of financialization (debt) that makes this symbiosis possible is the incipience, cultivation, and exploitation of the schizotypal solipsistic subject by authoritarian hegemony and the consumer apparatus.

Moreover, the tactics employed are to *inculcate, indoctrinate, and debilitate* through mass-media narcotization and an education system captured for this purpose. In other words, the latter (consumer apparatus) has a vested interest in maintaining the chronic state of the former (schizotypal solipsist), to the detriment of the individual and society, which is after all only a collection of individuals with shared interests.

The argument coalesces in the proposition that the methodology employed to ignite, develop, and sustain this symbiosis is a novel type of formation of a child's imaginary world of *a paracosm*, as described in contemporary literature, which in the adult becomes a full-fledged mental universe called here for the sake of shorthand *the paracosmos*.

Again, this raises the possibility of the straw-man in an argument, with the paracosmos as the bad guy. However, the paracosmos is neither good nor bad; it is not something anyone intends to create; it is self-creating, and it is definitely not something we can produce in a laboratory so that we can verify its existence. Rather, it is something we feel, intuit, share, and even enjoy.

It is only when the paracosmos inverts its role as a child's imaginary world and becomes the adult's "real" world that the chaos and disaster begin to

take hold only because reality itself does not tolerate such hubris and misprision. Therefore, it is also the contention of this book that we are now at that point, and that what we shall see unfold from this landmark in society at large onward is anyone's guess, but it has not been, and will not be, good.

It is this *imaginary world* of the paracosmos that the network of digital gadgetry and its content is dedicating to producing. The primary effect (benefit) of it is *narcotization* of the emotional conflict the subject suffers. As I said, I will not go into detail or provide extensive examples here in this explanation of the diagram; rather I will reiterate what you see above to make it more clear, then leave it up to the rest of the book to do its job.

The dynamic of this complex is driven by an engine requiring two opposing Identities, noted here as X and Y. These identities have developed throughout the Critical Period (ages 0-12) in the child's development chiefly of the Language Faculty (LF). Because human thought is characterized by its language features, this development is fundamental to the emergence of the crystallized (or fossilized) Identity of the adult (Vygotsky, 1962).

In the diagram X is labeled as pseudo-Marxian because it cannot be characterized by the history of true Marxist states that history has already witnessed, or even by the works of Karl Marx which are available to all and address little of what the modern-day altruist claims to have provenance in his works.

Its opposite, Y, is labeled "solipsistic" because is if the primary disposition of the subject in the paracosmos, who uses the opposite orientation (X) as a reflexive attempt to achieve psychic and emotional equilibrium and homeostasis. Therefore, throughout this narrative I also characterize Y as "self-referential," whereas the altruistic self is self-denying.

Normally, the adult will have a certain unitary identity. In a person diagnosed with schizophrenia, there may be more than one. However, we are talking only about someone who *cannot* be diagnosed as having schizoaffective disorder. This person may be diagnosed with *other* sorts or symptomology or pathology, though, such as paranoia, alienation, depression, substance abuse, or forms of neurosis.

The personality we discuss here, however, is most likely to fall within the

spectrum of a Personality Disorder, Clusters A, B, and C, as described by the DSM-5 (*MSD Manual*, Professional Version), as such subjects are united by evidence of a critical lack of early development of a sense of object-constancy. This matter is discussed at great length in this book.

Through pseudo-Marxian social conditioning, though, the subject is indoctrinated into an *altruistic* type of self-negating utilitarianism that is generally known today as *collectivism* or *Progressivism*. The primary discourse of Identity X is, "You are nothing; the collective is everything."

I should mention here at the onset, though, that there is a dimension of "being altruistic" (which is not the same thing as altruism as an "ism," or ideology) that is necessary and critical for the health continuance of human culture: namely, laboring selflessly in the present for the wellbeing of future generations.

As a form of self-sacrifice that does not directly and immediately benefit the subject, it is *being altruistic* as a verb rather than the "ism" noun. However, it seems that this impulse diminishes with what I would call *solipsistic altruism*. When being altruistic is corrupted into its "ism" form, the subject indulges in self-sacrifice (self-abnegation) for others who have for that subject no probabilistic way of bearing upon the future wellbeing of its family, ethnicity, region, nation, and even humanity at large.

This act of self-abnegation or immolation is merely a pseudo-Marxian "transfer of wealth" from the one that may have it (though it is often enough borrowed by that one from those who really do have it) to those who do not have it for one reason or another, but not always, as probability must dictate, "oppression" and a lack of quantitative equity.

From this negation arises the prevailing custom of *virtue-signaling*, which is also a kind of egotistical form of altruism where one earns self-gratification through being vocal and militant about helping others, rather than putting in the drudgery of *being altruistic*, often without any recognition whatsoever. As Matthew 6:3 states, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth ..."

Instead, the subject is in fact exploiting the recipient of the affected altruism as an excuse to exercise a reaction-formation in conjunction with a dis-

placement-substitute. By catering to the needs, wants, and even whims of the “oppressed” Other, whom the subject unconsciously loathes, fears, and feels threatened by, the negative emotions are temporarily purged or propitiated, including the guilt of even having such feelings which the subject has been indoctrinated into believing are ipso facto “bad.”

These negative emotions are exacerbated by pseudo-Marxian indoctrination early in life that the subject has received from the authorities, experts, and “professional” altruists who work together to construct a kind of altruistic-industrial complex where the authority metes out the nomological obligations, the expert at the university writes treatises about it that give it credibility where none exists, while the professional profits from the activity of the first two, possibly naïve co-conspirators.

The first two benefit from the profits of the third, knowingly or ignorantly, through cash for election campaigns in suffrage states and military support in junta states. The expert at the university and among the establishment cognoscenti (so-called public intellectuals) benefit by being lionized, published, and receiving tenurial positions and chairs in academe. (Later in this book we will visit the literary output of some of these mouthpieces for the hegemony and its consumer apparatus.)

For the subject, this apparatus or troika provides a necessary ritualistic purgation of negative emotions that resolve the conflict set up by the two schizotypal selves, which in the chart above are described as Identity-X, which is pseudo-Marxian with “equity” as its summum bonum, and Identity-Y, which is solipsistic and seeks only to propitiate its anxieties through drugs (legal and illegal) and forms of self-referential activity (such as transgressive jouissance, over-indulgence in food and alcohol, physical and mental lethargy, and so forth, covered rather well in the official list of the Seven Deadly Sins).

Altruism as an “ism” temporarily resolves the agony of the schism between the disparate and diametrically opposed selves, and therefore the identity crisis of the subject lacking a sense of object-constancy. Consequently, we may view the “ism” form as “altru-*schism*.”

Such a compensatory complex is evident in pseudo-isms such as being “nonbinary,” and projects such as “gender” militancy where the matter

of biological sex is subverted into an imaginary universe where all biological processes are suspended in favor of the compensatory mechanism. This militant regime is then guarded with cancel-culture, violence, absurd nomology, social indoctrination, and subtly crafted ideological treatises that are made possible by the hygienic dismissal of predicate logic and just plain conscious lying for profit, a matter explained later in some depth.

This compensatory avoidance mechanism, in its search for psychic and emotional equilibrium and homeostasis, may possibly include the disavowal of the subject's obvious and nonnegotiable sociological and biological antecedency, such as ethnicity, cultures of origin, nationality, and even socioeconomic class.

However, this disavowal does not obviate the genuine value of the wellbeing of the individual and society by making a sacrifice of self in the present for one's own progeny. A common example includes transmitting wealth or property to one's children before or upon one's death. By giving the next generation this assistance, one helps keep them off social services rolls, which can then focus resources on the truly needy who do not have this advantage, while providing one's progeny with a platform to perpetuate the gene pool in a robust way to the benefit of all.

At the same time, one may labor throughout one's life to make contributions directly to society (as one does, in theory, through paying taxes). One may also apportion part of one's legacy to local beneficiaries such as nature conservancies, parks, architectural and hardscape improvements, helping defray schools costs through scholarships, and simply engaging in labor directly benefiting the community.

The Fourth Pillar of Islam: Zakat, or the giving of alms, is critical to one's and society's wellbeing. However, just not becoming dependent upon society's charity is a also form of giving back to it so that these resources may be used for those who are truly victims of fate, chronic poverty, or persecution.

The activities immediately above are forms of being altruistic without diminishing the matter into the dead noun of an ideology, such as "effective altruism" and other such forms of institutionalized and financialized self-indulgence for the sake of one's own psychiatric shortcomings, or

self-enrichment through, as the old saying goes, doing well by doing good.

Being altruistic is not the same thing as being Progressive in the ideological sense, which is simply an adjunct of the altruism as an “ism” ideology. To the progressive, “the future” is the panacea. Therefore, anything done in the present is only for this future Shangi-la of peace and prosperity for all – the worst of all possible worlds. The paracosmos’ magical incantation is that “in the future” all problems will be resolved through the inevitability of Progressivism (known in this book as the Progressive Fallacy), which states that *the mere passage of time* makes everything bigger, better, and brighter, and that the past is stupid, and the present is bad.

The argument could be made that the Seven Deadly Sins (Pride, Greed, Wrath, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, and Sloth) represent an inventory of psychologically and biologically unhealthy behaviors, and not just “mortal sins” and so on. It would be difficult to argue in favor of all of them together as one’s “right,” though in general one is free to indulge in them only because efforts to prevent such indulgence tend to result in worse sins by the hegemony. It has also been pointed out that pride in oneself may negate gluttony and sloth, but with the “pride” movement now extended to the morbidly obese, this seems not to be the case.

It is also obvious that for some persons, life without the Seven Deadly is not worth living. Perhaps. But it is also clear that persons so inclined often end up in physical, psychological, and legal trouble, which may eventually make life *not* worth living. Most obviously there is the matter of spiritual trouble as well. This is not to say that we all have not found ourselves indulging in one or the other, which seems to be an integral part of learning from experience what *not* to do.

What, then, is the foil of such pitfalls in life when we are free to indulge them? Again, the answer is *being altruistic* in the spiritual sense, which means considering that 1) the past is good because others have made untold sacrifices that did not directly benefit them so that we may live now as we do, 2) the present is good because it is ontologically the only real spacetime in which anything occurs, and 3) that “the future” is and always shall be an imaginary place where we can never “be,” as being-there (Dasein) is the prerogative of the present only.

As a noun in the form of the ideology of an “ism,” altruism is a psychological *disease* affecting mostly normal subjects, and can, in fact, be deadly; it most likely, though, will simply expose the subject as a “mark” for predators and parasites to exploit before any mortal danger ensues.

Richard Dawkins, in *The Selfish Gene* (2016) employs the entire book in the service of the explanation of the difference, on a biologically and genetic level, between the mechanism of (for the sake of semantic convenience here) the two forms of altruism I describe above: the noun and the verb.

He also shows how this impulse may be applied for the benefit of others (in this case, of individual cells and their genes, or “kin altruism”), rather than as a kind of solipsistic propitiation of a schizotypal self (“handicap principle”), or social self-aggrandizement (“potlatch” dominance-signaling through donations):

Such kin altruism is only one way in which gene selfishness can translate itself into individual altruism. This book explains how it works, together with reciprocation [Kropotkin’s “mutual aid”], Darwinian theory’s other main generator of altruism. If I were ever to rewrite the book, as a late convert to the Zahavi/Grafen “handicap principle”, ... I should also give some space to Amotz Zahavi’s idea that *altruistic donation might be a “Potlatch” style of dominance signal: see how superior to you I am, I can afford to make a donation to you!* (p. ix)

The problem for us in a book about the paracosm and its effects, or even cause, of schizotypal solipsism, extends from Dawkins’ genetic arguments; both strategies of compensatory avoidance of the schizotypal complex the subject may indulge in lead to the same outcome: a gnawing sense of alienation, paranoia, other- and self-aggression in the forms of violence or self-harm, and, ultimately, general social disintegration.

Singular persons with identifiable, diagnosed, and often treated mental illnesses that are chronic and even of a biological etiology (such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder type 1) do not, even in the aggregate, lead to the disintegration of society (Penn & Martin, 1998). In fact, it is an integral society that is there for them to provide diagnosis, treatment, and, we hope, a life as meaningful and worth living as a person without such challenges.

However, when masses of normal persons are destabilized through the “meme” (Dawkins’ word from the book above) of schizotypal solipsism, which is not the same thing as the “selfishness” Dawkins describes, social, cultural, and even an existential crisis emerges that the authorities, experts, and profiteers are not in any way qualified or able to address.

It is in this morass we find ourselves today. It does not matter that “in the past” things were more chaotic from time to time and so forth. The fact is that “in the future” things will not “get better” due to the mere passage of time and the efforts of professional politicians, academic eggheads, bank loans, and consumer profiteers.

We are now faced with a crisis where it has become “normal” to be emotionally disturbed and even mentally ill, if not what can be called in everyday vernacular, “crazy.” Meantime, if someone with insight and experience provides factual evidence or verification that a certain idea, practice, law, medical procedure, or behavior is both irrational and harmful, that person is labeled “crazy” and shipped off to the fringe of culture by militant disenfranchisement, even if he or she were, at one time, at the center of it and contributed significantly to the wellbeing of general society.

Even stable persons not yet afflicted suffer from the actions of the unstable population, a portion of whom are addicted to such drugs as fentanyl and methamphetamine. Those who have dropped through the thin membrane at the bottom of society may for their short sojourn on Earth be violent and criminal, while also tending to drain public resources to the point of the dysfunction of those resources for those who truly may have benefited in the long run from them.

As the core identity of all individuals is eroded in favor of a manufactured irreality transmitted by digital gadgets and the nomological fiats of authoritarian governments, the core identity of the various cultures themselves has eroded to ineffectiveness and been replaced with an imaginary sense of being-ontology that is antireligion, anti-personal sovereignty, anti-culture, anti-tradition, anti-biology, anti-art, anti-science, and anti-life itself. It is absolute negation, which can only lead to existential crisis.

In a theological sense, such negation can be considered a dark and pervasive *evil* that cloaks its destructive effect by describing itself as the *only* true

path to freedom, happiness, and intellectual and spiritual enlightenment only because it is in a state of perpetual contradiction: good is bad, true is false, life is death, real is unreal, and so on.

But it is not necessary for us to theologize about it, since the effects we are concerned with here in *this* book are purely medical, mechanical, biological, and psychological, mostly supported by reviewed and established literature in that vein. Inasmuch as these prerogatives touch upon matters of culture such as literature, mass media, popular Scientism, financialization, hegemony, and the consumer apparatus, at base the crisis described here is *psychological*, if not psychiatric.

The approach, then, is not unlike that of Dawkins', who had much help from the evolutionary biologists preceding him as this book has had from the likes of Kant, Freud, Ouspensky, and many others. In *The Selfish Gene*, he manages to identify the genetic difference between *self-preservation* (which is what he means by "selfish") for the good of the organism, its progeny, and its community, and solipsistic and exploitative altruism which inevitably, at least in the computer models he used, leads to extinction.

In the inverted universe of the paracosmos, to be "selfish" in the biologically sustainable way described by Dawkins is evil, bad, fascist, and so forth because the organism does not surrender its resources to the predators, parasites, and opportunists of the consumer apparatus and its enabling cohorts in the hegemony who, after all, run the show and make its laws, despite a discolored patina of democracy and suffrage.

This is the ethos, or ethical aesthetic, of Identity-X, or the pseudo-Marxian self in the schizotypal subject; whereas Identity-Y, the pathological solipsist, interacts with others and the environment mainly as a source of gratification of the untamed instinctual impulses of the id, misidentifying these impulses as its feral "human right" to be and have this and that, and force everyone else into the same regime.

The authoritarian coercion enforced by the solipsist to ease its sense of a lack of object-constancy is carried out in an effort to reinforce the unstable structure of its maladaptation to reality, which in all creatures is apportioned by principles of sovereignty governed by mutual (social) assistance, as described by biologist Peter Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid* (1945).

The solipsist in power may adopt a tyrannical personality, enforcing its arbitrary will on others, or it may appear in the more modern and acceptable “democratic” guise of the gentle legislator, passing laws on behalf of the state and its analogs in the financial sector, rather than the people. Such laws generated by the needs and wants of the state and consumer apparatuses tend in effect to tyrannize the population en masse and for the long term, as laws are easy to make but hard to undo and tend to outlive even the most fastidious tyrant.

The bland bureaucrat may also calmly start military actions on behalf of the state’s benefactors in order to maximize their profits at the cost of an enormous loss of life and state treasure that can never be replaced.

In this way the pathological solipsist resembles the person diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), and is often mistaken for such a person. However, it is more likely that a person with NPD exploits the solipsist through the avenue of altruism, effective or ineffective, as the NPD is seldom altruistic whereas the solipsist is, by a lack of core identity and a need to affirm its false identity, altruistic in the ideological and psychological sense.

As this self-abnegation immediately produces a sense of self-alienation in the subject, especially during the critical period when its personality is boldly developing in many crucial ways (but chiefly psychosexually), it seeks palliation of this psychic pain in what is available to it in the environment. Today, the prevailing environmental stimulus is the digital gadget and the content it conveys.

It is also part of the thesis of this book that that environment is curated (*prepared*) by two forces: the state hegemony and its nomos, and its partner in this enterprise: consumerism and the financial industry. The combination is *generative*, resulting in the manufacture both of the paracosmos and a reification of the subject’s personality as it has been aggregated and *transformed* by its consumer profile mined by digital gadgetry.

The discourse of this personality is the opposite of the hegemonic one: “You are everything; the collective is nothing.” Therefore, this construct in the psyche of the subject directs its energy toward self-indulgence, self-centeredness, and sometimes egotism, and away from the other.