The Dark Enlightenment:
Readings from the Book of Third Nature as Political Theology

Timothy W. Luke
Department of Political Science
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University
Blacksburg, VA

Introduction

The overview explores several aspects of a small, but strangely attractive movement, namely, the "Dark Enlightenment." Because of its links to the alt-right, and some of its supporter's ties to Silicon Valley-centered venture capitalists, cyber-libertarians, and corporate entrepreneurs, no one should ignore a number of remarkable elective affinities in its political agendas and ideological alliances. In some ways, this movement arguably is yet another twist in the so-called "California Ideology" that many once saw bringing "cyber-communism" to America through the Internet economy during the 1990s.[1] In another fashion, however, one must note after two decades of economic booms, and then prolonged economic busts, how a reactionary modernism has gripped the imagination of many in Silicon Valley circles today.[2] And, the Dark Enlightenment perhaps is one of its more prominent signs.

Materially, the ideological, political, and sociological taken by the Dark Enlightenment are unusual. In a country without an established church, a feudal aristocracy or a once well-entrenched peasant economy, its followers proudly claim to be "neo-reactionaries" little awareness of how "paleo-reactionaries"

---

[1] Richard Barbrook, "Cyber-Communism: How the Americans are Spreading Communism in Cyber-Space," *The HRC Archive* (1999) [http://www.imaginaryfutures.net/2007/04/17/cyber-communism-how-the-americans-are-superseding-capitalism-in-cyberspace/]

[2] Jeff Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Nemar and the Third Reich,* **(**Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

typically arise from these missing traditional social institutions.

Within high technology industries made profitable by heavy

government investment and regulation, the neo-reactionaries, or

"NRx," claim to be radical libertarian anti-statists, presuming

that their STEM degrees or coding skills made them rich only by

dint of having far-sighted college guidance advisors or many all-

nighters at the screen. In addition, for a constitutional republic

allegedly devoted to the sustainable capitalist development of an

egalitarian industrial democracy for millions of hard-working

consumers striving to acquire the electronic goods and cybernetic

services these same high-tech firms produce, one finds disdain in

NRx thought for such values. Instead, they frequently denounce

democratic equality, the masses, and individual choice, fearing

that such popular forces now aspire only to raise taxes on the

highest fliers among America's entrepreneurial digiterati to

fritter away those monies on the undeserving poor in minority

underclass households.

"For the hardcore neo-reactionaries," according to the

Accelerationist thinker, Nick Land, "democracy is not merely

doomed. It is doom itself."[3] To be blunter about it, the neo-

reactionary movement is:

> Predisposed, in any case, to perceive the politically
> awakened masses as a howling irrational mob, it conceives

---

[3] Nick Land, *The Dark Enlightenment,* (2012) <www.thedarkenlightenment.com/the-dark-enlightenment-by-nick-land/#part1>.

the dynamics of democratization as fundamentally
degenerative: systematically consolidating and
exacerbating private vices, resentments, and deficiencies
until they reach the level of collective criminality and
comprehensive social corruption. The democratic
politician and the electorate are bound together by a
circuit of reciprocal incitement, in which each side
drives the other to ever more shameless extremities of
hooting, prancing, cannibalism, until the only
alternative to shouting is being eaten.[4]

Land's appraisal of democratic ideals is clearly negative, but it

underscores the opposing choices made during the eighteenth century

between, so to say, the "bright enlightenment" in several European

countries versus perspectives favored in the twenty-first century's

"Dark Enlightenment" expressed around the Pacific Rim. For Land,

Where the progressive enlightenment sees political ideas,
the Dark Enlightenment sees appetites. It accepts
governments are made of people, and that they will eat
well. Setting its expectations as low as reasonably
possible, it seeks only to spare civilization from
frenzied ruinous, gluttonous debauch. From Thomas Hobbes
to Hans-Herman Hoppe and beyond, it asks: How can the
sovereign power be prevented -- or at least dissuaded --
from devouring society? It consistently finds democratic
'solutions' to this problem risible, at best.[5]

The fact that earlier public figures, identified with "the

progressive enlightenment" in America, like James Madison, John

Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin or John Adams, also

shared these suspicions of "democracy," of course, is ignored.

Moreover, the "systems engineering" they embedded in the arcane

architecture of the U.S. Constitution, expressed in the pages of

---

[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

The Federalist Papers, and explicated further in The Bill of Rights

to counter-balance such fears of popular passion also is

downplayed. To enhance the drama in their new narratives about

collective social decline under modernity, Land and other neo-

reactionaries largely ignore these more complicated details.

On the one hand, this simplistic political stance perhaps

follows from the often historically uninformed, morally unfocused,

and politically-naïve streams of STEM-centered education that too

many high-tech workers endured on their way to some IPO bonanza.

Such training leaves too many of them stringing together their own

autodidactic "liberal arts" education from alt-right on-line

bloggers, science fiction mythologies or gothic horror tales in a

manner that lacks the core curriculum to build for greater

sensitivity to minding political uncertainty, freedom or choice.

Hence, many see themselves ironically as not unlike the electro-

existentialists and cyber-warriors celebrated in "The Matrix" film

trilogy. These screen-shot worldviews, in turn, justify their raw

epistemic elitism, since they fashion themselves among those

special few choosing "the red pill" and its Wonderland over "the

blue pill" of clueless unawareness.[6] On the other hand, as they

revel in Wonderland's workings, many conflate their personal

---

[6] Mencius Goldbug, *Unqualified Reservations,* (2007) <https://www.unqualified-reservations.org>. See also Scott Akin, "Deep Disagreement, The Dark Enlightenment, and the Rhetoric of the Red Pill," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (July 4, 2018) https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12331.

success and hard work in open celebrations of today's high-tech illiberal corporatocracy, as they also perhaps labor for FANG capital (Facebook, Apple, Netflix or Google) or its expanded network of consultants, out-sourcers, and suppliers. While maybe holding solid personal stock positions in the FANG sector and/or closely related IPO enterprises, the bigger visionaries also often diversify into good old-fashioned material holdings in FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate) assets. For greater peace of mind, others latch on to gold shares, blockchain currency or New Zealand boltholes. Such immense wealth often sustains libertarian values, but it today remains deeply rooted in narrow self-service, not unlike the robber barons of the Gilded Age before trust-busting broke up the big bank, oil, railway, and steel monopolies of that era.

The Accelerationist Creed

These new Masters of the Universe, then on Wall Street, downtown Seattle or scattered around the San Francisco Bay, who admire often Hoppe's history endeavors for "Getting Libertarianism Right," also are still looking for their own special common ground for freedom. They believe it lies in some twilight zone between incredibly Thomas Hobbes and Friedrich Hayek. There one finds them spinning cybersagas and searching in this or that fringe ideological lore beyond Hoppe's libertarianism for different

alternatives beyond autocracy and democracy, which usually lean

toward "alt-right" thinking.[7]

When surveying Goldbug's writings, it is clear that the degree

of ambiguity in his thoughts is high, and the conceptual aporia are

many in the amazing ideological affinities he finds running

through human history. As a result, it is difficult at times to

infer what Goldbug actually means and then decide where his project

stands. Nonetheless, for Land, "the supreme sith lord of the neo-

reactionaries, Mencius Goldbug," is to be regarded as correct in

his sociological short-takes. Since the state, or the

academic/scientific/bureaucratic formation Goldbug calls "The

Cathedral," cannot be abolished, its addiction to democracy must be

cured, and cleansed of its "systematic, degenerative, bad

government" through "neo-cameralism".[8] Looking to corporate ideals,

Goldbug's neo-cameralist formulae are plain, "a state is a business

which owns a country."[9] Believing more in the generative spirit

behind the S&P 500 rather than the degenerative afflictions of

---

[7] See Hans-Herman Hoppe, *Getting Libertarianism Right*, (Auburn, AL: Mises Institute); Christopher Chase Rachels, *White, Right, and Libertarian* (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2018), and Murray N. Rothbard, *What has Government Done to Our Money?*, fifth edition, (Auburn, AL: Mises Institute, 2005); along with the work of Nick Land, *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987–2007*, fifth edition, **(**Falmouth: Urbanatomy Electronic, 2011); Nick Land, *Calendric Dominion,* **(**Falmouth: Urbanatomy Electronic, 2013); and, Nick Land, *Templexity: Disordered Loops through Shanghai Time,* **(**Falmouth: Urbanatomy Electronic, 2014).
[8] Land, 2012: Pt. 1.
[9] Nick Land, *The Dark Enlightenment,* (2012) <www.thedarkenlightenment.com/the-dark-enlightenment-by-nick-land/#part1>.

contemporary democracy, Goldbug's statal designs mimic the

structure of an IPO:

> A state should be managed, like any other large business,
> by dividing logical ownership into negotiable shares,
> each of which yields a precise fraction of the state's
> profit. A well-run state is very profitable. Each share
> has one vote, and shareholders elect a board, which hires
> and fires managers. The business's customers are its
> residents. A profitably managed neo cameralist state
> will, like any business, serve its customers efficiently
> and effectively. Misgovernment equals management.[10]

Governments espousing liberty, equality, and fraternity, then, are

dismissed as fraudster scams. Neo-cameralist states, however, are

regarded as exemplars of managerial perfection in which government

would be the making of efficient, effective, and entrepreneurial

miracles. Goldbug graciously admits that he too is "a corporate

serf," the manor itself, "the US is nothing but a corporation," but

"it's not too crazy to say that all options -- including

restructuring and liquidation -- should be on the table".[11]

While working as young computing coders, or pre-IPO business

moguls, such grumpy "corporate serfs" apparently have a taste for

executive autocracy, a love of status, and a passion for futuristic

transhuman fantasies. Since many ordinary American citizens regard

"the brand" of the Trump Organization as more credible than the

---

[10] Ibid. Also see Rosie Gray, "Behind the Internet's Anti-Democracy Movement," *The Atlantic* (February 10, 2017) https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/02/behind-the-internets-dark-anti-democracy-movement/516243/.
[11] https://www.unqualified-reservations.org/2007/04/formalist-manifesto-originally-posted/.

legitimacy of the U.S. Constitution, this narrative about contemporary politics cannot be downplayed. In today's world, everything is being produced as, or soon reduced to, "big data." For the Masters of Big Data, there is, in turn, an increasingly less visible line between epistemic sophistication and racial supremacy, philosophical neo-reaction and actual neo-fascism, technocratic elitism and national chauvinism, anti-multiculturalism and xenophobic nationalism, or cybernetic futurism and scientific elitism. Given these ideological elective affinities, the proponents of Dark Enlightenment definitely cannot be ignored.

Unlike 1990s cyber-communism, the neo-cameralism of neo-reactionary thought undoubtedly would not be as well-known without recent endorsements by "Accelerationist" philosophers, like Nick Land. He has become more favorable about how, first, Dark Enlightenment thinkers describe the general conditions under which Accelerationism emerges. And, second, he admires the neo-reactionary readings of the economy and society that would exist should his Accelerationist program succeed. Success, of course, for the Accelerationists amounts to hastening an eventual transformative collapse of contemporary advanced industrial society as well as global capitalist exchange, which also was the agenda, according to Mackay and Avanessian of Karl Marx, "the first

Accelerationist."[12] In this regard, "accelerationism is a political

heresy; the insistence that the only radical political response to

capitalism is not to protest, disrupt, or critique, nor to await

its demise at the hands of its own contradictions, but to

accelerate its uprooting, alienating, decoding, abstractive

tendencies."[13]

Like Marx, Accelerationists regard the demise of capitalism as

a new beginning rather than the end of all that exists; but this

new beginning simply is not yet very well-named. Hence "the

general reason is that if modernity = progress = capitalism =

acceleration, then the only possible resistance amounts to

deceleration, whether through a fantasy of collective self-

sufficiency or a solo retreat into miserablism and sagacious

warnings against the treacherous counter finalities of rational

thought."[14]

In appraising some of its advocates' fantasies of collective

organic self-sufficiency, and others more solo

miserablist condemnations of the rational thought praised by the

existing order, it is clear the Dark Enlightenment is

intellectually diverse. Still, many offer harsh rejections of

their existing comfortable accommodations, namely, "liberal

---

[12]Robin Mackey and Armen Avanessian, eds., *#Accelerate Manifesto: For an Accelerationist Politics*, second edition*,* (Falmouth: Urbanomic Media, 2017).
[13] Ibid., 4.
[14] Ibid., 5-6.

capitalist democracy." With their highly stylized "Hunger Games,"

"Harry Potter," "Star Wars" or "Game of Thrones" political

imaginaries, the heroic self-imagination behind the extraordinary

political theology of neo-reactionary thinkers also allows them to

give an equally warm reception to odd new organic collectives of

self-sufficient city-states as well as vast mythic empires of

wealthy grandeur far beyond the ambit of today's fast-failing

capitalism.[15]

Unabloggers

The key "philosophes" of the Dark Enlightenment at this

juncture are a curious assortment of individuals, including Curtis

Yarvin (a computer scientist in the San Francisco Bay area, a.k.a.

"Mencius Goldbug"), Justine Tunney (a Google software engineer),

Michael Perilloux (a high-tech investor), Bruce Laiberte (a

Catholic anarchist), and more recently, the Accelerationist

thinker, Nick Land (a one-time professor of philosophy from the

University of Warwick now working as a writer in Shanghai after a

series of personal crises). In some significant ways, their *elan

vital* is not unlike Ted Kaczynski's, another Bay Area visionary who

took his fight against "industrial society and its future" into

---

[15] Frédéric Nayrat, *The Unconstructable Earth: An Ecology of Separation, (New*
York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 121-130. Also see Safiya Umosa Noble,
2018. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (New York:
NYU Press, 2018); and, Cathy O'Neil, *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data
Increases Inequality and Threaten Democracy* (New York: Broadway Books, 2017).

direct action primitivism and mail-bombing terrorism from the
Montana backwoods as "The Unabomber" a generation ago.[16] Kaczynski
also wanted to crash the forms of contemporary collective life
society, since he saw Silicon Valley and the American state seizing
control of humanity's future in the 1980s and 1990s. By turning to
direct anarchist violence, he believed he could crash "the System."
This prediction by the Unabomber was largely off-target, but his
prolonged bombing campaign was strangely arresting as radical
propaganda of the deed. Today, however, he is followed by
"Unabloggers" in the Dark Enlightenment, who believe their visions
for the future provide much better plans for the future.[17]

     Proud to take the "NRx" tag for themselves, neo-reactionary
thinkers are is diverse, but their unablogging styles are elitist
and ethnonational in tone with large measures of an obvious will to
power, rhetorical grandstanding, and a zealous eagerness to offend.
This proclivity to embrace authoritarian, anarchist, and
antihumanist ideals draws from the ever-changing *Kitschkultur* of
corporate futurism, science fiction sagas, and libertarian fiction,
which is much loved by nerdy teenagers and STEM majors at major

---

[16] Timothy W. Luke, "Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto," *Telos* (Spring 1996):
85-108.
[17] See Sadie Plant and Nick Land, "Cyberpositive;" CCRU, "Swarmachines;" Reza
Negarestini, "The Labor of the Inhuman;" and, Patricia Reed, 'Seven Prescriptions
for Accelerationism," in Mackay and Avanessian, 303-324, 321-331; 425-466; and,
521-536. Also see Arthur Gordian, "The Rise of Cultural Anarchism, *Social Matter*
(October 1, 2018) on the power of the Cathedral in the Trump era
[https://www.socialmatter.net/2018/10/01/the-rise-of-cultural-anarchism/].

research universities, after Ayn Rand, Robert Heinlein or Milton

Friedman awaken them to such fables. Eloquence is not

characteristic of Unablogger writings, because many largely spin in

the sentence fragments of born-digital electronic blogs or float on

hashtags in electronic social media. The archive of the Dark

Enlightenment, therefore, is somewhat hermetic, but it also is

voluminous, expansive, and antedates the Great Recession.[18]

Moreover, many of their arcane points are made evasively open to

multiple erroneous interpretations, which is not too perplexing in

light of the fragmented literate quality in many rational

communicative interactions in on-line discussion environments.

The contempt of NRx thinkers for almost all aspects of liberal

democracy, organic theories of government, or the notion of

positive law working through the state, is evident, however, in

Yarvin's critique of today's current correlation of forces in the

USA. For him, America has become a cohesive cluster of constant

crises, which he associates with "The Cathedral." In this

assessment of the contemporary state, oddly enough, its

functionaries work under the guidance of what Yarvin sees as "the

Left," or "the party of the educational organs, at whose head is

the press and the universities."[19] At his blog, "UR," or

Unqualified Reservations, he portrays it strangely as "our 20th-

---

[18] George Hawley, *The Alt-Right: What Everyone Needs to Know,* **(**New York: Oxford
University Press, 2018) 88-89.
[19] Goldbug, *Unqualified Reservations*, 2007).

century version of the established church" in which the "present system of government -- which might be described succinctly as an atheistic theocracy -- is accidentally similar to Puritan Massachusetts. . . this architecture of government -- theocracy secured through democratic means -- is a single continuous thread in American history."[20]

Neo-reactionary thought in these corners of the Dark Enlightenment exemplifies the tendencies Schmitt saw unfolding in the "social structures of an epoch" always needing a closer correspondence with "its metaphysical view of the world." [21] Mencius Goldbug's off-kilter NRx reading of Western civilization and Nick Land's neo-Deleuzean saga of slouching toward the Singularity with its ultimate "teleoplexy" share the same faith, if only to a degree, in digital machinic systems. For them, the social structure in our epoch is an operating system waiting to be crashed, hacked or always upgraded; and, these NRx thinkers are eager to disclose, as Unabloggers, how and why this is "what must be done" in the Dark Enlightenment through their digital discourses.

From *Bildungsbürgertum* to *Bytesbürgertum*

---

[20] Ibid.

[21] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Contest of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 45-46; and, Mackay and Avanessian, 509-520.

The self-absorption of these digiteratarian commentaries

starkly pushes the disruptive potential of apocalyptic texts, like

those of Nick Land or Sadie Plant, "to propagate and accelerate the

destitution of the human subject and its integration into the

artificial technosphere" as a path to "*antihumanist

catastrophism.*"[22] The irony of this development amidst "the Great

Acceleration" of fossil fueled globalization of the Anthropocene

since 1945 is startling.[23] Likewise, the values of an enlightened

middle class whose greater education once enabled them to guide

society in its collective *Bildung* have morphed bizarrely. In a

world organized around digital information infiltrating materiality

and ideas to connect everything to the smart systems composing the

Internet of Things, Accelerationist thought, as Beckett observes,

is often a thick tangle of cluttered confusion.   It contradicts

almost every earlier politicized intellectual project, including

"conservatism, traditional socialism, social democracy,

environmentalism, protectionism, populism, naturalism, localism and

all other ideologies that have sought to moderate or reverse the

already hugely disruptive, seemingly runaway pace of change in the

modern world."[24] Yet, it also intentionally takes this turn.

---

[22] Ibid., 20.
[23] J. R. McNeill and Peter Engelke, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).
[24] Andy Beckett, "Accelerationism: How a Fringe Philosophy Predicted the Future we Live in," *The Guardian* (May 11, 2017).

If the Anthropocene thesis is correct, the cyberian nihilist intellectuals pushing Accelerationism largely tend to ignore the details of how growing human populations, mushrooming fossil fuel use, accelerating global climate changes, spreading piles of waste plastic, and collapsing nonhuman biodiversity, which come with rapid planetary urbanization, already are fulfilling their heresies as they speak. This tendency also casts more light on how "accelerationism now gleefully explores what is escaping from human civilization" during its "anastrophic collapse into the future."[25] Such "radical heretics," however, seem also to differ today only slightly in temper and tone from well-established World Economic Forum enthusiasts, who celebrate "the Fourth Industrial Revolution."[26] Those Davos men and women are mapping out their own escape routes into another great and glorious hypertechnified future for the existing Silicon Valley-based *Besitzbürgertum* with a fuller, newer, and quicker revitalized *Bytesbürgertum*, emerging with the fifth generation wireless networks, ubiquitous autonomous

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/11/accelerationism-how-a-fringe-philosophy-predicted-the-future-we-live-in.
[25] MacKay and Avanessian, 20.
[26] See Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (2016) https://www.weforum.org/about/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-by-klaus-schwab/; Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* Schwab, (New York: Portfolio Penguin, 2017); and, Andrew McAfee and Erik Brynjolfsson, *Machine, Platform, Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2017).

systems, and greater robotization that global cybernetic monopolies see anchoring the next great transformations in capitalism.[27]

The threads in this *bytesbürgerliche* accelerationism are complicated, but they are well-worth untangling to find the political theology working this juncture in history. Many of its more audible voices are not entirely cranks, but their elective affinity for adopting ideas from a variety of reactionary movements from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ranging from aristocracy, eugenics, fascism to autarchy, elitism, and racism without much due deliberation, or only for political provocation, might aid the effort to understand where they begin, who they are, when they operate, how they gain credibility, and what they want politically.

The Book of Third Nature

The immersion of NRx thought in the theories and practices associated with social media, cyberspatial networks, and artificial intelligence is not trivial, because this nexus appears to be their origin point. Many believers in the Dark Enlightenment come to this philosophy through their everyday work with the computer codes and networked subcultures they generate. With now billions of intelligent devices tied into the networks, and with many more coming with the growing Internet of Things, "the Digital Planet" is

---

[27] James Bridle, *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future,* (New York: Verso, 2018).

a much more pervasive material reality.[28] Most of the world's

money, much of its communication, transportation, and distribution

system, and the majority of data analysis and archiving now

circulate in and out of cloud computing systems whose nebulous

banks, fronts, and storms already are beyond complete individual

comprehension. Still, it is crucial to recognize how and why

algorithms, codes, and servers are the enabling material

infrastructures constituting Accelerationism's ideal modes of

digital being. Out of the darkness of paleotechnic industrial

obsolescence, an alluring future is illuminated by photon and

electron pulses, and it brings a seductive transcendent rapture.[29]

This spiritual charge is one that the Dark Enlightenment loves to

champion.

Cyberspaces are, in one sense, one of many modalities being

made manifest in Nature's unfolding pluralization. After

millennia of living in small bands in the spaces and places of the

Earth, or "First Nature," the Neolithic revolution led to settled

agriculture, permanent dwellings, the rise of cities, and the

infamous emergence of "civilization." This new culture of cities

amid "nature" opened the books of a second nature scrawled across

---

[28] Erik Brynjolfsson, *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014).
[29] See Timothy W. Luke, *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination, and Resistance in Informational Society,* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1989); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); and, David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989).
.

the Earth by human culture, history, and society. For centuries,

human technical artifice has been reshaping wild environmental

settings with purposive-rational action, as marked traditionally

with the transformative infiltration of this "Second Nature"

fabricated out of humans' far-flung industrial and agricultural

activity over centuries. Informational modes of living, in turn,

are now pushing more iterations beyond these pre-informatic

technical artifices of "Second Nature," and gaining hyperreal

domains in a cybernetic/telematic/digitalized "Third Nature." The

multiplex imbrications of biogeophysical "First Nature" as well as

the technified artifices of "Second Nature" increasingly are

reformatted, supplemented or captured in the digital environments

in a new "Third Nature."[30]

Philosophers long have spoken about reading the Book of

Nature (twisted into terrestriality) as well as the Book of

Culture/History/Society (tethered to territoriality) as Second

Nature for insights. Now the Book of Technology (tied to

telemetrictality) as Third Nature is cracked open for its

revelations -- revealed and renewed in binary code 24x7 -- as

well.[31] The humanity's ontopolitical scripts of space and place

unfold within variously historicized readings from these books of

---

[30] See William J. Mitchell, *City of Bits: Space, Place and the Infobahn,* *(*Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

[31] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* **(**Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971)*;* and, Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of Jus Publicum Europaeum,* **(**New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2006).

three natures. Traditionally, the Nature of Creation has been pluralized, differentiated, and appropriated in terms of "firstness" and "secondness", while the *nomos* marking human presence has juxtaposed these interplays of nature's two modes in economy and society.[32]

In the Book of Third Nature, the Anthropocene is anticipated in the algorithms of cybernetic rationalization that morph "thirdness" through the cyberscape/infoscape/mediascape as the *telemetrical*. As a result, the Dark Enlightenment denounces abiding by antiquated conceptual categories imposed by orthodox discourses of first and second nature's cosmological idealism or political realism.[33] Divine revelation and classical antiquity are not their touchstone: it instead is all switching continuously between the binary of "0" and "1." Beyond the outer/inner reaches of the industrial technosphere, these epistemic visions of what is "real" do not hold fast. The Book of Third Nature is formatted in accord with Baudrillard's observations about informationalism and an understanding of the cybersphere with its systems of simulation running on the lines of hyperreality.[34]

---

[32] Timothy W. Luke, "Placing Powers/Siting Spaces: The Politics of Global and Local in the New World Order," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12 (1994), 613-628.

[33] Land, "Teleoplexy," Mackay and Avanessian, 511-520.

[34] Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); and, *Simulations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983).

Here one can recall the framing of political theology by
Schmitt. First, to what extent is it a political representation of
past/future history through some transcendent aesthetic or ethico-
political vision of a person and place in the context of the
present, which can be tied to aesthetic judgement and spiritual
affect along with more universal rational principles and reasoned
argument.[35] And, second, whether it is Wonderland, toppling the
Cathedral, accelerationist sagas or other sci-fi/cli-fi/Goth-fi
fables, these representations can anchor political theology as they
link into the "materiality" of First, Second, and Third Nature
(terrestriality, territoriality, and telemetricity) managed through
sovereign power and spiritual discourse. Most conveniently, Third
Nature is virtual, hyperreal, telemetrical and its cyberspatiality
to amorphously fuses materiality and representation in acts of the
intellect and will.

It is not as simple as Goldbug's "Cathedral," because those
networks of power cling to territorial and terrestrial roots.
Nonetheless, systems of hyperreal telemetricality spin from the
bits in televisual/cybernetic changes some believe are evaporating
modern representational differences between true and false, concept
and object, real and representation. Accelerationism essentially
accepts seeing everything anew as Third Nature: "No more mirror of
being and appearances, of the real and its concept. No more

---

[35] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology,* 36-50.

imaginary coextensity: rather, genetic miniaturization is the

dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized

united, from matrices, memory banks and command models--and with

these it can be reproduced an infinite number of times. It no

longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against

some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than

operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an

imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal, the

product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a

hyperspace without atmosphere."[36]

Third nature, then, is clusters of complex cybernetic

simulacra, copies of domains for which there are no stable

originals, but still very concrete, material, and powerful as they

nest within Second and First Nature. From these domains, NRx

thinkers have been imaginatively constructing visions for life

beyond boundaries of bits, regimes on RAM, cultures from clouds,

dominions of data, companies with code. A fascination with reading

the Book of Third Nature ontopolitically has evolved along with the

proliferation of complex networked communication and computer

systems over the past three decades. These social implications,

were anticipated over these years by informational theorists,

ranging from Hans Moravec to Nicholas Negroponte, who also spoke

---

[36] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 71.

often about humanity evolving from pushing "atoms" (matter) to generating "bits" (information).[37]

Representational imaginaries advanced by science fiction writers, like William Gibson, who shape fictive visions of history and culture around the contours of Third Nature to underscore the impact of cyberspaces with contemporary society. In *Neuromancer*, he imagines cyberspace as "a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts. . . A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding."[38] Such language is spiritual, transcendent, and mysterious. Its creators and users circulate such liturgically charged lingo as a new *illuminati*, and they often feel an omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience of some rising spirituality in digitality. With their readings from cyberian psalms in the Book of Third Nature, the waves in their telemetrical tenor easily carry content that is taken as theologically charged political revelations for the NRx movement.

Many advocates of Dark Enlightenment naturalize cyberspace, accepting it as a given that can and will be accessed at will by

---

[37] Hans Moravec, *Mind Children* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988; and Negroponte, *Being Digital*.
[38] William Gibson, *Neuromancer,* **(**New York: Ace Books, 1984), 51.

anyone astute and equipped enough to gain entry and read such

Unablogger wisdom. Yet, for other NRx networks, it is an occult

domain out-of-bounds for the "normies," who should never be granted

the complete access, authority or acceptance already gained by the

digiterati. Cybernetic control is their special realm of unique

expertise, the grounds for their autocratic authority, and the

foundation for a new political theology.

Few moments in history get a possibility for pluralizing

Nature, and the power of firms and individuals to create

entire realms of hyperreal estate on-line today has moved many

to reimagine themselves and fellow computer users as

possessing god-like attributes. Steward Brand, for example,

sees this turn at the core of Third Nature: "junior deities,

we want to be. Reality is mostly given. Virtual reality is

creatable."[39] With an ever-accelerating potential for

generating billions a year out of bits, such god talk is to be

expected. With the profits derived from such 24x7 turnover,

cyberspatial theorists easily naturalize their net

connections, because money, at least for them, will be no

object. Indeed, some imagine a new kind of immortality on the

Net in realizing such power and profit. As John Barlow

claimed, "when the yearning for human flesh has come to an

---

[39] Stewart Brand, *The Media Lab: Inventing the Future at MIT,* (New York: Viking 1987), 116.

end, what will remain? Mind may continue, uploaded into the

Net, suspended in an ecology of voltage as ambitiously capable

of self-sustenance as was its carbon-based forebears."[40]

Heaven's gate is the screen, and paradise itself could be

eternally online in the cloud.[41]

Accelerationist Fables

Such tenets in Dark Enlightenment philosophies represent the

basic vision of a new political theology.[42] Accelerationist

teachings demand the unrelenting rapid change of everything, and

target anything standing in their way, like "the Cathedral" and its

operatives. For NRx circles, the 24x7 performative intensity of

global capitalist exchange chewing up the planet, its people, life

itself at the frenetic pace of Internet time is all to be desired.

That is,

> Technology, particularly computer technology and
> capitalism, particularly the most aggressive, global
> variety, should be sped up and intensifies--either
> because this is the best way forward for humanity, or
> because there is no alternative. Accelerationists favor
> automation. They favour the further merging of the
> digital and the human. They often favour the
> deregulation of business, and drastically scaled-back
> government. . . They often believe that social and
> political upheaval has a value in itself.[43]

---

[40] Cited in Mark Slouka, *War of the Worlds: Cyberspace and the High-Tech Assault on Reality*, (New York: Basic, 1995), 11-12.
[41] Gregory Stock, *Metaman: The Merging of Humans and Machines into a Global Superorganism*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).
[42] Nullis Maximus, 2019. *The Zeroth Position,* (2019). <https://www.zerothposition.com/category/race-ethnicity/ethno-nation>.
[43] See Beckett, 2017.

This invidious intensification for NRx thinkers boosts their joint struggle to spark "end time" upheavals from Nature's exhaustions, Life's extinctions, and Society's exclusions to bring their techno-theosophical vision of "the Singularity" to pass.[44] Their antipathy for the Cathedral, its leftish apparatchiki, and less technically inclined masses, who are their enemy justify, in turn, a politics of elite autocracy by, for and of pure technology against mere humanity.

Meanwhile, back in the salons of the Dark Enlightenment, as Goldbug pieces together other parts in the puzzle from the Atlantic Republican tradition from the English Civil War to the present, which he brusquely dismisses it, suggesting if this set of developments is what "has gotten us from the Stuarts to Barack Obama. Personally, I would like a refund."[45] Goldbug also asserts "the leftward direction is, *itself*, the principle of organization," and it constitutes an on-going scam on society.[46] Looking back over nearly 400 years, he argues there has been a two-party democratic system, with Whigs and Tories, Democrats and Republicans, etc.," but, most, importantly, "the intelligentsia is always Whig. Their party is simply the party of those who want to get ahead. It is the party of celebrities, the ultra-rich, the great and the good,

---

[44] Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (New York: Viking, 2005); and, *The Age of Spiritual Machines When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence* (New York: Penguin, 2000).
[45] Goldbug, *Unqualified Reservations*.
[46] Ibid.

the flexible of conscience. Tories are always misfits, losers, or just plain stupid -- sometimes all three."[47] In this flat, chronocentric, reactionary reading, both the left and right are defined in terms of political entropy: "Right represents peace, order and security; Left represents *war, anarchy and crime.*"[48]

Since he asserts "values are inherently subjective, it is possible to argue the left can be good and the right can be bad. . . it also is quite easy to construct a very clean value system in which order is simply good and chaos is simply evil. I have chosen this path. It leaves quite a capacious cavity in the back of my skull, and allows me to call myself a reactionary."[49] Speaking as the key NRx advocate in *Unqualified Reservations*, Goldbug suggests, "it is interesting to go back and read your Chomsky. What you'll see is that Chomsky is, in every case, demanding that all political power be in the hands of the Cathedral," and the left, the Whig, the progressive, who Chomsky favors, "is always the underdog in his own mind. Yet, in objective reality, he always seems to win in the end."[50]

These NRx ontographies parameters recall, albeit from another time and context, other spiritual movements whose political

---

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] See *Spiritualism, Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy: An Eyewitness View of Occult History* (New York: Steiner Books, 200); and, Julie Chajes, *Recycled Lives: A History of Reincarnation in Blavatsk's Theosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

theologies embraced gnostic intuitive personal encounters with divine wisdom. Typically, esoteric knowledges, texts or sagas anchor such theosophy, but its variants, not surprisingly, usually claim some richer, larger or deeper reality exists that only their special wisdom can access at the hazy interface of first and second nature. At the same time, belief in extraordinary esoteric knowledge comes with the presumption that only a small elite group of special devotees can appreciate this teaching, which will bring greater spiritual, psychic, moral or ethical power to its followers. Many sects, like Freemasons, Rosicrucians, Manichaens, and Neoplatonists, have espoused such beliefs. So too did the Theosophical Society, which was organized in New York during 1875 by Helena Petronova Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, and William Quan Judge. Taken with so-called "eastern religious wisdom" and occult spiritualism, Olcott and Blavatsky moved to India (where the Society still remains active) in 1878 after scandals over some phony encounters staged to speak with the dead.[51]

Here, however, both Dark Enlightenment and Accelerationist thinkers put their digital pedal to new cybernetic metal. Some become neotheosophical proponents for seizing hold of a technoscientific divinity digitally developed by them beyond death, or "the bionic horizon," by merging cells and codes. As Broussard

---

[51] Meredith Broussard, *Artificial Unintelligence: How Computers Misunderstand the World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), 8.

suggests, such values are the most extreme "technochavinism,"

namely, "the belief that tech is always the solution," because it

is radical, revolutionary or revelatory.[52] Still, is this faith

only another mystification of capital via marketing, since the

paladins of digital salvation, like Land or Goldbug, overlook how

"digital technology has been an ordinary part of scientific and

bureaucratic life since the 1950s, and everyday life since the

1980s," even though "sophisticated marketing campaigns still have

most people convinced that tech is something new and potentially

revolutionary."[53] Reading Goldbug's or Land's overwrought rhetoric,

Broussard seems dead right, but the Dark Enlightenment goes

further. For Land, "The Cathedral" that Goldbug savages must pit

its dull leftish wallowing against sharp NRx wisdom in basic

nature/nurture terms. "As the suppressive orthodoxy of the

Cathedral becomes unstrung . . . a time of monsters is

approaching."[54] Putting it in the crudest terms, "the right likes

genes and the left likes culture," where "hereditary determinism

confronts social constructivism" unable to accept "the culture of

practical naturalism, which is to say the techno-scientific

industrial manipulation of the world."[55]

---

[52] Ibid.
[53] Land, *The Dark Enlightenment*, Pt. 4F.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Broussard, 8-9.

Nonetheless, these high-tech transformations have already happened, and their gadgets and gizmos already are routine and ordinary. They proliferate through standardized seriality: software version 1.0, 2.0, 3.0; network type in 3G, 4G, 5G; computing platform OS 10, 11, 12; chip capacity in KB, MB, GB, PB, etc. Technochavinism is that "artificial unintelligence" behind the university administration's, marketing department's and ordinary consumer's desire to relentlessly "Invent the Future" or "Put Knowledge to Work" for its own atavistic sake as well as that of technocapitalism.[56] Venture capitalists, start-up entrepreneurs, and major stockowners, however, also can cast these wares as sources of salvation, mistaking perhaps the miracles of monetary compound interest as the true signs of everlasting life. And, this salvation also sells itself regularly with yet greater future revelations, putting consumers' and producers' trained incapacities into play in Vegas at the Computer Electronics Show, in Gotham on the NASDAQ or from Seattle through Amazon. Such technochavinism reverberates at the established frequency and amplitude of today's commercial culture, which trusts in capital as a godly power. The deepest belief here remains rock-solid -- corporations, markets, entrepreneurs always are "the solution." Regardless, these myths are nothing new, quite conservative, and very compatible with NRx thought.

---

[56] Land, *The Dark Enlightenment*, Pt. 4F.

Conclusion

Nonetheless, apostles of Dark Enlightenment continue to read from the Book of Third Nature for even deeper revelations. Realizing "nature and culture compose a dynamic circuit, at the edge of nature, where fate is decided," Land asserts codes and cells can fuse together in a material transcendence beyond "our bionic horizon," and become "the threshold of conclusive nature-culture fusion at which a population becomes indistinguishable from its technology."[57] Like Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* "gene traders," who have "no identity separable from the biotechnological program that they perpetually implement upon themselves, as they commercially acquire, industrially produce, and sexually reproduce their population within a single, integral process," the "artificial unintelligence" driving digitality can, and therefore must, reprogram animality.[58] Such imperatives constitute a streak of divinity in this radical political theology, even though such revelations betray kinship with even stranger cults. These cyber-creeds indeed have been foreshadowed in the faith of earlier reactionary fellow-traveler sects, who have favored Ayn Randian meritocracy, cyborg technolibertarianism, machinic objectivity, biotic ultracomputerization, or artificial intelligence in the

---

[57] Ibid.
[58] Broussard, 2018: 8.

quest to "create a digitally enabled utopia."[59] Yet, the darker

final dystopia, which Land and other NRx thinkers propound in

creating a New World Order for a reactionary modernist

libertarianism, amounts to something not unlike "auto-

Aryanization."

That is, beyond the "religious traditionalists of the Western

orthosphere," the Dark Enlightenment envisions how "techno-

scientific auto-production specifically supplants the fixed and

sacralized essence of man as a created being, amidst the greatest

upheaval in the natural order since the emergence of eukaryotic

life, half a billion years ago."[60] In his new Genesis story, this

historic change "is not merely an evolutionary event, but the

threshold of a new '*evolutionary phase*,' or '*Homo*

autocatalyticus'."[61] Consequently, one learns this technotheosophy

goes beyond "the concerns of identity politics (racial purity), or

traditional cognitive elitism (eugenics)," because its proponents

are merging "hard/software" with "wetware" to take an "altogether

wilder and more monstrous bearing -- towards "*speciation*"[62] via

"creative conscious evolution."

---

[59] Land, *The Dark Enlightenment*, Pt. 4F. For earlier visions of this turn, see
Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-Biological Civilization* (Reading,
MA: Addison-Wesley, 1994); and, Bruce Mazlish, *The Fourth Discontinuity: The Co-
Evolution of Humans and Machines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] See Creative Conscious Evolution,
<https://www.euvolution.com/eugenics/rradical_intervention.html>. While these

While "speciation talk" pretends to avoid racism, this reading

from The Book of Third Nature parallels those made by the advocates

of Creative Conscious Evolution movement, and it rings together in

the tenor and tone of auto-Aryanization with the dreams about

"*Homo autocatalyticus*."[63] As John H. Campbell, a University of

California-Los Angeles biologist, suggests "we shall be able to

redesign our biological selves at will," and his followers see this

claim justifying "the abandonment of *Homo sapiens* as a 'relic' or

'living fossil' and the application of genetic technologies to

intrude upon the genome . . . using a DNA synthesizer. Such

eugenics would be practiced by elite groups, who achievements would

so quickly and radically outdistance the usual tempo of evolution

that within ten generations new groups will have advanced beyond

our current form to the same degree that we transcend apes."[64]

Again, these elective affinities are a bit expansive, but such new

CRISPR-coded posthuman beings will coexist with *Homo sapiens*. The

latter species, however, will become, like the Neanderthals before

the dominance of modern humans, essentially "Silizumthal" men and

women fated to fade away before the seemingly divine *Homo*

---

turns seem beyond far-fetched, Silicon Valley-minded thinkers are already taming
the radical posthuman aspirations at work here by rebranding this revolutionary
acceleration as "design anthropology" to remix ethnonational elitism, biomedical
experimentation, and technocratic oligarchy. See, for example, Travis Dumsday,
"Transhumanism, Theological Anthropology, and Modern Biological Taxonomy,"
Zygon: Journal of Religion & Science, Vol. 52, no. 3 (20170: 601-622.
[63] See John H. Campbell,
<https://www.euvolution.com/eugenics/radical_intervention.html>.
[64] Land, *The Dark Enlightenment*, Pt. 4F.

autocatalytici springing forth anew. From whatever "technoplastic

beings" recode them, these auto-Aryanizing humans will be well-

suited to "precise, scientifically informed transformations" that

arise from humanity's subsumption into its own "technosphere, where

information processing of the genome . . . brings reading and

editing into perfect coincidence."[65]

 Land is somewhat coy, but his favored source of such thinking,

John H. Campbell is forthright: "I predict that human destiny is to

elevate itself to the status of a god and beyond."[66] Likewise,

Campbell, Goldbug, and Land are mute about which humans will

elevate themselves, but majorityrights.com, speaking for Native

European Nationalists in Alliance, stresses that "Ethnogenetic

Interests," "Ethnocracy," and "The Euro-DNA Nation" must lead the

way.[67] And, Campbell highlights how such paths toward

"extradarwinian evolution," which must be "an elitist, self

referent, and generative process" will become tied to "private

human evolution."[68] Here some elective affinities in the Dark

Enlightenment's political theology are remarkably bizarre. NRx

leanings toward technotheosophy are, on the one hand, high tech

visions; but, on the other hand, they are maps for high-handed

---

[65] John H. Campbell, "The Moral Imperative of Our Future Evolution," *National Vanguard,* **(**2012) <https://nationalvanguard.org>.
[66] Native European Nationalists in Alliance, (majorityrights.com, 2019).
[67] Campbell, "The Moral Imperative."
[68] See Neoaction (2019) <neoreaction.net>.

insurrectionists intent upon burning down The Cathedral to bring

forth a new era for new "technoplastic human beings."

With this worldview, other NRx thinkers suggest at

neoreaction.net "modern history is an epic tale of social decay

under chronically bad government, masked by increasing

technological wealth." Consequently, they await some truly

transformative "versteckte Anführer," since "the core of our

solution is to find a man, and put him in charge, with a real chain

of command, and a clear ownership structure." With this agenda

before them, the opportunities for "auto-Aryanization" might well

prove to be the "patient new work on a new system" that serves at

this juncture to declare, "the only viable path to restoration of

competent government is the simple and hard way: 1) Become worthy;

2) Accept Power; 3) Rule."[69]

With their accelerationist, elitist, and separatist

aspirations for this apotheosis of auto-Aryanization, many among

the Dark Enlightenment's NRx digiterati at least are forthright.

The "programmer ethic" behind their accelerationism plainly is

pointing toward a very different "spirit of capitalism" than the

one explored by Max Weber's studies of the accumulationism behind

the Protestant ethic.[70] Nevertheless, they represent how, as

---

[69] See The Neoreaction <www.neoreaction.net>.
[70] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's, 1958).

35

Horkheimer and Adorno foresaw in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,[71] that the dynamics of Dark Enlightenment can lead directly to a dismal, but digitalized, gene-edited, and technoplastic barbarism where NRx thinkers believe their highly anticipated new posthuman beings must arise and prosper beyond the reach of the Cathedral.

---

[71] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2007).