

A fairly universally oriented concept is expressed in this essay, and yet naturally the subject coverage is weighted in a manner reflecting the writer's background and far greater familiarity in certain areas than others. I believe the dedicated reader will, however, find its method and breadth sufficiently demonstrative to provide him a new but anciently justified foothold from which to launch a far more soundly informed and oriented opinion, understanding and exploration – of moral, religious, political and economic history, patterns, and what might be termed philosophical and sociological insights – than will have been plausible through access to typical religious, mainstream and socially alternative information sources in isolation or in the light of standard explanations. I try to line up the associations in history, politics and religious sources such that the reader might more reasonably construe meaningful links, and help light certain paths. I hope I can help fall into place for the reader's sense of world history certain widely underappreciated trends such that his enriched sense of it allows him increased confidence in his own interpretations. If it informs and emboldens him to the point of coherently questioning my presentation or some adequately representative part of it, all the better. (I use 'he', 'his' and so on inclusively. No political or ideological statement is intended in this. Please substitute feminine or neutral terms if it helps you relate better to the content. It should make no difference to the substance.)

Proposing partnership with the reader, I seek to help guide an exploration among a suite of inseparable themes touching on the nature, means, origins, motivation, expression and vehicles of continuance of the power arrangements within which the world's institutions by and large operate and according to which recorded human history tends to be framed and accounted. Not expecting to comprehend the evidence neatly or in fullness, I have tried to ensure that my engagement here is responsive to a rich mass of information on the enduring methods of humanity's power relations that I seem to encounter everywhere I turn. I am an English-speaking Canadian of ethnically mixed ancestry who has studied British imperial history and jurisprudence, as well as some religious topics (packed as they are with moral discussion, symbol, interpretive discourse, and narrative and mythological wealth). I was raised in an independent-thinking family among a mix of Orthodox, Conservative and otherwise traditional Jewish community influences, as well as having some Catholic input, in and around a city known in recent decades for its calm tolerance of diversity and accommodation of mainstream and alternative alike.

This work seeks out and touches on many major recognizable symbolic reference points and legends by which civilization appears to grasp at, construct, or deduce some sense of cosmological meaning, or, in dissatisfaction, suspect a lack thereof. (I think it is a fair question what I mean here by civilization, but that is an element I hope will unfold for the reader as he progresses through the text.) Abundant reference points and directions as it may contain, the essay is oriented principally around a small handful, is aimed to follow one of them through in both title and signification as a thematic guiding element, and holds this in close association with a few others. In understanding it all, one begins somewhere; this does not mean, however, that one point necessarily supersedes another in importance.

Although the 'beginning' here is based on many unattributed co-elements and sits among a trove of no less important focal expressions of the power patterns studied, many of which could be chosen as a starting marker, my effective rallying point from which to fill in the map of how and why things are as they are in the human world has been (1) Cain and Abel: what their story means, or however much we can pry out. An allied base for this exploration has been (2) the incidence and propagation of Gnostic, mystical and ancient Vedic doctrines and comparable cosmologies. Their enduring insinuation into dominant cultural symbol – preceding and following the early Church, effecting inroads (less successfully, but not wholly *un*successfully) in Judaism and Islam, and without much resistance into the world of political justification, academic ethos, and entertainment

flavour today (in which I include most mainstream publishing) – indicates them as central ideological and multi-headed historical pivots around which religious, spiritual and intellectual ideals have become twisted and distorted to serve the ends of empire across many eras.

A relatable informational muster point has been (3) the British empire, whose perfidious (and often smugly) morally unfooted culture, lost in relativism, empiricism, positivism, utilitarianism and related thinking modes, and whose informally enduring control structures in our world's military-backed power-concentrating, mass-disempowering, mass-dehumanizing global corporatism, I have used as a kind of shorthand for the modes of evil empire across time. I have done so partly because it *is* relatable, familiar to most, partly because of the accessibility of its history to an English-speaking researcher, and partly because it is among what I have studied formally. No less, because the globally dispersed but Britain-focused power concentration denoted by 'British empire' remains, often hiding in plain view, with a deceivingly light touch and likable demeanour, among the dominant global forces today.

I use the term 'empire' itself and in this context to encapsulate a type of organized power manifestation that transcends national boundaries (indeed, in its very definition) to indicate the dominant financial, political, economic and ideological forces in today's West that underpin an unbroken continuum of power locus encompassing in time the British empire and also empires which preceded (and now succeed) it. I imply in doing so an inter-generationally sustained pyramid of power and culpability in power games both teasing and propelling the human world toward outcomes detrimental to the commonweal. I often colour empire in this sense 'evil empire'. En route, I attempt to address (4) the psychology of the tendencies behind such exercise of power, the motivating element.

When I refer to 'evil empire', I refer not to its subjects, except insofar as they by their own reckless or clearly appreciated wrong moral choices contribute to its continuance, nor even entirely to a large part of empire's loyal servants, many of whom truly know not, or at least not thoroughly, what they serve. I refer by 'evil empire' principally to the architects and intended ultimate material beneficiaries of a system of mass social arrangement who prefer to see themselves as gods – for having understood and capitalized unsentimentally on the (to them) primal lesson that might equals right, that knowledge, however obtained, however used, entails power, and that means of control do not really need justification (so that speaking of the ends justifying any means is not adequate to express their most basic position).

A governing reference in counterpoint throughout my exploration, although probably not really in the sense you might think, has been (5) the Bible (principally the Hebrew Bible) and allied traditions. I explore how, in a necessary mingling of morality with meaningful communal human aspiration within Creation, it has stood all along, in the greatest towering ethical-informational documentary presence known to humanity, for resistance to evil empire. Taken holistically in the form it arrives to us today, it stands for this (i) in, among other aspects, insisting on an 'identification' of God in thoroughly good terms and as a supreme creative and ever-potent entity beyond the conception, definition and comprehension of anybody, (ii) by its effortless association, with a flavour of obviousness, that God's way is the best way and the sooner that self-deceiving, benighted infidels of corrupt or ill intent would accept this commonsense point and adapt their ways to accord with God's good the better for them and all of us, and (iii) by its frank, and sometimes wry and insistent, portrayal of how emotional wrongfootedness emerges from deliberately wrongful choice, which in turn spawns error, which distorts and allows for the distortion of both factual and moral perception, which seeks to excuse wrongdoing through adjustment of terms and perspectival blurring and tinkering, and in turn to incline people away from good faith without them appreciating the deviousness of the enterprise by which their erroneous beliefs came to be (and thus gaining by crook at least the illusion

for Cain and those who manifest his character of some much desired company, however inauthentic the pretext on which their companionability rests).

A rallying point, however, is not quite the same as an information source; I enumerate some of mine here. Passages in history and law books; religious and cultural mores, practices, sacred texts and traditions; mainstream (global corporate) television news reports, internet commentary and journal editorials; some soundly (and many less soundly) argued or researched academic treatises or studies, from lately *and the past*; 'alternative' books (ie not published by a giant media conglomerate or any of its cultural associates) and website articles; conversations with my fellows in the course of a socio-economically and geographically varied life; direct personal observation from a participatory place within institutions, subcultures and social networks, including elite and confidentially restricted ones I have attended (without violating any lingering obligations which might have been mandated); the haunted ravings of the character in the pedestrian underpass, the 'slightly off' person on the park bench, at the health food store or frequenting the antiquarian's book aisles and edgy cafes (if such a thing can still be said to exist, if it ever could); ideological indications of artistic offerings, especially those having the embrace of establishment encouragement and approval; the express, implied and subliminally conveyed tones – what I would argue are generally imposed rather than organic – of so-called popular culture. All such may inform, and none is an illegitimate source nourishing one's wholesale societal awareness if taken in context and filtered through an intuitive and experiential lens; that is to say, the lens of everything else one has already learned, knows and understands, a lens of common sense, an open mind, a good human feel for things, and the checks and balances of reason, caution, discipline and appropriate humility.

In the presentation of this communique I rustle among the great informational treasure yet available to us in a sort of participatory demonstration, rather than trying to surmount it as a present of definitional finality, or even in all cases as marshalled evidence. The intent is rather to operate with the information, to shift oneself around within the data, in as fluid and immersively instructive a way as the written medium permits. See it from previously obscured angles. Indeed, one aims to invite participation by the reader in the document's development, which is to acknowledge up front, although one hopes it is coherent and rings true, that it has no claim to finality in form and detail. With few exceptions, I seek not to prove some tightly delivered proposition, nor on the other hand to divert you meaninglessly in a speculative maze, but to share my questions, to pull you into my reflections and conclusions, and for those to be grounded in the sheer preponderance and consistency of the patterns I have considered them to reflect. This is not to avoid the responsibility of standing behind a clear proposition, nor to condemn the reader to a yet more confused state, but truly and honestly to portray the position in which one finds himself, incapable of commanding but capable of appreciating and learning meaningful lessons within the themes explored. Inviting you into the weave also serves, I hope, to let you test its strength for yourself, to feel by pushing up against it whether it is in its whole tenable, and whether some threads or patches tend the wrong way or require replacement or adjustment.

Do I make too much of this? You read, you decide, I hope we'll see. If I may stretch the metaphor: just as one may not well judge the whole of the quilt from fingering a few squares, or putting a magnifying glass to one seam or stitch or other, so will the reader here find that it is only with a complete or nearly complete reading of this thing from front to back that he will be able to get the intended and more important of its senses. Passing judgment on it otherwise – even a part of it – would be an unreliable exercise. This is mainly because the themes explored disclose each other, as well as explain, qualify and complement. These (the 'suite of inseparable themes') typically contemplate unjustified material exploitation of the mass of humanity, and the enforcement of developmental limitation on us, by entrenched elites dependent (ultimately unsustainably) on a host of general societal conditions congenial to their ascendancy: social atomization,

ideological vacancy, cultural distraction, technical obsession, moral abdication, among others.

A person of goodwill referring to his intuition, a natural state for a normal person, who makes that reference on the basis of undistorted information (not as regular an occurrence as one would hope), is set to make good choices; thus the perpetuation of these conditions for control and suppressed agency across human communities (subjects making choices that favour elites and are not optimal or sustainable for them or their communities) depends greatly on the employment of a kit of magician's tools and conjurer's tricks: distortion of information, such that goodwill errs. The method counts broadly on (1) substitution in many aspects of subjects' lives of moral choice with (i) material choice and (ii) reflex, (2) promotion of a materialist and often tragic or at least hardened or pessimistic worldview, the cynical idea of jungle law always winning out in a 'state of nature', (3) priority of sense evidence over all other (and sense satisfaction over all other), (4) distraction, including by cynical stimulation of everyone's base impulses (so that the evildoers end up having some semblance of partnership among people no longer guided overwhelmingly by goodwill). It promotes our (5) dependency (or a sense thereof): on (i) authorities (formal, like Environment and Climate Change Canada, the 911 operator or the World Health Organization, and informal but reputed, like Greenpeace, Yuval Harari, Tiger Woods, Ian Hanomansing or the Washington Post), (ii) those perceived as safety guarantors and furnishers of necessities (military, police and other government agents, the pharmacist, Loblaw's, Toyota, the Weather Network), and on (iii) satisfaction facilitators (Apple, Netflix, the pharmacist, Loblaw's, Toyota, Cadbury, Disney, Starbucks, the pornography website); it also counts heavily on (6) social atomization, ensuring the link of accord between the exploited masses and authorities is stronger than those among the masses' own constituents, sabotaging and undoing most prospect of effectual independent coordination so that control remains hierarchical, even if abundant and even partially convincing lip service is paid to other ideals.

Evil empire requires a disingenuous employment of symbol, counting on the human subconscious, imagination and base emotions to fill in implied but unspecified aspects with links and messages that evoke consequences and confirm and perpetuate subjects' pliability to socially and culturally governing dictates and norms. It depends on its subjects locating far more implied meaning in given symbols than is directly provided, and stimulation in them of overlarge mental associations (AIDS is dirty and terrifying, the Allies were the good side in the wars, Harvard means top-notch, Police means do what you're told, Lady Gaga is a gleaming diva (a 'star'), Disney means magical fun, the supposedly refined British monarchy stands for mildness, tolerance, accommodation, glamour, and ancient right and tradition).

To divide and rule, to lose its subjects in distraction, for them to locate the objects of their enmity in other than their true exploiters, to keep elusive the specific identity of who benefits in the social structure, evil empire depends on preoccupation or simply a sense of sufficiency among the general public with practical issues elevated to ideological wedges, and their confusion by superficial opposition (Fox vs MSNBC, both components of an internally cooperative global media oligopoly promoting a generally agreed spectrum of values and opinions; Republicans vs Democrats, both colour-coded fronts for an administrative establishment answering to the same interests, operating within the same constraints, most of its leading participants motivated by similar career ambition; Arabs vs Jews, when the two are not even comparable groups (a broad ethnicity on the one hand, encompassing multiple religions, and a religious identification on the other); men vs women, who share and are bound in their social-group aspirations by the same ultimate desiderata: the best for their families, their communities and for humanity – and who desire, in a way that in the right conditions can almost completely be mutually understood, more or less the same things for themselves: material, sensual, social, spiritual and existential fulfilment).



Evil empire depends on over-ascribed significance to partial causes (both social-political and scientific: such as that evolutionary principles account for all 'rational' behaviour, or that the 'cause' of a discrete phenomenon can be isolated and attributed sufficiently by techniques of scientific observation alone, without admitting of philosophical dimensions in understanding cause). It finds operational ambit in its subjects' limited perspective, preferring that their access to holistic situational judgment allowing effective assessment of right and wrong, which might trigger innate moral response of a kind that challenges predictable compliance, be rarely available without concerted effort. For its structures to remain stable, evil empire requires adequate enjoyment of status and fear of loss among its subjects (the less specific the better, as specific fears are more easily conquered and rationalized into perspective), as well as sometimes the controlled disruption of these structures in order to effect in the social, political and economic landscapes circumscribed changes to order.

While the idea of divine right was long mis-cast and abused by empire as the preeminent justification for power, in both Christian and pre-Christian terms, post-Enlightenment power methodology requires any appeal to a serious theistic principle to be curtailed, and faith in providence sidelined, belittled, besmirched by association or cast under so much doubt as to enfeeble it as a guiding conviction. Among all the perceptual distortion, behaviouristic and statistically modelled aggregate control by superior panoptical knowledge and methods of propaganda, evil empire preferences technical aptitude over common moral purpose. It preferences involvement of its agents in the established enterprise by initiation and with mandated (that is, strictly limited) scope. It holds critical the need to foster in its professional class a predictable loyalty, either blindly given, by supposed affinity, or simply by cynical acceptance and pragmatic cooperation – rather than radically free, adaptable, morally independent, choice-based participation. How can a cowardly bully employing others in his enterprise hope to obtain his preferred results with any safe and reliable consistency if his agents think entirely for themselves and answer to a moral purpose?

The bully must, rather, depend on some attenuation of their sense of purpose or manipulation of their perception of what it is they are doing, or both; he depends on them trading their innate independence and *sense of responsibility*, as well as any faith in an involved Creator and aspiration to satisfy godly desiderata, for a sense that basic humanly or communally imperative tasks affecting the common good are being or will be (and *should be*) handled by others; he depends on them accepting that their role must by civilizational order be circumscribed. It is for the police to stop the crime occurring across the street, for the paramedics to help the fallen person on the sidewalk, for *technical* 'experts' ('surely there are experts for such-and-such decision?') to make society-governing decisions with *moral* implications, for senior managers to decide if a socially harmful action is to be taken by the company (and on their part on the basis not of any objective concept of right, but on an 'interest'-based risk assessment, the idea of interest purely material and sensual and well and truly divorced in this context from any idea of the common good, although the subject prefers not to think that far).

The more effective such perceptual manipulation is culturally responsive in very nuanced ways: if the British people, for instance, generally like to carry on with a confident self-assurance that they're doing the right thing on balance and in rational terms, based on a reasonable degree of self-informedness – then the elite-enmeshed authorities will ensure their propaganda plays carefully to that instinct. The BBC will offer concerned, thoughtful and circumspectly compassionate narrators covering various sides of a situation in apparent depth, leaving gestures of self-doubt where appropriate, keeping up an air of pluck (which counts in British for dependability), while satisfying the adventure-stimulated British imagination with a wide range of regionally-coloured insight from far-flung places to flatter their sense of comprehensive awareness. In understanding the predominating collective psyche within a culture (which they also have a hand in crafting and perpetuating), they can leave glaring omissions that go relatively unnoticed,

counting on the viewer's or listener's having been taken up in the 'responsibly' presented adventure. It is magician's distraction geared to the audience and their specialists have studied just the degree of distraction that will hit the sweet spot (too much will be caught out), allowing the career editors, whose life path often includes journalism *and* espionage, simply to omit the parts that really count in power and moral terms. It thus has the job of – in its selection and presentation of public information – helping satisfy people who generally like to see themselves as doing the right thing, with the sense that in participating in the British societal edifice, whatever their walk of life, they are.

In America NBC hoping to shape public thought might play to a culture of rapid but energetically decisive opinion changers in response to strongly emotive concepts of patriotism, liberty, unity, just cause, optimism, and higher purpose, persuasion typically offered in truncated bursts with the right affective colour and short, intense, low-information ('cut-to-the-chase'), heartfelt expressions. This is in all cases alongside a vast suite of scientifically supported techniques of subliminal suggestion in tone, colour, music, facial resemblance and expression and, for TV, background imaging. It is, in short, as any good stage magician knows, magic, in the most banal sense of the term. But more than the momentary emotional flavour experienced at a magic show, its elaborate recipe achieves a wholesale feeling about one's life and the world around him which is ongoing and person-defining, short attention span or not.

In English Canada CBC, in its role of cutting out giant swathes of informational elucidation that would cast light on the real nature of power arrangements and the exploitation of an entire nation of busy little beavers for the ends of London-centred evil empire, will both craft and respond to a culture preferring the safe option, the cautious and prudent approach, the home-structure-obsessed, slightly disapproving, 'I'll stay in my dam and *count* on the experts to sort out how we're looked after' attitude. The Canadian subject insists on his and other Canadians' *material* rights relative to government, while CBC sterilely projects a kind of sunset-over-snow curated perspective on intellectual subjects past and current for those of mildly refined tastes or aspiring to inclusion in a cozy Canadian intelligentsia. CBC both nudges and responds to the expectation that all of it, whatever the demographic target, will be kept 'very down to earth', effectively a Canadian proof of rightness. This is true for all TV audiences in their various burrows, whether Persian-carpeted and airily accoutremented, or with kids' hockey jerseys drying on the space heater and the truck charger going.

Evil empire favours reductive (and thus manipulable) concepts of Creation, of people and of communities, and ideological and operational approaches which do not acknowledge God, natural law or any objective good, or which make a show of reasonableness and credibility by acknowledging them but casting doubt over them, usually by subtle emotional means. It favours these over individual appeal to higher principles and common acceptance of a unified, ultimate, willful force of good to whom we ought to answer. It wants us, in short, simplified, dependent, predictable, exploitable; where possible, it wants us unconfident, and where there is a culture of confidence, it emphasizes a curation and occasional outright censorship of public information, partly formal and partly informal, but establishing a sense of 'mainstream' and 'fringe', so that the confident may make what they feel are good choices, assuming at least predominantly good will behind the institutions providing the information, which is not a sound assumption.

Delivery of the public information of which we speak takes many forms, with press but one; educational curricula, academic discourse, publishing, corporate information campaigns, both 'for profit and 'not for profit', is to list a few. These are challenged principally, although most temporal powers are shy to admit incompatibility with right, by intense and focused moral correctives. In particular, these are correctives favouring zealously maintained wholesome community and inter-personal values, with group and individual appeal, which answer to God, respect Creation and higher ideals than what is represented technically and materially in the civilizational establishment. These

are ideals which rather encourage a sense of unattenuated personal moral responsibility for all individual conduct, under whatever earthly command, and establish godly moral values as the primary criteria informing every personal choice.

Although efforts are made to distract from this truth, evil empire despises the expression of such information in morally oriented texts. The predominant one is the Bible, most especially instructively potent in its original language. The clarity of biblical and associated religious morality has accordingly been subject to efforts at muddying the message more than anywhere, and for the longest time in continuous human record. The distorting perceptual interference with the deepest psychic reach and widest world impact has been and remains that which is launched into the realm of religion and religious text, practice, concept and symbol. This is an area to which I accordingly devote central attention in the text, while integrating it, sensing that religion must not be treated separately in accounts and analyses of civilizational history to the spheres of political, social and economic life. It is part of the same picture.

Out of it I consider – without postulating exactly what may have been before Indian civilization, other than what we find reported tersely in Genesis – if we may gradually, in admittedly extremely broad and yet sense-enhancing strokes, map a world history in which humanity has swung and danced among these dominant ideological-political forms, which I letter code here to help the eye scan and the mind differentiate. (X) Paganistic primitivism, expressed in deceptively sophisticated terms allied to hierarchical imperial structures in ancient Indian civilization and its 'spiritual' beliefs, but with Aryan elite religio-political influence spanning the fertile crescent across Mesopotamia and into Egypt → to (B) an ethical, monotheistic, minimally hierarchical, faith-based, responsibility-based, rule-of-law-based tribal resistance expressed in Israel → to (C) a reinforcement of the pagan-imperial impulse in a seepage into Rome, via Persia, Greece and Egypt, of ancient Indo-Aryan expressions repackaged, not least in Gnostic, philosophical, metaphorical, rationalist and early Christian form, at once radiating eastward from India in atheist-nihilist, ascetic Jain and Buddhist variations → to (B2) a concurrent reinforcement and digging in of monotheistic but now foreignly-coloured Judaic identity, refined in predominantly exilic rabbinic terms, in counterpoint → to (C+) an attempted pragmatic but still power-worshipping fusion by Rome of monotheistic name with paganistic and imperial-hierarchical practice in Nicene Christianity (buttressed and lent authority with military-backed, rationalized mass administration and technological application building on Greek sophistication) → to (D) an ethical monotheistic revival in Islam just as Judaism seemed (as it turned out inaccurately) under threat of terminal ideological corruption in its Silk Route involvements and extravagances.

Thus the pillars of today's contrasting religious and ideological forces, nowadays very often confused and disguised as and infiltrated by each other, and yet in essence holding one of the basic characters sketched here. In Bible and in Islam, Cain is the man who killed his brother and, experientially wounded and self-divorced from God, founded civilization. In classical Western foundations, that is, Greek myth, Prometheus, a near analogue in function, is a tragic (endlessly suffering) *saviour* of humanity. The Vedic version, Agni, is a god. No more telling a reflection of the emphases and predilections of the three traditions exists in such comprehending shorthand, and the contrasts within this multi-angled view of essentially the same civilizational pivot inform much of my parsing.

This is not strictly a political commentary, nor a religious one. If it must be categorized, it is perhaps most closely described as a perspectival corrective accompanied by moral suggestion. As corrective it must not be understood as offering a comprehensive account of historical processes or political positions. If certain parts seem narrow or one-sided it may well be because it seems to me that the most readily available accounts are inadequate and require augmentation or counterpoint, and because I figure you already know them. My principal aim in such cases is to compensate for inadequately traced motive, cause and pattern in generally referenced accounts, or simply to fill in gaps and draw in missed connections. I don't bother with any main overview of the rise of, say,

Bolshevism, or Nazism, because such is not hard to find. You might know everything you can read on every last panel at the Holocaust museum. You might have filled your head with monographs and critical debate on the subject, controversial authors like Norman Finkelstein. You might even be aware of Antony Sutton's reactionary but instructive book describing how Wall Street financed the rise of Hitler and the Nazis in support of 'corporate socialism'. But have you covered *why*?

Can you identify Wall Street's enduring loyalties and broader political purpose in the context of empire? It's not all just about people and groups grasping around blindly for money in an unregulated global economy. Money too, in its prevailing form, is just a construct of power, and much of global economy is a planned affair. What ends did Hitler and Nazism serve? Why were the major 20th-century wars prosecuted by all sides even while peaceful accommodation was an obvious possibility on all sides? Why is no complete copy of the Hebrew Bible older than eleven hundred years available to us? I do not approach these directly, but they represent the genre of question with which we engage here, and which we encourage be posed. Why is it not enough to blame happenstance, an unfortunate coalescence of conditions at the wrong time? Incompetence, blowback, chaos? Because a preponderance of patterns shows us a wider theme, a determined purpose, advance intent and coordinated planning among cynical elites to bring about conditions favourable to their continued material and informational domination of mankind, imperfect as their campaign may be. That does not always hold the answers, but once their tendencies and patterns are understood, it is only reasonable for an acknowledgement of their agency to form or at least accompany the starting ground of any inquiry. How does Zionism fit in, messianism? Those are areas I do attempt to broach.

No point that seems to be made here *depends* on any 'fringe' theory. It depends neither on an empirical line-up nor exclusively on deductive reason, but rather on a transfer of intuitive determination through a shared weave of perceived associations between one theme, trend, historical occurrence, idea, textual reference or other explored phenomenon and another. This is not because I aim for vagueness or seek to avoid disproof – on the contrary: I strive for precision and clarity – but because I can think of no other way to try and orient you in my thinking, that we might share some common points of reference around which to hash out an ever better understanding. Thus, your visceral objection to any single element need not be cause to discount the exploratory process nor to turn away from the whole. There are many excursive involvements in what is to follow which may evoke eye rolls, strain credulity or patience. Of few things it may be truer said, however, that this essay ought not to be judged until read in its entirety. If you think you object to it or to some substantial part of it before you have done so, you will not really know to what you are objecting. Come at it not only with an open mind, but a willingness to suspend your protest until you have read to the end, and we may just find the basis for sincere engagement with these themes, with each other – our partnership – and with God, in the context of some wider perceptual and, one hopes, moral clarity.