

Psychedelic Immortality: A Prolegomena

1. In *Lifecycles: Reincarnation and the Web of Life*, Christopher M. Bache observes that ‘the current clinical picture suggests... that whenever consciousness is probed with a technique capable of penetrating to particularly deep levels of the psyche, former-life memories may emerge’ and that one of these techniques is the ‘use of certain consciousness-expanding drugs’ (Bache 1994, 44). But, although the evidence for reincarnation is overwhelming, Bache admits that we still do not have an explanation for *how* reincarnation occurs (Bache 1994, 14). In my forthcoming book *Psychedelic Immortality: Nietzschean Perspectives on Reincarnation, Femtheogens, and Philosophy*, I offer explanations for how we can and why we should use psychedelics to facilitate past-life recollection as well as maintain that western civilization should return to an ancient model of education which both situates pedagogy within the context of reincarnation and utilizes psychedelics to facilitate philosophical divinization:—using philosophical inquiry as a means of awakening one’s inner divinity; past-life recollection and philosophical inspiration being two manifestations of the same awakening. The term ‘immortality’ in the book’s title is meant to indicate how it builds upon Brian C. Muraresku’s *The Immortality Key: The Secret History of the Religion with No Name* which, besides making a strong case for the use of psychedelics at the Eleusinian mysteries—the West’s ‘first, undisputed spiritual capital’ (Muraresku 2020, 25. Cf. Wasson et al. 2008)—, maintains that philosophy has always been about divinization:

True philosophy has nothing to do with books.... Behind all the mental gymnastics was a timeless teaching, mentioned only briefly by Socrates in Plato’s *Phaedo*: ‘those who engage with philosophy in the right way are practicing nothing else but dying and being dead’ (Muraresku 2020, 320).

Practice dying, the philosophers have been telling us for twenty-five hundred years. So that when your time comes, you won’t even feel the flames that engulf everything you ever knew. This has happened before, you’ll remember. This is not dying. This is becoming God. The God you’ve always been (Muraresku 2020, 374-75).

There is significant evidence that the first western philosophers (the *presocratics* or *preplatonic*s) used psychedelics to facilitate their divinization: evidence such as how Heraclitus was a priest of Eleusinian Demeter whose imbibement of the sacrament is suggested by his being known as a kukeon-drinker; Carl A. P. Ruck's view that Pythagoras entered into deified states of ecstasy in his incubation chamber thanks to sacred drugs (Ruck 2015. Cf. Muraresku 2020, 279); Parmenides' Phocaeen ancestry—the best evidence for psychedelic wine comes from Magna Graecia thanks to the Phocaeans who also 'carried the cult of Demeter and Persephone all the way from Anatolia to found the Greek colony of Emporion in Spain'(Muraresku 2020, 319); Empedocles' enigmatic fragment describing a magical *pharmaka* as a remedy for death (Muraresku 2020, 325); and that Democritus—of whom it was said that he traveled into the boundless—'provided a taxonomy of plants, Pliny tells us, that induce various visions and exalted states of consciousness' (Sjöstedt-Hughes and Hauskeller 2023, 1-2). Muraresku's speaking of psychedelic experiences in terms of 'dying before you die' coincides with how philosophical divinization was pursued for centuries within the context of reincarnation—just as 'philosophy, for the Pythagoreans, has no other meaning and context than the narrative of transmigration' (Luchte 2009, 53), virtually all of the presocratics and the entire Pythagorean-Platonic tradition down to Plotinus held reincarnation to be fundamental to the whole sense of the meaning of life (McEvilley 2002, 149, note 92)—but, whereas Muraresku appears to use 'dying before you die' so as to metaphorically convey the ego-death which characterizes psychedelic experiences, I take this expression in a more literal direction as conveying that psychedelic, philosophical, and/or religious experiences are intra-lifetime instances of rebirth which better enable one to direct the succession of one's future lifetimes. I also suggest that this ancient approach to learning helps us address a spiritual crisis in western education which William A. Richards summarizes as follows:

The development of the imaginative capacity to ponder one's place in the cosmos, of sensibilities of wonder and awe, and of mind-body awareness seems to receive comparatively short shrift in the present educational environment, where test scores and instrumental thinking still tend to preoccupy administrators, teachers and students.... The youthful exuberance for discovery, learning, and imagining is all too often displaced by a desire merely to unreflectively consume entertainment and material goods (Richards 2018, 153).

If children within cultures that believe in reincarnation tend to receive more recognition and attentive childcare than kids in secular or non-reincarnationist cultures, (Burley 2016, 101. Cf. Gupta 2002, 36 and Gottlieb 2006, 160) and people in general are more likely to remember their past lives if they live in a reincarnationist society (Burley 2016, 53-54)—'environment is the greatest factor to remember the past lives' (Stevenson 1974, 89)—, then *re-situating* western education within the context of reincarnation will not only better enable us to nurture what must be thought of as young people's spiritual development but will even nurture the capacity for past-life recollection that we all possess to some degree.

2. However, encouraging a return to this ancient model of education is just part of my larger concern to provide a spiritual foundation for western democracy; one that will facilitate a renaissance (rebirth) of western civilization by addressing an existential threat to our survival as species. *Psychedelic Immortality* is the result of over a decade of thinking about psychedelics and reincarnation through the lens of my formal philosophy education but, over the last several years,

my concern has shifted from ‘how can reincarnation, psychedelics, and philosophy incite significant and sustained cultural-political progress?’ to ‘given the ascendance of post-truth worldviews, is it possible for any ideas or facts to exert the world-shaping influence which philosophy has hitherto had throughout human history?’ Friedrich Nietzsche’s statement that ‘thoughts that come on the feet of doves steer the world’ (Nietzsche 2010, II §22) indicates the history-making efficacy of ideas that Alfred North Whitehead also notes when he writes that ‘[philosophy] is the most effective of all intellectual pursuits. It builds cathedrals before the workmen have moved a stone, and it destroys them before the elements have worn down their arches’ (Whitehead 1967, vii). But the capacity of philosophical ideas to change the world—or, similarly, our species’ capacity for social-spiritual progress—depends on our ability to reach a consensus concerning at least some basic facts and values, and, if contemporary western culture’s inability to do so derives in large part from its religion vs. science schism, then, as a religious idea that is also scientifically and philosophical verifiable, reincarnation is able to create a common ground upon which communities who usually talk past each other can engage in mutually transformative and enriching dialogues; thereby better enabling other ideas, truths, facts, and values to steer the world. In this article, I’ll briefly summarize how I intend *Psychedelic Immortality* to provide a sense sobriety and optimism in what for many is shaping up to be an increasing disorienting and disconcerting century, and the basic outline of what’s to come is as follows. – First, we’ll clarify what it means to ‘prove’ that reincarnation is a fact as well as preempt materialistic objections (§§3-5). We’ll then consider *how we can* use psychedelics to facilitate past-life recollection and/or divinization as religious experiences that, in addition to their more dramatic instances, occur subtly throughout our everyday lives (§§6-9). But, in order to explain *why we should* use psychedelics in this way, §10 discusses the limitations and problems of liberalism before §11 argues both that significant progress necessitates the very transformation of human subjectivity that liberalism precludes and that, although religion must be part of creating a healthier paradigm, doing so also requires that we, as a species, confront abuses of religion. §12 draws upon the distinction between esoteric and exoteric religious traditions so as to chart a path towards an ontological consensus between religion(s) and science which will function as the aforementioned common ground. And §§13-16 discuss how *Psychedelic Immortality* builds upon my first book so as ground western democracy and education on a specifically feminine religiosity. Finally, §§17 and 18 conclude by reflecting on how all of this is just my way of working from the left side of the political spectrum to encourage the bi-partisanship, moderation, and cooperation needed to ensure that we continue to evolve as both a culture and as a species.

3. Since different areas of inquiry have different degrees of certainty, we shouldn’t hold research in a less certain area of inquiry to the standards from a more certain area of inquiry, and there are three interrelated aspects of Nietzsche’s view of objectivity that are important to keep in mind when assessing the veracity of reincarnation because doing so helps us avoid the dual dangers of either rigid dogmatism or excessive skepticism. First, the mainstream conception of objectivity as consisting in an impartial or neutral state of mind is arguably far more of a romantic fiction than mystical states of consciousness and, as Victor Sōgen Hori notes, it’s function is often ‘not epistemological, to distinguish a mode of knowledge, but ideological, to confer authority on a particular group of people—scholars’ (Hori 2005, xix). But Nietzsche avoids the problem of having to appeal to an implausible state of mind by maintaining that, like truth and falsity, ‘objectivity’ is a matter of degree which depends on the number and diversity of perspectives that one brings to a phenomenon (Nietzsche 2017, III §12). This is why the objectivity of our proof of reincarnation derives from approaching it from as many perspectives as possible. When combined

with the copious empirical evidence for rebirth collected by people like Ian Stevenson (Stevenson 2001), our explanation of reincarnation is meant to show that, at the very least, reincarnation is a far more plausible idea than either personal immortality or certain death. (In fact, there's a sense in which it's important that we do not have a definitive proof or explanation of reincarnation insofar as such things as the tyrannical behavior of the Pythagoreans (Hermann 2004, 50-90), the oppressive tendencies of the Indian varna system, and the Papel people's practice of killing children who are thought to be born without souls (Burley 2016, 101) are just some examples of what can happen when people believe that they possess the dogmatic truth of how rebirth occurs.) Second, Nietzsche maintained that 'objectivity' also depends on our '*having in our power* the ability to engage and disengage our "pros" and "cons"' (Nietzsche 2017, III §12); that is, on our ability to be aware of why we want to either believe or not believe in particular ideas so that we can take our preferences into consideration as we prioritize and align our beliefs according to their degrees of certainty. Since objective neutrality is not an option, people who do not believe in rebirth cannot deny that they don't want to believe in it and, in order to show readers that the resistance which they may feel towards either reincarnation or psychedelics is the result of cultural conditioning—thus further lightening the burden to definitely 'prove' reincarnation—, chapter 4 of my book chronicles how both belief in reincarnation and the use of psychedelics have been suppressed for generations by religious, scientific, and political institutions. Finally, many people who undergo mystical revelations describe them as possessing a self-evident authoritativeness (Griffiths and MacLean 2017, 144-45)—as being experiences of a reality that is more real than the everyday world—and Nietzsche relates his own experience of how certain ideas seem to possess an intrinsic authority when he writes of 'the strangest "objectivity" possible: absolute certainty about what I *am* projects itself onto some arbitrary piece of reality, – the truth about myself speaks from out of awe-inspiring depth' (Nietzsche 2005, §4). Cultural conditioning notwithstanding, there is something to be said about the 'objectivity' which certain idea appear to possess due to their intuitive appeal, but the flip side to this is that some ideas—no matter how definitively proven they may be—will never resonate with some people. Shallow or immature souls in particular tend to be characterized by either an indifference or hostility towards religious ideas, and it for the sake of avoiding the futile exercise of trying to convince the invincible that this book continues Bache's descriptive rather than argumentative approach (Bache 1994, 13); describing a reincarnationist worldview by unpacking all the ways in which reincarnation can change the way we think and feel about ourselves and the world so that readers will be persuaded more by the big picture than by a single definitive argument.

4. Now, the point of speaking of shallow souls is not to disparage anyone who remains skeptical about reincarnation but rather to prevent either excessive skepticism or bad-faith criticisms from standing in the way of the progress that we can make by building upon an idea that is coming to light in psychedelic therapy:

The results [of a psychedelic experiment] show increased wellbeing because the psychedelic experience supposedly reorients people away from a hard materialistic perspective: 'A significant positive correlation was found between shifts away from hard-materialism (the NPB factor) and changes in well-being.' (Hauskeller 2023, 125. Cf. Timmermann et al. 2021, 11)

The ideology of liberal individualism that denies the need for human community and connection.... These established social conditions can be non-idiopathic

reasons for symptoms of alienation such as anger, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, desperation (Hauskeller 2023, 128).

One of *Psychedelic Immortality*'s major themes is that the scientific-materialistic / liberal-secular paradigm which characterizes mainstream western culture is not just intellectually untenable but also personally and culturally toxic. And, while we'll postpone our critique of liberalism until ¶¶10 and 11, we'll now critique scientific materialism so as to prevent the subsequent explanation of reincarnation from being read within a paradigm that virtually precludes its existence from the start. For Nietzsche, materialism's 'absurdity consists in this, that [the materialist] proceeds from objectivity, while in truth everything objective is conditioned by the knowing subject' (Nietzsche 2006, 130). Since, by definition, unconscious matter can only be known indirectly as a representation of consciousness, materialism qua the reduction of consciousness to matter tries to explain the immediacy of consciousness in terms of a representation our knowledge of which presupposes consciousness. Likewise, Whitehead notes that 'the whole concept of materialism only applies to very abstract entities, the products of logical discernment,' (Whitehead 1967, 79)—that is, the very idea of inanimate matter is an intellectual abstraction, and, as such, shouldn't be considered to be an actual entity—but Whitehead also conveys the toxic meaninglessness of the materialistic worldview when he writes that 'the assumption of the bare valuelessness of mere matter [has] led to a lack of reverence in the treatment of natural or artistic beauty' (Whitehead 1967, 17). To be sure, given the success of scientific materialism in previous centuries as well as all the ways that science continues to improve our lives, it's understandable that scientific materialism continues to be a mainstream academic perspective, but we can see how its longevity is also the result of its toxicity by unpacking Michael Pollan's observation that 'science has little interest in, and tolerance for, the testimony of the individual; in this it is, curiously, much like an organized religion' (Pollan 2019, 42). 'Western science came out of a hierarchical, conformist, misogynist, all-male medieval clerical culture,' (Eisler and Fry 2019, 3) and Rupert Sheldrake indicates the role of machismo in perpetuating scientific materialism when he writes that, 'for believers in the materialist theory of nature, living unhappily can seem like an act of heroism, an unflinching fidelity to objective truth. But philosophical materialism is not the truth; it is a world-view, a belief system' (Sheldrake 2017, 42-43). In short, it's precisely the nihilistic toxicity of materialism which leads many male scientists to invest it with a quasi-religious authority because, like their self-image of being purely rational or objective, it fulfills their emotional need to conform to traditional ideals of masculinity. And, after being accused of being 'a failed prophet' leading 'a veritable cult' (van Lommel 2010, 154-55) for his research into near-death experiences (NDEs), the cardiologist Pim van Lommel can personally attest to the emotional investment which many scientists have in materialism: 'research into NDE and other manifestations of nonlocal consciousness that cannot be accounted for by current Western science often evokes ridicule or rejection as well as emotional responses or prejudices' (van Lommel 2010, 311). Just as religious fundamentalists tend to use whatever authority they've acquired to force their views on others, van Lommel reminds us that 'the influence of well-known leading scientists must certainly not be underestimated because they often occupy important positions in national and international scientific advisory committees and they have seats on the boards of major scientific journals, where they determine whether or not an article will be published' (van Lommel 2010, 312). But Pollan's mention of 'the snicker test' (Pollan 2019, 57-58) which with psychedelic researchers have had to contend is an example of how, beyond institutional disenfranchisement, ideas and facts that

contravene scientific materialism are also suppressed at the personal or micro level by tactics of ridicule and trivialization.

5. Once again, the point of mentioning all this is not to disparage modern science, but rather to show that, just as the west's technological capacities and geopolitical influence have exceeded its cultural-spiritual sophistication to an arguably dangerous degree, modern science, despite its sophistication, retains a dogmatically materialistic *scientism* the dangerousness of which consists in how it's hostility to inconvenient truths dovetails with that of *anti-scientism*. It's precisely in order to improve academic and/or scientific culture that I propose we resituate western education within the context of reincarnation and, to this end, ¶¶6-9 will now provide the elevator-pitch version of my account of how we can use psychedelics to facilitate past-life recollection.

6. The idea that the brain is an experiential reducing valve is an old one in the psychedelic community, and the way in which the brain filters experience has been recently elucidated by the correlation of the ego with the brain's default mode network (DMN):—'a critical and centrally located hub of brain activity that links parts of the cerebral cortex to deeper (and older) structures involved in memory and emotion' (Pollan 2019, 301). As the neural correlate of repression, the DMN prevents the deeper levels of the psyche from becoming conscious by exerting an inhibitory influence on the deeper brain structures and, while this is necessary in order to function in daily life, a hyper-active DMN—as well as the excessively rigid modes of thought that follow—contributes to conditions such as addiction, obsessions, eating disorders, and depression (Pollan 2019, 307). Psychedelics lessen the repressive function of the DMN by reducing its blood supply which alleviates said maladies by disorganizing brain activity so that an older system re-emerges in which the whole brain is able to communicate (Pollan 2019, 307). It's by relaxing the egoistic reducing valve in this way that psychedelics enable one to probe the deeper levels of the psyche, and we can better understand how this allows former-life memories to emerge when we disabuse ourselves of a pervasive idea which continues to discourage many from even entertaining the idea of reincarnation; namely, that the brain produces consciousness. – This idea is seriously called into question by several facts such as the NDE studies which indicate that 'consciousness, with memories and occasional perception, can be experienced *during* a period... when the brain shows no measurable activity' (van Lommel 2010, 161); the phenomenon of neuroplasticity which shows how the mind is capable of changing the anatomy and function of the brain and, hence, is not a mere epiphenomenon of brain activity (van Lommel 2010, 198-200); and the condition of hydrocephalus which has shown that people can live healthy and intelligent lives with virtually no brains (Barnard 2011, 140-41). A more plausible idea is that 'the brain does not *produce* consciousness; instead, it receives and responds to those preexisting fields of consciousness that serve its own practical needs' (Barnard 2011, 140), and van Lommel maintains that the brain *and the body* 'function as a relay station receiving part of the overall consciousness' (van Lommel 2010, 247) that our next paragraph will link to the individual fields of consciousness. Just as destroying a television set does not destroy the television programs that it broadcasts, destroying the brain does not destroy the fields of consciousness the continuous flow of which accounts for reincarnation both in the sense of the transition between lifetimes and as the continuous change which characterizes each lifetime as such. (Due to the constant breakdown and regeneration of molecules and cells, the information that consciousness fields contain about the development and design of the body with all its different systems and specialized functions plays an essential role in maintaining the continuity of bodily functions. And it's because life itself is a process of continual change that it's a red herring to demand proof that one lifetime retains the exact identity of a previous one.) Van Lommel suggests that it is DNA in the cell nucleus which serves as the

medium by which fields of consciousness ranging from the cosmic/universal to the person-specific are both accessed and stored, and that ‘the reciprocal information transfer takes place via resonance with specific frequencies, even at the smallest subcellular level of electron spin resonance and nuclear magnetic resonance (quantum spin correlation)’ (van Lommel 2010, 278). In order to get a better sense of reincarnation’s cosmic dimension, we’ll now further explore the idea of fields of overall consciousness.

7. A clear example of how, as Graham Smetham observes, the academic community allows some of its members ‘to flagrantly misrepresent the truth of contemporary physics’ (Smetham 2010, 328) in order to keep materialism on life-support, as it were, is how materialists like Dan Dennett simply ignore quantum physics (Smetham 2010, 29); especially the evidence which quantum physics provides for the existence of the nonlocal (overall) consciousness which van Lommel also describes as being ‘the nonlocal repository of all past experience’ (van Lommel 2010, 278-79): ‘memories of a previous life can be explained with the idea of a nonlocal consciousness because it posits a nonlocal connection with the consciousness of somebody who has died’ (van Lommel 2010, 316-17). Along with replacing the idea of the brain producing consciousness with that of the brain receiving consciousness, shifting from a materialistic worldview to one in which consciousness-memory is ontologically foundational makes reincarnation even more plausible. And, whereas the ontological status of memory has been supported scientifically by Rupert Sheldrake’s work on morphogenetic fields (Sheldrake 1995 and 2009) as well as by Ervin Laszlo’s work on the akashic field (Laszlo 2004), I combine such research with philosophical accounts of ontological memory so as to show how what we anthropocentrically think of as reincarnation is part of a larger process of cosmic evolution. – Since idealism is as much an instance of what Whitehead calls the fallacy of misplaced concreteness:—mistaking intellectual abstractions for actuality—as materialism (Whitehead 1967, 58), I take up C. S. Peirce’s view that ‘the one intelligible theory of the universe is that of objective idealism, that matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws’ (Peirce 1992, 293) so as to show that nonlocal consciousness is also *nondual* in the sense that it is inseparable from matter. Peirce’s account of how matter evolved from mind is as follows. As the only phenomenon which, by definition, cannot be explained, chance—which Peirce identifies with the pure spontaneity of mind—is the only final explanation at which (cosmo)logical inquiry can arrive and, if everything that can happen by chance, sometime or other will happen, then, at some time in our cosmic past, chance (nonlocal consciousness) produced the tendency to take habits:—a generalizing tendency which causes actions in the future to follow some generalization of past actions, and which, over time, produced matter by confining the spontaneity of mind within general habits / natural laws (Peirce 1992, 220, 277). With respect to reincarnation, what’s important about Peirce’s evolutionary cosmology is that he categorizes natural laws or generalities as symbols (Peirce 1998, 292) and, according to André De Tienne, a symbol’s unity of consistency ‘stems from the representational process in which Peirce saw the manifestation of the phenomenon of personal identity’ (De Tienne 2012, 20): ‘a person is a symbol’ (De Tienne 2012, 26) and ‘every symbol, every general idea, shares the living and unified feeling of a person’ (De Tienne 2012, 27). In other words, if Peirce’s habits/laws’ mental origin enables us to identify them with the aforementioned fields of consciousness, then the fields which account for reincarnation are also the laws which guide cosmic evolution. Furthermore, the generality of Peircean personhood coincides with the Tibetan and Native American belief in multiple simultaneous rebirths—according to which, a soul can be reborn into any number of entities at the same time (Burley 2016, 71-72) just as a television program can simultaneously appear on multiple

sets—and we'll now see how each field of consciousness reflects the totality of overall consciousness by turning to another view of ontological memory and generality.

8. Gilles Deleuze argues for the existence of ontological memory (the pure past) with the following paradox of time: 'if a new present were required for the past to be constituted as past, then the former present would never pass and the new one would never arrive. No present would ever pass were it not past "at the same time" as it is present; no past would ever be constituted unless it were first constituted "at the same time" as it was present' (Deleuze 1994, 81). That is, if present moments are completely separate from the past, then they could never pass into the past but, since they do, this means that the past exists simultaneously with—and, hence, independently of—each present moment. This pure past is the totality of the past which both coexists with each present thereby enabling the latter to pass and conserves itself independently of the passing present. Henri Bergson conceived of ontological memory as an inverted cone with the top/base being the pure past, the bottom/point being the present moment, and each section or slice of the cone being an individual duration which expresses the totality of memory in its own way. And it's the continual flow of durations which constitutes both everyday experience and reincarnation:

The succession of present presents is only the manifestation of something more profound—namely, the manner in which each continues the whole life, but at a different level or degree to the preceding, since all levels and degrees coexist and present themselves for our choice on the basis of a past which was never present.... what we say of a life may be said of several lives. Since each is a passing present, one life may replay another at a different level, as if the philosopher and the pig, the criminal and the saint, played out the same past at different levels of a gigantic cone. This is what we call metempsychosis (Deleuze 1994, 83).

As a continuum of durations each of which 'is entirely distinct from the individuals which envelop it in variable and complementary degrees of clarity' (Deleuze 1990, 111), we can think of ontological memory as being composed of an infinite number of virtual or potential generalities which are actualized as Peirce's living general laws; each field of consciousness, again, reflecting overall consciousness to its own degree. And, just as Deleuze's view that each life replays the totality of memory coincides with the identity of divinity and individuality that we find in esoteric religious traditions—their common teaching that 'the innermost essence of every human being is nothing less than the Divine Essence itself' (Bache 1994, 66)—, that ontological memory consists of a hierarchical continuum of lives coincides with Bache's account of the relation between an individual soul and its inner divinity: 'it is a paradoxical situation. We are at once the Whole and a single part' and, since 'our deepest identity is not our personality or the Oversoul but Divinity Itself,' it is helpful to envision one's connection to the divine as consisting of a 'hierarchical nesting of intelligences' (Bache 1994, 66). If the divine is our *deepest* identity, one's oversoul is one's *deeper* identity; 'the larger consciousness that is collecting and integrating the experiences of both my life and all the lives that precede and follow mine' (Bache 1994, 107) and which serves as a medium between individual souls and the divine. In other words, although there can be strong empirical evidence for the identity between different lifetimes, another reason why we should not get too hung-up on delineating the identities between different lives is because each life is a continual becoming of the same divine consciousness-memory.

9. That the relation between an individual soul and the divine, like the relation between a present moment and the pure past, consists in a hierarchical continuity of durations-selves is

important for understanding how we experience reincarnation within our waking lives because it enables us to see that past-life recollection is just one manifestation of what I call true-self recollection:—experiencing the divine consciousness which both constitutes one’s deepest identity and manifests in religious experiences. The general understanding of religious experiences as discrete dramatic—and, hence, relatively inaccessible—events is a construction of modern western culture that arose, in part, due to academic efforts to marginalize religious truth claims (Roberts 2000, 206), but Martin Buber’s statement that ‘the powerful revelations invoked by the religions are essentially the same as the quiet one that occurs everywhere and at all times’ (Buber 1970, 165-66) reminds us that, like reincarnation, religious experiences are just part of everyday life. Van Lommel compares everyday and nonlocal consciousness to the particle and wave aspects of light (van Lommel 2010, 248-49) and maintains that, although under normal circumstances people only experience the everyday-particle aspect, abnormal circumstances like NDEs and those occasioned by psychedelics can cause people to ‘experience the endless aspect of nonlocal consciousness independent of the body’ (van Lommel 2010, 260). But, in order to emphasize how this shift occurs in degrees of intensity, I propose that religious experiences are emergences within the narrower durations of waking consciousness of durations the greater expansiveness of which more explicitly reveals one’s inner divinity, and—building upon both the long lasting life changes that such experiences tend to incite and that durations are also selves—I maintain that religious experiences are intra-lifetime experiences of rebirth in which more expansive durations not only emerge within one’s everyday consciousness but also further attune it the divine. There are two particular ways in which divine consciousness quietly reveals itself in daily life which indicate the practical significance of religious experiences:

How do radically new insights enter consciousness? We know that Einstein’s theory of relativity came to him in an epiphany.... Inspiration, creativity, and sudden scientific insights may be explained by (unconscious) contact with aspects of nonlocal consciousness (van Lommel 2010, 304-05).

‘The encounter with God does not come to man in order that he may henceforth attend to God but in order that he may prove its meaning in action in the world. All revelation is a calling and a mission’ (Buber 1970, 164) because ‘to be aware of the divine presence is to be directed towards the good of the world’ (Suchocki 2011, 56).

Just as Nietzsche was right to maintain that all philosophy begins in ‘a mystic intuition’ (Nietzsche 1998, 39) because events of philosophical inspiration are one way in which divine consciousness quietly manifests in everyday life, he was also right to distinguish philosophers in terms of their ethical character (Nietzsche 1997, §482) because the same divine consciousness manifests in the events of ethical consideration which we colloquially refer to as calls of conscience. And I open the first chapter of *Psychedelic Immortality* with the following Nietzsche quote so as to emphasize how vitally imperative it is that we use psychedelics—as well as any available methods—to nurture divine subjectivity:

Reason and the tree of humanity. – That which in senile short-sightedness you call the overpopulation of the earth is precisely what proffers the more hopeful their greatest task: mankind shall one day become a tree that overshadows the whole

earth... The task is unspeakably great and bold: let us all see to it that the tree does not *untimely* rot away! (Nietzsche 1996b, §189)

Due to the sheer number of people on the planet, the quality of human subjectivity is now the decisive factor determining the future of life on earth, and it's because, of all the available methods, psychedelics provide the most sure-fire way to access divine consciousness that they should be used to incite significant cultural-political progress by divinizing human subjectivity: 'the artificial and "private" liberation [of psychedelics] anticipates, in a distorted manner, an exigency of the social liberation: the revolution must be at the same time a revolution in perception which will accompany the material and intellectual reconstruction of society' (Marcuse 1969, 37. Cf. Ramon 2023, 146). Unfortunately, Jean-Paul Sartre's view that, whereas right-wing fascists work to destroy others physically, liberals work to destroy them culturally by reducing each person to 'the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man' (Sartre 1948, 41) reflects how western—and to extent that the west influences the rest of the world—and human civilization confine themselves to a political ideology (i.e. liberalism) that negates the significance of human subjectivity as much as scientific material negates significance (i.e. value) as such; that liberalism is characterized by the same quasi-religious intolerance for individual experience-subjectivity as modern science. Riane Eisler and Douglas Fry's claim that most progressive social movements have ignored the parent-child and gender relations that most profoundly affect brain development and, hence, subjectivity qua how people think, feel, and act in the world (Eisler and Fry 2019, 101) is just one example of how some progressives are moving beyond the self-imposed limitations of liberalism, and we'll now show why it is imperative that we do so.

10. As with scientific materialism, we must not let the significant benefits which liberalism has brought to the world inhibit further progress by preventing us from acknowledging its flaws. But this is even more difficult with liberalism insofar as, where as many scientists use the appearance of neutral objectivity as a means of presenting their own unquestioned assumptions as the only reasonable views—'the impartiality of scientific language... merely provided the existing order with a neutral sign for itself' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 17)—many of my fellow lefties use moralism:—positioning moral considerations as criteria by which to determine what can be considered true—to shame people into adhering to highly questionable ideas. This is why I feel compelled to assure readers that my critique of liberalism is meant to encourage the development of a stronger more effective political left, and it boils down to unpacking the problematic consequences of liberalism's reactive origin and nature:

Every sentence of the Declaration of the Rights of Man is a challenge to some abuse. The main thing was to put an end to intolerable suffering... the French Revolution was not made for the sake of liberty and equality, but simply because 'people were starving'.... It is not easy to gather from [democratic precepts] the positive indication of what is to be done. Above all, they are applicable only if transposed... and the transposition always risks turning into an incurvation in the direction of private interest (Bergson 2010, 283).

Endowing each person with god-given equality and inherent rights is an understandable—and it should always be kept in mind *Christian*—reaction to the cruelty that we see throughout history but, as reactions, such liberal ideas are not only unable to provide a positive foundation for society but also carry along their own negative consequence. Specifically, they negate the fundamentally

relational nature of human existence thereby perpetuating the egoism which leads to very cruelty to which liberalism is a reaction: liberal ideals ‘point away from collective ethical goals and toward individual goals.... [and thereby] attenuate our connection to particular communities and hence throw us back upon our own “selfish” materials aims’ (Church 2015, 252-53). A major reason why liberalism will never be able to provide a solid ground for social solidarity is that it merely seek a false sense of solidarity by resorting to what Nietzsche described as the cyclopean building of democratization:—a prophylactic endeavor of building legalistic dams and metaphorical walls between different areas of life (Nietzsche 1996b, §275). Just as simply declaring that human beings are created equal and possess inalienable right does not make it so, creating divisions between such things as church and state or private and public only produces an appearance of civic harmony by erecting token barriers which serve as fig-leaves that conceal the influence of anti-democratic forces even at the highest levels of government. For example, the fact that the war on drugs began as a Christian effort to win native American converts by banning peyote (Muraresku 2020, 371) is just one example of how the appearance of secular neutrality is used to force religious views on others, but the consequences of liberal compartmentalization become even more dire when it is applied on a global scale:

The truth is that the only walls that exist now are those that are anxiously built up by what we have come to call ‘fundamentalist’ movements to protect people from the psychological, social and political realities of our emerging global community. Such a reactionary response is no doubt understandable... but it carries its own drastic social price, that is, the Balkanization of the species and a disturbing outbreak of ethnic and religious violence. Any theoretical position that insists on what is essentially an identity politics... can only contribute to this fracture (Kripal 2000, 260-61).

In order to survive and progress as a species, it is as imperative that we agree on at least some basic facts and values as it is that we use constructive cultural criticism to work towards mutual transformation and enrichment, but neither of these will happen so long as those who engage in identity politics either conflate consensus with oppression—‘as though any discourse of the common must reduce and level, must inflict one group’s agenda on the rest, as though there is not a difference between homogeneity and commonality’ (Kearns and Keller 2007, 11)—or employ basic logical fallacies—appeals to emotion and tradition or the ad populum fallacy of arguing that an idea is valid because many people think it is—so as to shield certain cultures from critical scrutiny. Whereas Jeffrey J. Kripal’s qualification that such reactionism ‘is no doubt understandable’ reminds us that liberal declarations are certainly well-meant, his description of identity politics as a ‘fundamentalist’ movement reminds us that good intentions without critical intelligence can be deadly. And we can understand why Nietzsche saw democracy as the death of the state (Nietzsche 1996a, §472) when we specify that fundamentalism ‘espouses the possession of finite things as if they were infinite and at the expense of an openness to fresh possibilities from the future, which, if actualized, might challenge or change inherited ways’ (McDaniel 2007, 31). ‘A civilization which cannot burst through its current abstractions is doomed to sterility after a very limited period of progress’ (Whitehead 1967, 59) and, as an ideology which conceals the particularity of its own origins and perspective by investing its abstractions with self-evident universality, liberalism is a fundamentalist ideology which impedes the very progress for which many who identify as liberal are striving.

11. Bergson's observation that democratic precepts 'are applicable only if transposed... and the transposition always risks turning into an incurvation in the direction of private interest' (Bergson 2010, 283) shows in what sense liberalism is emblematic of a problem that plagues any political system—that, no matter how well-constructed a general political framework may be, it must be interpreted by human beings in order to be applied to particular situations, and this makes it inescapably vulnerable to abuse. No amount of either political legislation or technological innovation can take the place of human subjectivity, and that's why, in contrast to how liberalism's atomistic abstract conception of humanity both encourages egoism and precludes us from addressing its political implications, we need a political paradigm that actively nurtures our humanity by counteracting the toxicity of liberal secularism and scientific materialism. Nietzsche is very clear not only about the inescapable entwinement of religion and government but also of the latter's dependence on the former:

The power that lies in unity of popular sentiment, in the fact that everyone holds the same opinions and has the same objectives, is sealed and protected by religion.... [thus] the interests of tutelary government and the interests of religion go hand in hand together, so that when the latter begins to die out the foundations of the state too are undermined (Nietzsche 1996a, §472).

And that religion will be essential for creating a healthier paradigm is indicated by the significant health benefits which people tend to derive from religion (Sheldrake 2017, 3). Religion is able to offer such benefits, in part, because it provides two things that, as we've seen, are negated by materialism and liberalism—namely, value and community—and, while many may understandably be uncomfortable with promoting a religious form of government, such fears most likely stem from an unconscious conflation of religion itself with the abuses of religion that continue to pass themselves off as orthodoxy. Whitehead's statement that 'religion is the last refuge of human savagery. The uncritical association of religion with goodness is directly negated by plain facts. [But] religion can be, and has been, the main instrument for progress' (Whitehead 1926, 37-38) succinctly encapsulates how absolutely unacceptable it is to defend religious freedom without possessing adequate criteria for what counts as a legitimate religion because, as long as we avoid confronting abuses of religion, religion will always be (ab)used as a shield and sword with which to preserve and promulgate brutality. But his statement also indicates the progress to be gained from this confrontation, and I think it's becoming increasingly clear to many people that, in contrast to the non-solution of quixotically trying to separate religion from politics, we will never attain long-term political stability until we embark on a global religious reformation. As ideas which virtually by definition determine how people live and die, religious ideas should be highly scrutinized in terms of both their veracity and toxicity so that our species can reach a new level of consensus: 'a uniform ontological stance, combined with a wide range of modes of investigation and analysis, should be adopted in the evaluation of truth claims from all religions and branches of science' (Wallace 2003, 26).

12. We can see how such consensus will promote religious pluralism when we unpack Bache's view that 'the real contrast [regarding religion] is not between Eastern and Western religions, but between what is often referred to as the *esoteric* and *exoteric* sides of religion;' the latter being the public or conventional side which, in the west, has tended to define orthodoxy, and the former being the secret or mystical side which 'attracts those for whom belief alone is insufficient, those who must actually experience the realities the doctrines describe' (Bache 1994,

15-17). Whereas, ‘at the exoteric or popular level, what stands out are the differences in religious observance,’ there is a surprising convergence of views or ‘a consistent core set of teachings in the esoteric spiritual traditions’ (Bache 1994, 17) which reflects the common experiential source of all religions: ‘whence do [religions] come? The presence and strength of revelation (for all of them necessarily invoke some sort of revelation, whether verbal, natural, or psychic—there are, strictly speaking, only revealed religions)’ (Buber 1970, 161). That is, all religions arise from religious experiences the contents of which they try to convey via symbols, rituals, doctrines etc. but, unfortunately, those who prefer conventional belief to immediate experience tend to mistake such secondary phenomenon for the source thus reifying the merely apparent differences of religions: exoteric religion ‘has not always been willing to countenance what its esoteric brethren have claimed on the basis of their spiritual experiences’ (Bache 1994, 18 note 16). ‘What is most distinctive about the spiritual awakening in our time is a looking beyond secondary religious phenomena—doctrines, ethics, ritual—to their primary source’ (Steindl-Rast 2020, 4) because people want ‘to be the student and beneficiary of all traditions, and the slave to none’ (Shweder 1991, 68) and, considering that—besides conquest—orthodox religions got to where they are today by adapting to popular interests, there’s no reason why they can’t continue to adapt by relinquishing the literalistic interpretations of their exoteric aspects; interpretations which are not just unnecessary but also symptoms of spiritual immaturity and, hence, illegitimacy. It is only by overcoming such reification that religious differences can be utilized for helping people with different sensibilities and capacities remember their inner divinity instead of being abused as justifications of profane brutality. Finally, if many religions associate esoteric knowledge with femininity (Despeux and Kohn 2003, 1), then uniting exoteric religious differences around their common esoteric source means treating religious patriarchy—and especially misogyny—as a particularly pernicious abuse of the divine: ‘history shows that the moral degradation of woman is due more to theological superstitions than to all other influences together’ (Stanton 1885, 389). In my first book *Nietzschean, Feminist, and Embodied Perspectives on the Presocratics: Philosophy as Partnership* (Breidenstein Jr 2023), I showed that western philosophy began as what we today would call a feminist religious reformation, and *Psychedelic Immortality* shows how contemporary philosophy can and why it should continue such a reformation on a global scale. In the remainder of this article, I’ll summarize how the second book builds upon the first.

13. Western civilization can and should lead the world in shifting to a feminine religious paradigm because its first undisputed spiritual capital was as feminine as it was psychedelic. ‘The Mysteries were always the women’s domain’ (Muraresku 2020, 48) where participants remembered not merely their inner divinity but their inner goddess: ‘knowledge was communicated to them by the beatific vision of the Kore at Eleusis—vision of the innermost “divine maiden” of men and women’ (Kerényi 1967, 174). Such knowledge was delivered along with that of rebirth, Nietzsche’s view that Eleusinian mysteries also played a formative role in the birth of western philosophy—‘the deep-thinking Greek had an unmistakably firm foundation for metaphysical thought in his Mysteries’ (Nietzsche 2004, §9)—has been supported by the evidence which links many prominent presocratic philosophers to the mysteries as well as by Richard Seaford’s view that the mystic notion of a concealed fundamental truth may have been adapted to a new cosmological idea of a concealed reality underlying appearances: ‘exposition of myth in mystic ritual may have involved physical cosmology’ (Seaford 2004, 234). But Eleusis was just one place where feminine religiosity influenced the birth of western philosophy: ‘leading pre-Socratic philosopher-scientists like Xenophanes of Calophon, Pythagoras of Samos, and Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes of Miletus lived in islands in the eastern Mediterranean and cities

on the southern Anatolian coast, sites of millennia of Goddess-worshipping cultures' (Eisler 1995, 232 note 16). Furthermore, during the archaic age in which philosophy emerged, many Greeks were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with how traditional Greek religion offered little to no hope for a happy afterlife, and Nietzsche's view that the first philosophers were primarily religious reformers has been supported by recent research which shows both the centrality of theological considerations for presocratic thought and that many presocratics were reforming Hesiod in particular. But this begs the question 'what was the nature of the presocratics' religious reformation?' My answer is that they were reviving, within the largely patriarchal and death-glorifying culture of archaic Greece, a paleo/neolithic goddess-centered religion of rebirth, and this new perspective on the origin (and nature) of philosophy is especially relevant today. – Some have described the growing popularity of the spiritual-but-not-religious (SBNR) movement as the most important religious development of our time because 20% of all Americans now identify as SBNR and this trend will only surge in the years to come (Muraresku 2020, 9. Cf. Lipka 2015.) and, at a time when books like Carolyn Baker's *Confronting Christofascism: Healing the Evangelical Wound* (Baker 2021) and Hamed Abdel-Samad's *Islamic Fascism* (Abdel-Samad 2016) are illustrating the threat which abusive forms of religion pose for democracy, we can certainly emphasize with the ancient Greek's yearning for a better approach to religion. I previously suggested that reviving the original conception of philosophy as a feminine religiosity which saw (philosophical) inquiry as a path of divinization that unfolds over successive lifetimes could meet the spiritual needs of our time and, in doing so, protect and improve the cultural foundations of western democracy and education. I'm currently thinking of the latter point more in terms of carrying forward the contemporary renaissance of western civilization which began in the 1960s and, in order to explain how an alignment philosophy and goddess religiosity can do this, I'll now describe how I used Eisler's cultural transformation theory to both support my reading of presocratic philosophy and illustrate its present-day significance.

14. For Eisler, underlying the variety of political systems the we find throughout human history is our species' tendency to gravitate to either one of two social models, each society exhibiting both models to some degree: a dominator model which holds communities together via either the use or threat of force (institutionalization of trauma, and the vilifying of sexuality), and which tends to be patriarchal and misogynistic; and a partnership model which holds communities together via shared enjoyment (institutionalization of bonding, and viewing sex as sacred), and which tends to prioritize traits which we typically associate with femininity over those associated with masculinity. There are two main reasons why I associate domination with fascism and partnership with democracy. – First, whereas cultures in which women have higher status tend to be more democratic (Eisler and Fry 2019, 34), fascism, in a broad sense, 'is an exacerbation, a more militant extension, of the patriarchal relationships between men and women that have persisted for centuries' (Wilson 2018). At the very least, Hudson et al.'s *The First Political Order: How Sex Shapes Governance and National Security Worldwide* (Hudson et al. 2021) illustrates the numerous ways in which the oppression of women jeopardizes political stability for everyone, and it's because promoting positive attitudes towards—as well as improving the lives of—women and girls is not just a women's issue but a precondition for political stability that the patriarchal mentality of dominator societies can be identified with the spectre of political evil which fascism assumed in the 20th century. Second, partnership and domination-oriented cultures support very different neurochemical profiles (Eisler and Fry 2019, 120), and dominator cultures in particular produce several impairments which, in turn, inhibit people's capacity for democracy. Affectively, by reducing peoples' levels of oxytocin, vasopressin, and serotonin, the persistent stress of living

in a dominator culture inhibits people's ability to either bond or empathize with each other while inculcating a habitual form of disassociation (Eisler and Fry 2019, 81-82, 187); perceptually, dominators' intolerance for ambiguity and complexity leads to stereotyped patterns of selective perception in which people simply ignore what they don't want to see, and are thus incapable of accurately perceiving their environment (Eisler and Fry 2019, 184-85); and, cognitively, becoming habituated to living in psychological attack mode constricts people capacity for independent thought (Eisler and Fry 2019, 105). Now, as Abdel-Samad recognized, democracy is not just a political system but 'a state of mind' (Abdel-Samad 2016, 12) to which patriarchal fundamentalists are adamantly opposed and, likewise, John Dewey saw that 'democracy is more than a form of government' (Dewey 1916, 87. Cf. Gordon 2018, 58) because its essence consists not in abstract rights but in the exchange of different ideas and the common deliberation that underlies collective decision making. I expand upon these views by emphasizing the intuitive (even cliché) idea that democracy necessitates the kind of philosophical subjectivity:—the capacity to empathize with different perspectives, see the world in new ways, and think independently—which, as a state of being that must be continually nurtured, is inhibited by patriarchal/domineering environments. (It's because democracy depends on a sufficient percentage of the population being able to think, feel, and *perceive* philosophically that teaching philosophy—as well as the humanities in general—is as necessary for preserving the cultural and psychological foundations of democracy as is valuing and supporting women and girls.)

15. If both psychedelic (Osto 2019, 111) and religious/near-death (van Lommel 2010, 58) experiences tend to inspire interest in philosophy, then we can view the perceptual revolution occasioned by psychedelics as the cultivation of the divine-philosophical subjectivity the political necessity of which is further indicated by its ethical nature, and that incorporating psychedelics into western democracy and education on the basis of feminine spirituality can rejuvenate western civilization is indicated by how goddess religiosity gave birth to western philosophy in the first place. Paleolithic Europe was the proto-typical partnership society, but Eisler—building upon the work of Marija Gimbutas—maintains that a drastic shift in western cultural evolution took place when the proto-typical dominator society of the Indo-European Aryan-speaking people from the steppe region north of the black sea swept across Old Europe in three successive waves from 4,300-2,800BCE. This cultural transformation—from which western civilization has yet to recover—is illustrated by a mythological shift from divinity being personified as a nurturing earth goddess to a violent sky god; from celebrating the rebirth of life to glorifying war and death: 'where in older art and myths the central theme is the cyclic regeneration of life, focusing on sex, love, and regeneration, the central emphasis of later art and myth is on punishment, sacrifice, and death' (Eisler 1996, 134). In addition to tracing the cultural connection that the first philosophers had—via the Eleusinian mysteries, Minoan Crete, and other regions—to Old Europe as well as showing how the feminine cyclicality of many presocratics cosmologies both recalls Old European myths and stands in stark contrast to the masculine linearity—you're born, you hopefully achieve glory in battle, and then you die—of traditional Greek religion, I defend my view that western philosophy began as an effort to revive Old European religiosity by showing how goddess religiosity facilitates the emergence of philosophical subjectivity. – Personifications of divinity both reflect and further reinforce societal norms and values and, whereas the Old Europeans' personifying divinity as a nurturing goddess reflected and reinforced partnership, the Indo-European's personifying divinity as a violent god reflected and reinforced domination. While there is no causal relationship between goddess worship and better living conditions for women because female personifications of divinity can just as easily be used to promote domination as male

personifications can be used to promote partnership, there is a correlation between goddess worship and better social and psychological conditions for women: hence Luce Irigaray's view that 'as long as woman lacks a divine made in her image, she cannot establish her subjectivity' (Irigaray 1993, 63). Both poor and affluent Greek women were involved in educating their children (Blundell 1995, 141)—in fact, women may have been the kernels of the Greek household's (oikos) self-knowledge and memory insofar as they constructed private histories of their kin-groups partly by singing songs to their children so as to educate them about their ancestors (Stears 1998, 97)—and that, in contrast to women from more domineering cultures who are more liable to take out their frustrations on their children (Blundell 1995, 43), the mothers of the goddess-worshipping cultures from which so many of the first Greek philosophers hailed would have been better equipped to nurture philosophical subjectivity as indicated by contemporary research on the importance of touch and maternal care for brain development: 'how we are touched can powerfully affect how we feel, think and act... [because] the skin can be seen as an extension of the brain itself' (Eisler and Fry 2019, 197-98) and 'neuroscientists have found a strong relationship between nurturing and the size of children's hippocampus, a brain region important in learning, memory, and response to stress. Brain scans show that children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus and were less stressed' (Eisler and Fry 2019, 107). So, in a nutshell, if goddess religiosity correlates with better lives for real women, and Greek women from regions with goddess traditions would be more able to provide the kind of loving touch and maternal care that we now know is vital for brain development, then it makes sense both that many of the first western philosophers came from regions with millennia-long traditions of goddess worship and that they themselves would be meeting the religious dissatisfaction of their age by reviving the very partnership religiosity and lifestyle that facilitates philosophical thought. And, again, if feminine spirituality played such a formative role in the birth of western philosophy, then we should at least explore how it could contribute to another rebirth of the west.

16. Democritus—the last of the presocratics who, although he was more of a critic of religion than a reformer, I still include within the partnership tradition not least because of his respect for women and Demeter—has as much a claim as any other Greek to be the one who coined the word *dēmokratia* (Mejer 2004, 1) and, if he did in fact do so, then democracy was also born from the goddess religiosity that most of the presocratics were reviving. No doubt there were many other factors contributing to emergence of both philosophy and democracy, but goddess religiosity deserves special attention because of how it can help today's religions ground their exoteric elements in their esoteric-feminine source. Carol Christ's statement 'I understand the divine power to be beyond gender or inclusive of all genders. However, I also believe that the word 'Goddess' must be spoken along with 'Sophia,' 'Shekhina,' and other female names in prayer and liturgy if we hope to break the hold of 'God' as masculine and male on the human mind' (Christ 2003, 17-18) shows how one can endorse particular representations of the divine without insisting on their literal truth. But, besides serving as a model for how exoteric elements can be utilized to produce real world change without themselves being reified, there is an argument to be made that, just as our ontological non-dualism does not prevent mind from being more fundamental than matter, recognizing the inherent limitations of representation does not prevent feminine personifications of the divine from being more accurate than masculine ones. – Like our own critique of the crypto patriarchy and egoism which hide behind scientific and liberal neutrality, Simone de Beauvoir's observation that, while 'man represents both the positive and the neutral... woman represents only the negative' (Beauvoir 1989, xxi-xxii) indicates how understanding the divine to be beyond gender can be just another way of presenting its masculinity. And, like how a foundational

philosophical premise of tantra is that the immanent divine is least concealed in female embodiment (Sherma 2000, 43), Charles Hartshorne maintained that the idea of a mother is more compatible with process philosophy's understanding of divinity—in which becoming and relationality are central elements—than traditional conceptions of male power (Hartshorne 1984, 58). In addition to how divine (nonlocal) consciousness' being immanent within the world entails that it is processual and relational, both the psychedelic nature of what Muraresku would call the original religion with no name and the psychological implications of reincarnation suggest that religion itself should be thought of as being primarily feminine: Maria Papaspyrou's statement that 'the essence of feminine consciousness is based on the elementary feminine experience of boundary dissolution, motherhood, where the "other" is contained within oneself' (Papaspyrou 2019, 15) shows in what sense the ego-dissolution which characterizes psychedelic and/or religious experiences is a feminine experience, and Pierre Klossowski shows that such boundary dissolution is essential to reincarnation when he notes that—unlike beliefs in either personal immortality or certain death which reify subjective identity by either projecting it onto eternity or enabling one to delimit it within the bounds of a single lifetime—belief in rebirth disrupts one's ego by making one conceive of oneself both as having been other than one is now and, in a sense, still being identical with this unknown other (Klossowski 1997, 54). That is, not only is feminine imagery more in tune with our scientifically and philosophically sophisticated conception of divinity, it also better conveys the transcendence of the ego which is central to both the experiential source of all religions and the process of reincarnation by which one progressively embodies more of the divine. In my first book, I both argued that philosophy is a feminine form of subjectivity and embodiment and found precedent for this view in two figures whom many feminist see as personifications of philosophical patriarchy and misogyny—Parmenides and Nietzsche—and *Psychedelic Immortality* builds upon this by adding divinity to the mix as well as by situating philosophical divinization within an onto-cosmology that's characterized by 'a recognition of femaleness as ontologically primary and maleness as derivative and dependent, and a deference to women in social' (Shaw 1994, 32) contexts like that which *can* be found in eastern traditions like tantric Buddhism, Śāktism, and the daoism; this time with the wisdom goddess Sophia directing the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. That it is not far-fetched to hope that aligning contemporary philosophy with feminine spirituality can revive the revolutionary zeal of the 1960s is evident in the simple facts that people change religions all the time and, as far as winning converts is concerned, it's difficult to think of something more advantageous than being able to explain how reincarnation works instead of merely asking people to have faith in an afterlife.

17. In conclusion, I think that one of the funniest things about *Psychedelic Immortality* is, despite its progressive agenda, just how conservative it is, and this irony is due to the nonduality between progressivism and conservatism that I derive from what Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno called the dialectic of preservation:—'self-preservation destroys the very thing which is to be preserved' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 43). Since life necessitates adaptation, an excessive drive for self-preservation backfires into an unintentional act of self-negation, and this is why progressivism is as conservative as fundamentalism is profane. Instead of merely preserving the identities or products of various cultural traditions, we must also conserve the creative processes which gave rise to such traditions in the first place because doing so is necessary to adapt them to novel circumstances the reality of which we ignore at our own peril and, likewise, instead of thinking of progress solely in terms novelty, we must recognize that progress also consists in reconnecting with ideas and values the quotidian and even cliché nature of which is liable to obscure their significance under a veil of false familiarity: 'men are accustomed to cease to reflect

on those things which surround them most closely’ (Nietzsche 1996a §423). That many people experience an understandable resistance to new ideas means that the reconnective type of progress possesses a distinct advantage over the novel type, and that’s why I maintain that, historically speaking, domination and/or patriarchy—and especially the materialistic-liberal paradigm which functions as their neutral sign—are mere deviations from a much older partnership and/or feminine lifestyle that, in a sense, can also be thought of as new-age. Eleusis symbolizes how foundational reincarnation, psychedelics and partnership were to western civilization, but each of these extends far beyond the west. Whereas Schopenhauer’s suggestion that Europe could be defined as that part of the world that rejects reincarnation (Schopenhauer 1974, 368-69) succinctly conveys the global pervasiveness of belief in some form of reincarnation, the antiquity of this belief is evident in how its virtual ubiquity has led some scholars to speculate that this idea may have arisen contemporaneously with the origins of human culture itself (Burly 2016, 15). Furthermore, ‘extensive ethnographic data demonstrate that some form of institutionally sanctioned altered state appears to be the social norm, rather than the exception’ (Osto 2019, 116), but it seems as though the antiquity of psychedelic use extends even further back than that of human institutions themselves insofar as they played an evolutionary role in honing our species’ partnership sensibility. Just as Eisler and Fry note that human nature and mind ‘evolved under the long-standing era of partnership organization’ before approximately 10,000 BCE (Eisler and Fry 2019, 160), José Manuel Rodríguez Arce and Michael James Winkelman observe that ‘Hominins developed an egalitarian political system in which interdependence and the availability of lethal weapons (e.g., wooden spears and lithic points) made possible group control of leaders.... [and] this emerging sociopolitical system thus selected for increased cognitive and linguistic ability, which enhanced prosocial leadership skills’ (Rodríguez Arce and Winkelman 2021, 12). And, while Rodríguez Arce and Winkelman deny the possibility of a simplistic theory of psychedelics as being the ‘missing link’ in hominin evolution, they do ‘propose a model of psychedelics as an *enabling factor* in human adaptation and evolution’ (Rodríguez Arce and Winkelman 2021, 3) according to which psychedelic use ‘increased social cognition and symbolic behavior and thereby selected for yet further increases in such capacities by increasing the richness and complexity of the (constructed) social and semiotic environment’ (Rodríguez Arce and Winkelman 2021, 16). In other words, while it’s important not to naturalize oppressive political ideologies, quarantining political theory from broader conceptions about the nature of (human) life itself is merely another a prophylactic reaction, and it’s in this way that we can interpret democratic governance as a political systemization of the spirit of partnership that not only, in a sense, makes us human but also vastly predates the patriarchal domination that even the opponents of which invest with a false sense of legitimacy by conflating it with conservatism. If psychedelics enabled us to evolve as a species, then they can help us to evolve as a culture, and that they can specifically enable us progress to an unprecedented level of political cooperation is indicated by the fact that right-wingers get high too.

18. At a time when the ascendance of political centrism is gaining so much momentum in America that even media outlets are reporting that our country is far more united than is typically portrayed in the media, it would be irresponsible not to meet the growing demand for healthier forms of religion in a way that also meets the growing demand for political cooperation. As a democrat, I’m convinced that a more centrist-moderate left wing will be a stronger more effective left wing, but pursuing this goal necessitates that left-wing politics progress beyond the out-dated reactivity of liberalism: ‘life is an offensive.... a policy of sociological defense is doomed to failure’ (Whitehead 1933, 80). ‘Left secular movements feel the need to wrest religion from the

sole domination of the right' (Rajan 2000, 281) because it is now clear that the left has never and will never be able to compete with the right on a level playing field so long as it is only the latter which possesses a religious commitment to politics, and I propose that we should use psychedelics to facilitate past-life recollection because this would be an area of scientific and philosophical research that would not only provide and elucidate a spiritual worldview with which right-wing religiosity will have difficulty competing but also, by overcoming the science vs religion divide, promote political and cultural solidarity. For Nietzsche, it was the loss of religion which accounts for modernity's incapacity to work towards the kind of long-term goals that would take generations to bear fruit, but there's one more aspect of human evolution which shows how long-lasting the progress which our young species could make could be: it's because evolution 'is the result of innumerable experiences, accumulated through an almost unimaginable length of time' (Barash 1979, 203) that 'we are contingent and historical creatures through and through, lacking any unchanging "species-essence" or fixed "human nature"' (Waldron 2003, 152-53), and that ideas are evolutionarily efficacious as well is indicated by development in epigenetics such as the work of Bruce H. Lipton who has shown that, via their influencing how we perceive ourselves and the world, our beliefs determine how our genes are expressed (Lipton 2008, 105, 113). If our experiences and ideas influence the course of our continuing evolution, then taking psychedelics within a healthier and more truthful paradigm could lead to significant progress the sustainability of which lies in its being progress in *who we are* as well as in how we live, and it's in this way that Nietzsche's/Zarathustra's imperative '*I teach you the overman. Human being is something that must be overcome*' (Nietzsche 2010, I Prologue §3) is perhaps more relevant now than it has ever been. However, since tending to the tree of humanity in this way is certainly an unspeakably great and bold task, I must emphasize that I approach it not only as a philosopher but also as a bass player in the sense that, while I have no shortage of ideas, I think of my written works as taking place within an ongoing conversation with many other voices whom I encourage to use my ideas as bassline upon which to improvise.

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