# Shattering Crystals
# The Role of 'Dream Time' in Extreme
# Right-Wing Political Violence

## ROGER GRIFFIN

This article prepares the conceptual ground for a new heuristic approach to understanding acts of political violence that consciously incur the risk of death to their perpetrators. It focuses on the deep-seated human drive to escape the futility and emptiness induced by clock-time (chronos), and the way a sense of being 'chosen' for a mission of destruction can precipitate the experience of being reborn in a new supra-individual dimension ('dream time'). At this point the etymological connotations of 'self-sacrifice' and 'fanatic' acquire a new significance, since the personal palingenesis experienced by the soldier or terrorist confronting death may rehearse archetypal patterns of mystic purification and immortality. This 'chrono-ethological' perspective on extreme political violence is elaborated by considering the devastating impact that Western modernity has had on the access to states of 'self-transcendence' available in traditional religious culture. It is then applied to examples of inter-war fascist paramilitarism and contemporary 'lone-wolf' terrorism.

The Way of the Samurai is found in death.

Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure* (*The Book of the Samurai*) 1716

The Blue Fairy is part of the great human flaw, to wish for things that don't exist, or of the greatest single human gift: to chase down our dreams, and that is something no machine has ever done until you.

Steven Spielberg, *A.I.* 2000

## An Introduction to 'Chrono-ethology'

*Ideologically Motivated Self-sacrifice as an Anthropological Conundrum*

At the outset of what is, according to the reckoning of post-Christian Eurocentric humanity, the Third Millennium, much of what motivates human behaviour is still shrouded in mystery and controversy, especially when questions of deeply held beliefs are concerned. There is thus no straightforward or uncontested explanation for the most extreme
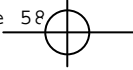
manifestation of faith, namely the readiness, or even determination of some
human beings to give up their lives in a premeditated manner for a 'higher'
cause. By this is meant a purpose that lacks the immediacy or concreteness
of saving one's own 'kind' from immediate physical danger (though self-
sacrifice to such an end is already in ethological terms an unusual, though
not unique trait for an animal species to be endowed with). What results is
an act of self-immolation that can be seen as heroic 'martyrdom' or mad
'fanaticism' according to the values of the observer.

The capacity for self-sacrifice for the sake of purely religious ideals or
political ends is such a remarkable trait of our species that it would
doubtless have excited the curiosity of the sublimely inquisitive extra-
terrestrial anthropologists depicted at the end of Spielberg's cinematic
reworking of the Pinocchio legend, *A.I.* These aliens are shown exploring
the mysteries of the life form responsible for the deep-frozen remains of the
planetary civilization found in a first drowned then ice-locked New York
long after the last specimen of *Homo sapiens* has died. Their only tenuous
link with the human race is David, a single surviving 'Mecca', a mechanical
rather than an organic human being electronically endowed with the
sensibility of a child, and hence the capacity to give and crave love. He is
the product of an ambitious technological experiment undertaken at a future
stage of human society's simultaneous progress and collapse to create a
robot that (who?) can dream. His 'creator' tells him when he has tracked
down the laboratory where he was made.

You found a fairy-tale, and inspired by love fuelled by desire you set out
on a journey to make her real and, most remarkable of all, no one taught you
how. […] Our test was a simple one: where would your self-motivated
reasoning take you, to what logical conclusion.[…]

It is the strength of David's drive to 'chase down' his dream that is the
acid test of his humanity. Spielberg's imaginary project highlights a
quintessentially human faculty, which is treated in this article for heuristic
purposes as playing a vital role in motivating political violence or terroristic
acts that run or embrace the risk of self-destruction, namely the ability to
dream, to day-dream, to imagine other realities, to project more desirable
worlds to inhabit. It is the fact that David is finally able to break out of pre-
programmed cognition at the end of the film and fully enter the realm of
creative 'inwardness' that signals the completion of his *rite de passage* from
robot to 'real boy'. It also betokens the onset of his mortality. The film
concludes with the words: 'So David went to sleep too. And for the first
time in his life he went to that place where dreams are born.'

The human sciences could be seen as a vast Dream Factory, part
collaborative, part competitive, which operates on a gargantuan scale that
eclipses Hollywood. The salient difference is that its imaginative
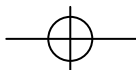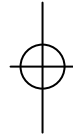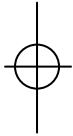
hypotheses and explanatory fantasies are supposedly shaped by the rigorous use of empirical data and controlled by the methodological rules (paradigms) of the particular discipline. It is a rigour that can create a purblindness, bequeathed from the Enlightenment, to the importance of dreams to even the most 'modern' human beings, and thus have inhibiting effects on the explanatory power of academic analysis when it comes providing penetrating insight into the inner motivation of extreme political violence. The logical conclusion of research blinkered by the assumption that everything deeply 'irrational' is probably pathological are attempts to explain all political fanaticism in terms of behavioural patterns associated with clinical paranoia.[1]

At least some specialists are prepared to concede the inadequacy of conventional academic approaches in this respect, as when Ehud Sprinzak states in an article on right-wing extremism that 'Psychologists and students of political violence have so far failed to fully explain the violent personality. We just know that the evolution and activity of certain violent groups … cannot be reduced to socio-political factors.' His very next sentence then unwittingly provides a glimpse of the potentially more fruitful line of enquiry pursued here when he observed that 'The heads of such groups just happen to be … more moved by romantic dreams of virility and glorious violence.'[2] In similar vein it is only at the end of a whole book on the origins of terrorism that has largely avoided focusing on the utopianism of the terrorists themselves that we are offered the crucial, but tantalizingly unelaborated conclusion: 'Terrorism is an example and product of human interaction gone awry and is worth studying and understanding in the human terms that befit it: as conflict, struggle, passion, drama, myth, history, reality, and, not least, psychology.'[3]

Certainly such statements point in a heuristically more promising direction than 'evolutionary ethics' when it is used in a crudely behaviourist spirit. One of the main 'successes' claimed by this discipline is to explain the paradox of extreme forms of apparently idealistic or altruistic behaviour that deliberately cost human beings their lives as a function of 'selfish' evolutionary imperatives.[4] However, studies that focus on the way self-destructive behaviour at an individual level can be traced to innate genetic programmes designed to maximize the prospects for survival of the species as a whole run a serious risk of reductionism. It is surely reductionism *ad absurdum*, for example, when the geneticist Colin Tudge, author of one of the most important popularizations of evolutionary ethics, *The Engineer in the Garden*,[5] assures readers in an issue of the *New Scientist* that:

> Self-sacrifice makes evolutionary sense because the gene that
> promotes the behaviour is also contained within other bacteria of the

same genotype. All individuals of a given genotype will produce the toxin and so sacrifice themselves on behalf of the others. Game theory analysis can show what proportion will emerge as suicide bombers.[6]

The same article suggests that such behaviour may also be illuminated by the hypothesis put forward by Geoffrey Miller in *The Mating Mind*. This maintains that all great human exploits have their roots in displays of prowess, and that extreme violence can be seen as an elaborate form of showing off. After all 'Some animals do weird and wonderful things for the opposite sex that are quite useless or even damaging for survival'.[7] Such explanatory strategies surely say more about the poverty of some social scientific imaginations when confronted with acts of extreme idealism and physical courage than they do about the phenomenon itself.

*Temporal Experience as a Conditioning Factor of Human Behaviour*

The conceptual framework of this article might be seen as a fusion of science with science fiction, and of academic hypothesis with fairy-tale, since it is posited on a deliberately anti-reductionist explanatory strategy to the phenomenon of terrorist violence, which is yet to exist as a formally constituted theory on a par with 'evolutionary ethics'. If it were ever to be elaborated into one, a possible name for it might be 'chrono-ethology', the study of human behaviour in relation to time. Its premise is that much can be gleaned about the hidden mainsprings of human action, in this case 'our' propensity for blind devotion to causes at whatever personal cost, by probing into the (in terrestrial terms) unique capacity of human beings to experience time in qualitatively different ways, both as a linear procession from past to future and as a special period when linearity seems suspended and individual time is subsumed within a supra-personal reality.

By focusing on the 'chrono-ethological' strand of what motivates right-wing violence, the *imaginaire* of right-wing terrorism, this article sets out at least to point a dim torch of speculation at an important area of its phenomenology and psychological causation. The hope is that others equipped with arc lights and specialist forensic gear may then go on to investigate in greater depth the psychological processes at work that I map so tentatively here. The premise behind reconnoitring them is that most acts of political fanaticism, far from being pathological ('awry') in themselves, are extreme examples of the quintessential human capacity to structure 'real' life on the basis of narrative fictions. Indeed human life may well be literally unliveable without a shifting kaleidoscope of plans, goals, ideals, myths, fantasies, obsessions and utopias that together constitute maps of reality that have more in common with the phantasmogorical elucubrations of medieval cartographers than the satellite-based topographies available to
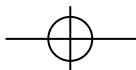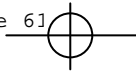
modern geographers. In the context the 'fanatic' is only an extreme form of perfectly normal human being. As T.E. Lawrence declared in what surely is an autobiographical observation:

> All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.[8]

## Chrono-ethology as a Strategy for Explaining Extreme Political Violence

A key component of the argument that unfolds here, however, is that investigations of the dynamics of terrorism and political violence should give due weight not just to the human capacity to dream, and especially to day-dream, but to the impact that this faculty has on the qualitative experience of time. It is one that in extreme circumstances can turn idealistic, intelligent human beings into smart biological missiles capable of delivering warheads to their target personally despite the certainty of dying in the process.

How the human brain first developed self-consciousness, and attained the reflexive awareness of time and death that is its concomitant, is an issue of awesome complexity, one which evolutionary science will surely never be able to present as a seamless, fully coherent biological, psychological and historical narrative. Nor are the human sciences ever likely to plumb the depths of the convoluted relationship that exists between the so-called reality principle of (so curiously and ironically named) *Homo sapiens* and the continual enactment of imagination involved in living. It is tempting to postulate that at the very heart of the unfolding process of 'everyday reality' a continuous operation of counter-factual speculation is taking place projecting alternative futures and new realities varying distances into the future, so that dream is woven into the very fabric of the reality principle that is tailored to each individual's existence. But this is another story. For our present purposes it is enough to note that all the highly diverse attempts that have been made to investigate the complexities of human temporal experience tend to corroborate the thesis that qualitative distinctions exist within the human perception of time that are absolutely real experientially (phenomenologically), however slender their empirical basis in scientific terms.[9] Moreover, to a considerable, if largely unacknowledged and uninvestigated degree, these subjective distinctions condition the way human beings behave in different, historically shaped, existential situations.
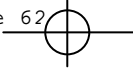
An outstanding pioneer of this 'chrono-ethology' was Mircea Eliade, who spent much of his academic career documenting and analysing the universality of rituals and beliefs within pre-modern societies. Central to his work was the experiential distinction between 'profane' and 'sacred' time, which his research persuaded him constitutes a norm of the human condition. He attributed the universality of physical and psychic techniques to access sacred time to a deep inner compulsion to ward off the 'Terror of History' induced by the experience of time as nothing but the infinite corridor of undifferentiated rectilinear *chronos* stretching to infinity.[10] Obviously, his is not the only way of conceptualizing the way humans can inhabit qualitatively different times. Thus Walter Benjamin contrasts 'Messianic time' with 'empty, homogeneous' time,[11] while in *The Sense of an Ending*,[12] Frank Kermode investigates the preoccupation of modern literature with *kairos*, a cosmic 'quality' time in which *chronos* is suspended. Joseph Campbell's studies of 'epic time'[13] and Jung's theory of the 'archetype',[14] not to mention any number of explorations of 'myth',[15] could all produce different conceptual schemes, each with its own taxonomic nuances and subtleties.

Clearly any dyadic or dichotomous scheme for categorising human time is bound to be simplistic, as is any equation of 'higher' or supra-individual time with the 'sacred', since there are seemingly many gradations in the eternal and the numinous. But for the heuristic purposes of this article I will use the binomial expression 'ordinary time'/*chronos* and 'dream time'. This latter phrase consciously alludes to the Australian Aboriginal term 'Dream Time', the mythic realm of events that occur in *illo tempore*, in a primordial time-space of which our world is but an epiphenomenon. This cosmology meant that ancestral dream time was experienced (at least before the destruction of Aboriginal culture) as synchronic, omnipresent and phenomenologically more substantial than the rectilinear *chronos* of the personal lifeline, which was surrounded by it like a tiny, ephemeral island set in a vast, eternal ocean.

Applying Eliade's perspective, Dream Time belongs to a vast family of mythic constructs that have provided the cohesion of the myriad societies that are the domain of cultural anthropology. It ranges from the rich legends of nomadic tribes to the elaborate cosmologies that once structured entire ancient civilizations such as the Chinese, the Aztec, the Maya and the Egyptian 'worlds'. All can be seen as the fruit of a deep-seated human drive to keep at bay the paralysing sense of futility and absurdity that would result from the experience of existence deprived of regular access to the sense of an all-transcendent higher reality and purpose. Lewis Mumford referred to the grand cultural matrix that shapes an entire civilization as 'the megamachine'.[16] In terms of an evolutionary
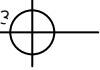
ethics informed by chrono-ethology, the megamachine that built the pyramids in Egypt and Yucatan is only the more spectacular product of a universal human mind-game played out in countless permutations whose function is to create a canopy (or *templum*) of sacred time to demarcate the fragile capsule of human life from the infinity that surrounds it. Far from 'pathological', it is a symbolic activity in which human beings have to engage, whether passively as part of an inherited culture, or actively as one of its creators, in order to win symbolic victories over time and not be crushed by the Juggernaut of *chronos*. Once this is recognized the mythopoeic speculations and psychotropic (or rather 'chronotropic', or 'time-bending') activities associated with transforming the quality of time are as crucial to the survival of the species as language, socialization or tool making, and temporal experience becomes a crucial factor in the explanation of human behaviour.

Some academics are prepared to recognize that in the modern age too attempts to change the structure of society involve transforming the collective experience of time, as the French,[17] Russian,[18] Fascist[19] or Nazi[20] revolutions demonstrate.[21] As for the question of organized violence, it is significant that Martin van Creveld, a military historian who resists the temptation to romanticize war, still includes among the elements that condition the 'will to fight' in humans a temporal factor. He notes that as long as fighting lasts, 'reality is suspended, abolished, lost. The joy of fighting consists precisely in that it permits participants and spectators alike to forget themselves and transcend reality, however incompletely and however momentarily.'[22] But it is precisely on the subject of terrorism that one expert has come the closest to expressing the key concept behind this article, albeit in language that reflects the discourse of post-modernism and the 'linguistic turn'. Exploring the subject of 'sacred terror' committed in the name of defending the purity of Islam, David Rapoport argues that modern acts of religious martyrdom are based on 'projective narratives that tell a story of the past and map out future actions that can imbue the time with transcendent collective values'.[23]

It is but a small step from this insight to the recognition that all senses of 'mission', of being 'sent' or 'charged' to do something by a higher authority, of being entrusted with a task to be carried out for the sake of a supra-personal 'cause' involve 'projective narratives'. As such they all generate this sense of transcendent time, whether the context is a traditional religion or a secular ideology. This helps account for the deep mystic resonance of the world's many legends that dramatize a 'sacred' quest, of which the pagano-Christian Holy Grail is but one variant of a universal topos.

## The Dialectic of *Chronos* and Dream Time in Pre-modern Cultures

### *Heroic Sacrifice as an Archetype of Time-defiance*

Comparative anthropology suggests that there are at least two archetypal[24] features of the obsession of pre-modern societies with 'sacred' time (i.e. dream time). The first is the mythic hero,[25] who plays a crucial role in the creation of the world (i.e. in cosmogony) and in preserving the resulting cosmology from entropy and decay. The second is the concept of sacrifice,[26] which involves the ritual destruction of something valuable or pure, whether to restore the harmony of the divine order, or to ensure the success of a physically or spiritually important undertaking, such as planting the next season's crops, preparing for battle, building a bridge or launching a ship.[27] Within the Eliadean perspective both the hero myth and rite of sacrifice are to be understood as components of elaborate psychotropic and chronotropic techniques evolved by the human mind to suspend *chronos*. They are deeply bound up with other important recurrent fruits of human mythopoeia such as the many legends of cosmic creation, initiation ceremonies and shamanic practices, as well as the intricate world of ritual, symbology, religious belief, superstitions, myths, legends and folklore with which they are inextricably enmeshed.

The body too has any number of its own techniques to enable the mind to 'stand outside' profane time, to achieve *ek-stasis*, such as in ritual dance and theatre, yoga, martial arts, simulated combat with mythical demons, liturgical ball-games or the ceremonial use of hallucinogens. Both mythopoeia and the body, psyche and soma, can work in harmony to create a powerful (though from a secular scientific perspective ultimately illusory) sense of metaphysical home, human scale and rootedness in a universe whose infinity, if ever glimpsed by disenchanted eyes, would numb our senses and crush our spirit. Cosmology and altered states of consciousness act as a sheltering sky that shields us[28] from the boundlessness of space, its empirical content as ultimately insubstantial as that merciful optical illusion, the thin stratum of blue that lies between us and the black infinity that surrounds our planet.[29]

The human imagination is endowed with an extraordinary creative capacity for decorating and making over the minute existential room to which the body is assigned in life, and with a seemingly unlimited capacity to syncretize disparate mythic elements into new compounds. It is thus hardly surprising that the hero myth and the concept of sacrifice have frequently been fused in the topos of the hero who is prepared to sacrifice himself or herself in fighting for a holy cause or in defeating the monstrous embodiment of evil and chaos, so achieving a special form of immortality. This may be the immortality of myth and legend, as in the

case of Perseus and the Minotaur, or St George and the Dragon, equivalents of which are universal in folklore and tales all over the world. It can also take the form of a metaphysical immortality identified with the fulfilment of a higher duty based on a set of values associated with a supra-human God or transcendental Good, a notion that informs the medieval concept of the Knight and its equivalents in so many cultures where the warrior is the upholder of a social order instituted on the basis of cosmic principles (the Japanese samurai, the Hindu kshaitrya, the Red Indian 'brave'). Hence the importance attributed in numerous societies to the 'warrior priest'.[30] The higher plane of reality may even be associated with a special fate after death reserved to the hero who dies fighting for a higher cause, as in the case of the Nordic myth of Valhalla, a sort of heavenly military headquarters or barracks. In what is to the Western outsider a disarmingly male-chauvinist discourse, the Qur'an promises that the youth who gives his life for his faith will:

> Spend eternity in gardens of tranquillity …
> Youths of never-ending bloom will pass round to them decanters,
> Beakers full of sparkling wine.
> Unheady, inebriating.
> And suck fruits as they fancy.
> Bird meats that they relish.
> And companions with big beautiful eyes
> Like pearls within their shells.
> We have formed them in a distinctive fashion,
> and made them virginal.[31]

The fusion of hero with the idea of self-sacrifice perhaps finds its most telling expression in the idea of the 'holy war', which occurs in several religious traditions (e.g. the crusade, the *jihad*) and invokes a collective ethos in which an entire army or people are involved in a communal battle with Evil. This calls upon a small elite within the community to be prepared to sacrifice itself for a cause that transcends the realm of the human in its significance and thus guarantees immortality of some sort for all those who lay down their lives in the struggle. The use of the term 'suicide bomber' in this context thus points to a profound category error committed by uninitiated minds. The type of suicide that Durkheim researched as part of his investigation of anomie, and that is explicitly condemned in all the major religious traditions, is in many ways diametrically opposed to the act of martyrdom, which is sanctioned by the very same traditions. For example, a senior member of Hamas assured a *New Scientist* journalist, when asked to justify suicide bombings against
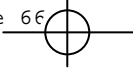
Israel, 'It is not suicide. Suicide is not allowed in Islam. It is the highest form of martyrdom.'[32]

It is this categorical difference between suicide and martyrdom that helps explain why research into the sentiments of kamikaze pilots just before their last missions shows that the cult of the Emperor was sufficiently strong for most to be serene and calm about the prospect of dying (at least in their public persona). As one pilot put it in a letter, he was willing to die in order to 'let this beautiful Japan keep growing', to be released from the wicked hands of the Americans and the British, and to build a 'freed Asia'. Such convictions meant that 'some young and innocent pilots died believing they could become happy dying that way.' One of the letters examined is from the pilot Isao to his parents on the eve of his mission in Manila. It closes with the words 'We are sixteen warriors manning the bombers. May our death be as sudden and clean as the shattering of crystal: Isao soaring into the sky of the southern seas. It is our glorious mission to die as the shields of His Majesty. Cherry blossoms glisten as they open and fall.'[33] (Note the way this brief passage conflates images of purity and supra-personal hardness, of vitalism and death, of spring and autumn, thereby fusing the military and religious connotations of the pilot's 'mission'. In particular, it is significant that the translucent hardness of crystal is an archetypal metaphor for transcendent reality and truth,[34] and hence for supra-personal time. Subjectively, then, Isao seems to have experienced his personal *chronos* merging with dream time like a river reaching the sea.)

Materialistically inclined historians may well argue that the discourse of 'holy war' and martyrdom must be seen as a mystification of the struggles for ideological, political or economic hegemony, which have existed between rival cultures since time immemorial. President George W. Bush's gaffe of referring to the war against Islamic terrorism in the aftermath of 11 September as a 'crusade' certainly lends credence to such an interpretation. Meanwhile geneticists may well enrich further our understanding by focusing on the biochemical roots of martyrdom, such as the toxins produced by the colicin gene. But as long as the research it encourages is carried out in the spirit of methodological pluralism, it surely also makes considerable sense in chrono-ethological terms to suggest that the celebration of the self-sacrifice of the warrior for a higher cause is the exoteric expression of an esoteric notion that lies at the heart of all mystical traditions. It is the notion, born of surely one of the most extraordinary time-defying flights of the human *imaginaire*, that total self-renunciation to the point of self-annihilation is the precondition to the rebirth in a higher Self.
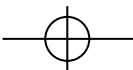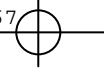
*Death as the Prelude to Mystic Rebirth*

According to the Buddhist tradition, 'for a Bodhisattva to surrender life and limbs in aid of others is the keenest joy.' Similarly in Zen philosophy the death of the false self is called the Great Death, after which 'we give birth to a new self', while the Islamic mystic Farid al-Din'Attar exhorts adepts to 'Become a bird of the Way to God and develop your wings and your feathers. Nay, rather, burn your wings and feathers and destroy yourself by fire, and so will you arrive at the Goal before all others.' The Apostle St John's declaration that 'he who hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal' acquires a new resonance within the tradition of universal mysticism,[35] as do St Paul's exhortations to the faithful to divest themselves of the Old Man to allow the New Man to emerge.[36]

The millennial fascination exerted by such mythic narratives as the phoenix legend; the numerous permutations in the world's treasure-trove of fairy-tales in which the hero is trapped within the belly of a whale or some other monster as a prelude to rebirth; the universality of the shamanic rituals of symbolic death and rebirth; the countless variations on the theme that the path to the gates of rebirth and eternal life necessarily passes through suffering and spiritual mortification; the confrontation with 'evil' enacted in such allegories of spiritual metamorphosis as the the Osiris myth; the world's various alchemical traditions that identify a phase of total dissolution (in Western alchemy called 'nigredo') as the precondition for the metamorphosis of base metal into gold: all point to some sort of archetypal predisposition in the human imagination to create poetic narratives that dramatize the access to a sacred time through a death within profane time, a death which is mostly symbolic but sometimes absolutely literal.[37] The notion of an 'inward odyssey' of the soul, which involves an elaborate process of 'self-naughting' as the prelude to palingenesis within a higher realm, informs the rites of Australian Aborigines, Navaho Indians and Tibetan monks just as much as the classics of world literature from Mahabarata and the Norse myths to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It even recurs thinly disguised in some recent (remarkably un-Hollywoodian) Hollywood movies, such as *Groundhog Day*, *The Game* and *The Matrix*.

Against this background it would seem reasonable to postulate that some sort of archetypal matrix[38] or 'great code'[39] is inscribed within human mythopoeia in its response to the destructive onslaught of *chronos*, which has at least as formative a role in shaping the human impulse to sacrifice and self-sacrifice as any genetic processes, albeit at another layer of that conflation of inner and outer realities we all inhabit. A theory of political violence based on such an innate human predisposition would cast fresh
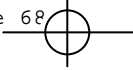
light on the cultural and psychological nexus that exists between the readiness of the 20th-century kamikaze pilot to die for 'a more beautiful Japan', like a 'glistening blossom' and a 'shattering crystal', and the warrior's capacity, extolled 200 years earlier in *The Book of the Samurai* (*Hagakure*), to be 'completely at one with his master and serve[d] him as though his own body were already dead'.[40] It would also throw into relief the significance of the fact that the most authoritative modern commentary on the samurai ethical system, 'Introduction to Hagakure' (*Hagakure Nyumon*), was written by none other than Mishima Yukio, the iconic incarnation of extreme right-wing fanaticism who committed *seppuku* in 1970 after leading an abortive attempt to mount a military revolt against a modern Japanese state he believed had been corrupted to the core by 'Western' decadence.[41]

Occasionally academics probing the psychological mysteries posed by terrorism have sensed the structural link between the self-appointed mission of contemporary 'secular' terrorists to rid the world of an evil system and the familiar 'religious' quest for purity and regeneration. Thus one commentator observes that:

> Some sort of 'complex' seems to be at work that is common to all terrorists. Notice how often the terrorist idealizes his excesses: he is a virtuous person trying to cleanse, purge the world of unclean influences. All this leads me to think that the most hard-core terrorists are compulsion-driven individuals – a purification compulsion perhaps. The common themes may be that the world is a polluted place and he is trying to clean it up by just, sometimes holy, means. If so the terrorist has much in common with the conventional religious fanatic.[42]

At this point, etymology, often a 'false friend' of scholars, may actually be illuminating, steering us away from the psychopathological assumptions that still lurk in the above quotation in the terms 'complex' and 'compulsion'. It is well known that 'sacrifice' derives from the Latin for 'making holy', a process that in religious cultures often involves the destruction of the most precious or the most pure specimen of a living being in order to appease higher powers or invoke metaphysical forces. Less well known is the fact that 'fanaticism' derives from the Latin for a temple or sanctuary, *fanum*, the root element in the term 'profane', meaning literally in front of and hence outside, excluded from, a desecration of the sacred place. *Fanaticus* originally referred to those possessed by a temple deity such as Cybele, the Great Goddess of Phrygia, whose cult was orgiastic and associated with ritual violence like the Dionysus cult itself. According to Greek mythology it was Cybele who was able to heal and purify Dionysus
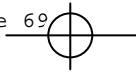
after he had discovered the sacred vine and been sent mad by Hera.[43] The fanaticism of someone devoted to a cause to the point of self-sacrifice, therefore, can thus be seen as the expression of a deep-seated matrix within human psychology that precipitates in human beings the powerful subjective experience of being able to transcend and abolish a crushing but essentially unreal *chronos* through a door in it[44] that gives access to a higher, indestructible realm of metaphysical time and being.[45]

## The Crisis of Heroic Modes of Dream Time in Western Modernity

### *The Modern Interpenetration of the Sacred and Secular*

If the matrix of self-sacrifice in the human psyche is one of the symbolic codes that coexists with (and may even ultimately be conditioned by) the genetic ones that determine human life, the concrete historical circumstances in which it finds expression obviously vary enormously. In the countless religion-based societies that existed in the world before the onset of the globalizing force of secularization and Westernization, it is possible to infer from the ample documentation provided by anthropologists and archaeologists a vital common denominator that underlay the myriad differences between them. A shared cosmology, symbology and set of institutionalized metaphysical beliefs, underpinned by deeply rooted ritual and tradition, ensured that the distinction between the sacred and the profane was hardwired into the culture that shaped the temporal experience of every member of the community.

It is worth stressing that even in pre-modern societies the distinction between the this-worldly and the other-worldly is rarely clean cut. In monistic schemes such as Buddhism, or in animistic cultures that instinctively operated an immanentist sense of the metaphysical powers that hold together the universe, the profane and the holy are constantly commingled and interwoven. Even in a dualistic religious system such as Christianity the secular world is conceived as so intimately bound up with the divine that human history itself assumes a metaphysical subtext and is penetrated by the divine in Christ's incarnation and crucifixion. A sinister thread of theocratic logic thus leads from the historicization and secularization of the divine in St Augustine's image of the Two Cities, Holy and Earthly, whose fates are intertwined, to the Crusades in which many thousands of Christian knights were ready to give up their lives to reconsecrate an entire terrestrial country that in their eyes had become profaned by a pagan occupation and commit unspeakable atrocities against the 'Infidel' in the name of 'their' God. For them historical time and geographical space had been transformed into a site where a cosmic
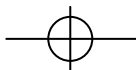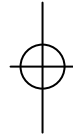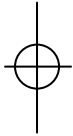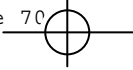
metaphysical drama of redemption was being played out, forging an unholy alliance between the this-worldly and the next sanctioned by the highest spiritual authority that adumbrates the dark side of modern politicized religions. It was the Holy See himself who led the recruitment drive in 1095 for a campaign against the Turks with his pronouncement that Christ commanded men of all ranks to 'hasten to exterminate this vile race from the lands of your Eastern brethren'. He exhorted robbers to become soldiers of Christ and those mercenaries prepared to fight for a low wage now to fight for the richer reward of eternal life, promising that any Crusader losing his life in the Holy Land would have all sins remitted. The spoils of victory would go to those who survived while 'everlasting glory' awaited those whose 'blood gushed out'.[46]

The projection of metaphysical beliefs on to terrestrial history is so deeply ingrained in Christianity that the initial secularizing impact of Renaissance humanism intensified it rather than counteracted it. Thus it was not a matter of an idiosyncratic conceit or self-aggrandizing delusion but symptomatic of an age of collective faith in a supra-personal scheme of history if in the 16th century James I **[???]** of England could still literally believe that not just his own eternal life but that of all his subjects hung on his response to Cromwell's demands and that his execution prevented the nation's spiritual purity being defiled. An even more telling adumbration of future modes of political fanaticism is the fact that as early as the 14th century a curious blend of religion with secular nationalism had already come about in the wake of defeat at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in a 'Serbian faith' in which 'the memory of the medieval kingdom was worked into church ritual' and national heroes became saints. As a result, the Serb nationalist leader Lazar was canonized by the Orthodox Church and, according to the tissue of myth woven around his name, had renounced earthly victory and deliberately accepted death at the hands of the enemy in order to gain future spiritual redemption and a heavenly kingdom for the Serb people as a whole.[47]

For centuries Christendom created regular patterns of human behaviour and generated new ritualized forms of religious political and social life, which displayed a cohesive underlying logic in the attitude it betrayed to profane historical time, one which remained fundamentally akin to that which informs the relationship to time of all human societies based on a shared metaphysical cosmology. However, the situation was to change radically under the impact of the nexus of processes associated with the term 'modernization', especially secularization and the rise of individualism as the concomitant of the breakdown of communal existence. As T.S. Eliot puts it in Choruses from *The Rock*:
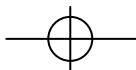
> But it seems something has happened that has never happened before:
> though we know not just when, or why, or how, or where.
> Men have left God not for other gods, they say, but for no god;
> and this has never happened before.

Obviously the emergence of a secular, 'godless' society, in all probability a unique event in human history, is a highly complex phenomenon. It involves, not a dramatic leap from one era to another, but a slow waning similar to the one that allowed paganism to coexist and commingle with Christianity, and Christianity in its turn to coexist and merge with the secularizing thrust of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Even in the 'West', millions of devout believers in Christianity and other religious faiths still live out large components of 'pre-modern' world-views while in other respects managing to be members of a secular society. Moreover, much secular life retains echoes of the original religious substrata of Western life, as when the ritualized materialistic frenzy, family reunions and social parties of the Christmas period continue to reproduce, no matter how mindlessly, a symbiosis of both Christian and pagan mythology in which the celebration of a divine nativity and the birth of the New Year are conjoined.

The sacred and the profane are thus far from being neatly compartmentalized categories, and the historical process by which modern secular society emerged from traditional religious society defies the search for neat, symmetrical patterns of development. However, it is possible to suggest a simplifying narrative fiction of the rise of secular modernity which identifies the early part of the 19th century in Europe as the point when a significant number of the more metaphysically sensitive of the Western artistic and intellectual elite became aware of what Heinrich Heine referred to as 'the great rip in the fabric of the world', which was tearing his heart apart.[48] The same feeling that more sensitive minds now register the loss of the world's wholeness, and the resulting incompatibility between the soul of any creative human being and the nature of the modern world, lies at the core of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* published in 1857. It finds explicit expression, for example, in the poem in which he compares himself to a cracked bell which when rung can only make a discordant sound.[49] In 'chrono-ethological' terms the most significant poems in this collection are those which explore the sense of bottomless *ennui* at the core of human existence and depict the poet as helpless to withstand the merciless onrush of *chronos* which 'wins without cheating, every time: it's the law!'.[50]

A vast documentary reader could be produced to demonstrate that a defining aspect of Western modernity is the diffusion to all strata of society of the sense of fragmentation, breakdown of values, proliferation of incompatible world-views and logics,[51] loss of centre,[52] of harmony, of
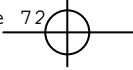
connectedness with the age and the world, the failure of language,[53] the capricious irruption of the irrational, whether in sublime mode from above or demonic guise from below the sphere of an increasingly besieged, debilitated and vulnerable reason. All the self-confident, utopian projects of modernity are dialectically linked to a mood of self-doubt and disorientation. Conversely the expressions of the darkest nights of the soul, its 'seasons in hell'[54] can suddenly be transfigured by intimations of an imminent breakthrough to a new realm of order, certainty and meaning in which the lost *logos* is restored, albeit in altered and even unrecognizable forms.[55]

For millions of 'ordinary' inhabitants of modernity, and not just the intelligentsia, modernity is the age of both bottomless anomie and the hypertrophy of ideologies and values, of utter meaninglessness and sudden epiphanies, of metaphysical nausea and inklings of cosmic futility interleaved with countless glimpses of irreconcilable certainties and utopian projects. It is an era (or rather a geographically and culturally delimited sensibility, which only a deeply engrained Western ethnocentrism turns into an ultimate and universal reality or 'the human condition') in which the auratic, which in pre-modern societies is attached by a shared cosmology and ritual to specific actions and objects, has become a 'free-floating signifier' that can assign itself almost at random to anything in the world that human beings infuse with passion and meaning. The outbreak of brooding, paralysing *Angst* induced by the hypertrophy of information and by conflicting portents of salvation and catastrophe that Dürer encapsulated in his *Melancholia I* has now become pandemic. 'Outsiderdom' and ex-centricity now form a paradoxical part of normality. For all but the statistical minority with a pachydermal temperamental robustness that protects them from psychological insecurities engendered by the steadily encroaching 'West', ours is a civilization (if only at a subliminal level) of existential homelessness,[56] of disinherited minds,[57] of anxiety,[58] of ambivalence.[59] It is an age that evokes images of dispossessed aristocrats whose star is dead[60] or ontological orphans[61] thrown into the world[62] and prey to the 'restless hungry feeling' of being just 'one too many mornings and a thousand miles behind'.[63]

At the heart of Western modernity there is thus an absence: the absence of a cosmological centre to which all can turn, the absence of a communal public gate to a higher realm. It is a situation evoked in the parable of the man from the country seeking access to the Law in Kafka's *The Trial*, but who finds his way barred by an enormous gate guarded by a gatekeeper. Unable to sacrifice himself, to go through a process of 'self-naughting', he remains outside the gate in an increasingly pitiful physical and mental state, though with his eyesight dimming he can just make out the light shining
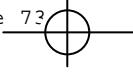
under the gate from the other side.[64] The gatekeeper now has no option but to lock the door when he dies (for it has been unlocked all along), with the words 'No one else could gain admittance here, for this entrance was meant for you alone. I will go now and close it.' In the subliminal logic of the fanatic, the minute aperture or wormhole in the wall of *chronos* can only be passed through by a voluntary act of self-destruction in profane time, an act that makes the individual's life holy in the process of offering[65] it up to a supra-personal cause.

### The Randomization of the Epiphany

Seen in terms of 'chrono-ethology' human beings trapped on board a ship of modernity cut adrift from reliable metaphysical ports and anchorages may behave as if personal time itself is out of joint, as if a divine watchmaker is needed to wind up the psychic clock or recharge its battery to put it back in synch with the sacred rhythms of life. The rivers of sacred time no longer run predictably and manageably within fixed channels, but constantly threaten suddenly to evaporate or to break their banks, leaving individuals either high and dry in a world devoid of transcendence, or vulnerable to drowning in waves of unsustainable religious 'revelation'.

In such a condition homogeneous, empty time can even be transfigured by highly secularized modern news and entertainment media, fuelled, like the world-wide explosion of drug consumption, by a universal craving to be snatched even momentarily and self-destructively from the jaws of all-consuming *chronos*, and lifted into a dream time, even if it lasts no longer than a World Cup football match or a pop concert. (Baudelaire aptly described the states of mind created by hallucinogens as an 'artificial paradise', a phrase that could be applied to most modern forms of 'escape'.) Yet, just as modern human beings have retained a physiology adapted to Stone Age living, so we still have the metaphysical instincts, the gift for ecstatic experience, and mythopoeic faculties of the primordial hunter-gatherers of higher meaning who once constructed Stonehenge, built the vast temple complex of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, and elaborated the rituals which made Dream Time more real than profane time in all so-called primitive societies. Those whose hunger for spiritual manna cannot be sated by carefully designed, commercialized and mass-produced 'highs' continue subliminally to crave a more authentic mystic experience. Peter Shafer's play *Equus* dramatizes the dilemma of an individual, Alan Strang, who, despite being stranded on one of the inhospitable beaches of modern secular existence well above the tide mark left by the ebb of a shared cosmology and ritual, subliminally draws on his primordial myth-making powers to avoid being engulfed by the absurd. This he does by elaborating his own private religion, which endows the horse with a sense of the numinous,

imbuing his private life with meaning through a single drop of the mythic energies that collectively forged Greek culture, the religious equivalent of *idioglossia*, or a private language.

Shafer shows how the contingencies of psychological predisposition and moment can enable a suburban teenager to create a special ritual in which he temporarily but regularly metamorphosizes into a centaur. It also suggests that the potential lies within all individuals, no matter how inured in secular modernity, to rediscover within themselves the psychic force that produced the archetypal hero. Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, though ostensibly about 'the human condition' can be read as a sustained reflection on the spiritual dilemma of human beings (articulated in the scrupulously semi-encrypted register of epiphanic obscurantism so typical of modernism gripped by the crisis of language itself).[66] At one point they reflect on how in the course of growing up the eyes of our species are 'turned round' and act as cognitive 'traps' in the perception of reality. As a result, the purity of unselfconscious experience and unreflecting action is perpetually contaminated by reflexivity,[67] denying human beings the timeless experience of the 'open' that Rilke attributes to animals and children:

> We, only, see death; the free animal has its death always behind it, forever, and God before it, and when it moves, it moves already in eternity, like a fountain. Never for a single day do we have before us that pure space into which flowers endlessly open.[68]

Human beings cannot live life 'to the full' because our self-awareness causes us to cling to the ephemeral, to fix time in the routinized consciousness of habit and familiarity. To use Rilke's image, we are so preoccupied with enjoying the blossoming stage of our development that we can never give ourselves totally to the act of becoming fruit. In contrast 'the hero' is unconcerned with permanence and makes no attempt to prolong the ephemeral: 'he lives in continual ascent, moving on into the ever-changing constellation of perpetual danger.'[69]

### The Ambivalence of the Modern Access to Dream Time

What emerges from such a brief excursion into the realm of modernism is a picture of contemporary human beings cut off from a regular and reliable source of the numinous and trapped within an oppressive self-reflexivity, but still endowed with an innate capacity and thirst for a transcendent experience that has generated the myriad different ways of experiencing glimpses of dream time that are a feature of the Western world. It is a situation that can drive some into the most utopian 'causes' in an attempt to break the thrall of ordinary time. However, the impulse to break through into a heroic, *chronos*-defying, state of being, now that it has become

detached from the traditions, rituals and rigours generated by a shared cosmology has, in this age of ambivalence, itself taken on a deep ambivalence.

Cultural anthropology and history suggest that the human capacity for self-transcendence has always had a dual aspect. It can lead to integration in a higher cause that does not involve acts of destruction and self-destruction, a form of selflessness in which the individual still retains a separate identity. Equally it can produce the type of total identification with a cause to the point where it abolishes a critical detachment and sense of self, often leading to a sublimation of the collective self to which the devotee now belongs and a demonization of the Other now perceived as its antithesis or enemy.[70] However, with the 'decay of values'[71] and the 'randomization of the sacred' under the impact of high modernity, any human cause can potentially be transformed into a source of self-transcendence in an integrative[72] or identificatory spirit. Moreover, even the most apparently secular set of values on closer inspection proves to be given affective coherence and normative power by being infused with a sacral dimension.

This structural situation gives rise to a basic process at the heart of modernization, the evidence for which is all around. Driven by a subliminal 'Terror of History', a phobia against meaningless, profane, rectilinear time inscribed deep in the human psyche, the tendency towards secularization and the death of traditional religious cosmologies and communities generates its own countervailing forces, as people find activities and causes with which to experience self-transcendence. This resolves the paradox that the age of secularization has infused all politics with a religious dimension to the point that even the most apparently secular democracy, namely that of the USA, turns out on closer examination to be based politically and in terms of national identity on an extraordinarily elaborate civic religion.[73] This also explains why in times of crisis or conflict so-called liberal democracies instinctively institute a powerful campaign to sacralize politics and turn the war into a holy cause, a fact fully borne out by the history of both world wars as well as the post-war conflicts of the 'Free World' with communism and rogue states of all descriptions.

Sanctifying the battle against a demonized enemy may create a deep resonance with the lives of millions of its citizens whose nationalism all too easily degenerates into an identificatory form of self-transcendence as long as the subject threat to their lives prevails.[74] However, even when there is no collective sense of crisis, some individuals are predisposed like Alan Strang in *Equus* to invest all their idealism and metaphysical longings into a private cause that endows their lives with meaning it would otherwise lack, especially when objective social or political conditions make this seem like 'the only way out'.
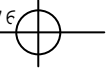
**Extreme Right-wing Violence in the Light of Chrono-ethology**

*The Exoteric and the Esoteric in the Fascist Cult of Death*

I would invite readers to accept in a non-dogmatic, heuristic spirit the main premises of this chrono-ethological explanatory scheme of the human urge for transcendence and the rise of modernity, despite their inevitably highly contentious nature. We are then in a position to apply the explanatory framework that has emerged to two different manifestations of fanaticism associated with the extreme right in the 20th century: the death cult of the organized fascist movement, and the lone act of 'black' terrorism.

*Squadrismo*

Since it was the crucible of World War I that did so much to weld ultra-nationalism and the myth of total regeneration into the new ideological compound that came to be known as fascism, it is hardly surprising that the extolling of militaristic values as the key to overcoming decadence is a central theme of the rhetoric, ritual and style of all inter-war fascisms. It would be misleading, however, to cite texts that celebrate the readiness to sacrifice oneself for one's nation as the highest form of courage as evidence of a genuine death cult in the mystical sense we have explored earlier. In the case of fascism, for example, the famed 'menefreghismo' of the *squadristi* was inherited from the *Arditi* for whom defiance in the face of danger had never been the sign that death had been put behind them, or the expression of a genuine will literally to give up their own lives so that their country might be reborn. Rather it was a vulgarized form of Nietzschean vitalism and the determination to 'live dangerously'. Despite the *squadrista* emblem of a skull with the dagger between its teeth, a celebration of the values of the Blackshirt called 'Heroic Rhapsody' affirmed that 'The Fascist loves life'.[75] Nor was there anything really sacred about the 'Sacrarium of the Martyrs' in the 'Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista' in which a phonograph continually played the fascist song 'Giovinezza' in a cavernous black room on the ceiling of which every painted star represented a fascist martyr. At bottom this was simply an imaginative variation of the cult of the fallen soldier common to all the combatant powers of World War I, an integral part of the quite exoteric process by which the masses were nationalized in the modern age through a constant flow of chauvinistic state propaganda.[76]

*Nazism*

The same could be said of the many rituals, theatrical events and films produced by the Nazis dealing with the theme of martyrdom, blood and death. It is arguable that the charismatic power of Hitler was deeply bound up with his capacity to fulfil the longings for a new age and a new time
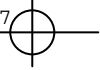
being experienced by millions of 'ordinary Germans' after 1929 once Weimar collapsed as a credible entity. They were longings summed up in a brilliant evocation of the psychological portrait of the age as a yearning in the heart of each citizen for:

> a Leader to take him tenderly and lightly by the hand, to set things in order and show him the way; … the Leader who will build the house anew that the dead may come to life again; … the Healer who by his actions will give meaning to the incomprehensible events of the Age, so that Time can begin again.[77]

Close analysis shows that their underlying theme was not the celebration of death as such, but rather the evocation of the collective palingenesis by which the *Volksgemeinschaft* passed through its (Weimar) winter of decay and death to a new spring in the Third Reich. This was a process of communal salvation through which it entered a mythic, this-worldly eternity metaphorically, avoiding an existential confrontation with personal annihilation. Thus the elaborate ritual staged each year in the centre of Munich to commemorate those who died in the failed putsch of 9 November 1923 symbolized 'the historical turning point through which the old ended and something entirely new began'. As one phrase in the liturgy put it, 'The earth finished with your death, with your fame our life starts afresh'.[78] In the same way, the killing of a member of the Hitler Youth in the film *Hitlerjunge Quex* is presented without morbidity as the *rite de passage* to the immortality of a reborn Germany.[79] Much of Nazism's elaborate 'political religion', including the obsessively repeated topos of sacrifice and death, salvation and resurrection, is little more than a thinly disguised travesty of Christian ritual and symbology overlaid with spurious Nordic mythology. As such, mainstream Nazism lacks an authentic esoteric or 'necrophiliac'[80] dimension, and is at bottom a form of theatrical or aestheticized politics, which no more betokens the presence of a death cult than does the ceremonial honouring of the dead of two world wars that takes place annually at the Cenotaph in London.[81]

However, it is reasonable to suggest that more lies behind the choice of the skull and crossbones to adorn the uniform of the SS than a histrionic gesture to instil terror in their victims. Himmler went to considerable lengths to turn the Ordensburgen, the academies in which the elite of the Waffen SS were trained, into the sites of a prolonged *rite de passage* both physical and metaphysical. The 'examinations' could include such bizarre ordeals as fighting savage dogs bare-handed for 12 minutes, digging a hole to take refuge in within 80 seconds to avoid being crushed by a relentlessly advancing tank, and deliberately exploding a hand grenade placed on a helmet with a brim specially reinforced for the occasion: any attempt to run
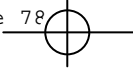
away led to the candidate being shot on the spot.[82] This went considerably beyond the scope of conventional military training, which aims to turn out obedient soldiers ready to enter combat without question. It was deliberately calculated to teach the cadets to 'receive death' in the sense of 'dying to one's own self', thus creating the new man, the 'god-man' evoked by Hitler in his conversations with Rauschning.[83]

Himmler also poured considerable energy into the project of creating a mystic fulcrum for the new Nazi Empire in the castle at Wewelsburg in the Teutoburger Forest. Under the influence of Weisthor, pseudonym of the occultist anti-Semite Karl Wiligut, he set about transforming the castle, requisitioned by the SS in 1934, into the temple to his neo-pagan cult of National Socialism as the spiritual reawakening of pre-Judeo-Christian Aryan energies. At the heart of the project was the construction of a domed, crypt-like room in which the coats of arms of dead SS-Obergruppenführer were to hang and where ceremonies to honour ancestral forces of the Germanic race were to take place. Clearly Himmler felt called upon to create an esoteric elite to spearhead Germany's rebirth under the influence of an occultist cosmology similar to the one that led the Ariosophist Lanz von Liebenfels to form the Ordo Novi Templi in 1907 and to acquire the Austrian castle of Burg Werfenstein as its headquarters. Here he and his followers enacted the bizarre rituals rooted in the fantasies of a cosmic racial war between humans and demons in human form (Jews) in which the chivalric order, the Knights Templars, had been the front-line soldiers in the time of the Crusades.

Weisthor's most conspicuous impact on mainstream Nazism was as designer of the SS Totenkopf ring ornamented with a death's head, a swastika and various runic symbols worn by all members of the SS. In 1938 Himmler decreed that the rings of all dead SS men were to be kept in a chest at the castle to symbolize their permanent membership of the order.[84] However, it is questionable whether any more than a small minority of the Waffen SS were ever turned into latter-day Knights who vowed to die on behalf of their race, despite the sinister mystique that has always clung to them and the role of warrior priests sometimes ascribed to them by those who insist that Nazism was an occultist rebellion against Western rationality, science and modernity, which has been utterly misunderstood by conventional historians.[85] In any case, the vast expansion of the SS in the course of the war ensured that by 1945 it had degenerated into little more than a conscript army of mass-murderers operating above any sort of legal or moral constraint, a ghastly travesty of the spiritual and physical harbingers of a new master race of 'human gods' that they were meant to become.

In all likelihood the death cult remained a minor strand in the Third Reich as a whole, largely restricted to the utopian fantasies of Himmler
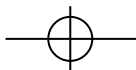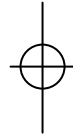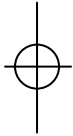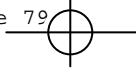
himself, just as the ravings of Lanz von Liebenfels in his Ariosophist periodical played a minimal part in the operational ideology of Hitler, even if they may have been one of the many influences that helped transform him into an ideological anti-Semite fanatically committed to national rebirth in the formative years spent in Vienna before World War I.[86] Though it makes a lot of sense to see Nazism as a political religion bent on regenerating history through the awakening of mythic and ritual forces,[87] this is not a blank cheque to treat it as a form of esotericism driven at its core by a special relationship with the occult or death.

*The Death Cult in Spanish and Romanian Fascism*

A similar situation pertains to the death cult in Franco's Spain. Mainstream Fanquismo and Falangism did not cultivate death in any esoteric sense, the calls to sacrifice in the battle for the soul of the nation and the cult of Primo de Rivera as a Falangist martyr were part of the conventional symbology of militaristic nationalism. However, something more profound resonated in the main hall of Salamanca University on 12 October 1936 when General Millán Astray y Terreros, leader of the Spanish Foreign Legion yelled 'Down with Intelligence! Long live death!' (*Viva la muerte!*). He was responding to the declaration he had just heard by the famous humanist philosopher Miguel de Unamuno that 'At times to be silent is to lie. You will win because you have enough brute force. But you will not convince. For to convince you need to persuade. And in order to persuade you would need what you lack: Reason and Right.' After Astray's defiant riposte the ageing philosopher was driven from the university at gunpoint and died of a heart attack a week later.

The General's cult of death was more than mere rhetoric. He had taken it upon himself to turn his troops into fanatics who had left their secular lives and commitments behind them in order to devote themselves utterly to the cause of Spain. When he learnt that some of his men still had savings in bank accounts he railed:

> The legionary must only think of today, not of the past, which is, even more so than for others, dead. Not of tomorrow because, by enrolling he knows he has placed his own signature on his death certificate. We live today. We fight today. We die today. To die: this is your duty. […] Legionaries, go and take out your savings. You have all the time you need to spend them because I am giving you leave till two o'clock. I am sure that by tomorrow none of you will still have savings books. Legionaries! Long live Spain! Long live Franco! Long live death![88]

For Astray at least there was something more than rhetorical in the Tercio song, 'Death's Fiancé' with the line 'I am betrothed to death and will
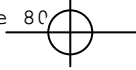
bind myself with a strong rope to this loyal companion.' It is perhaps no coincidence that El Tercio bore the name of the Spanish militia that fought to preserve the spiritual unity of Catholic Spain in the age of the Riconquista when Spain was fighting a 'holy war' to purge itself of the presence and influence of Islam.

But of all inter-war fascist movements it is the Iron Guard that displays the least rhetorical and most genuine *thanatophilia*, or love of death. Like the Tercio, its songs celebrated death in such lines as: 'Death, only death, legionaries, is a joyful bride for us. Legionaries die singing and sing dying'. However, such sentiments were not confined to a particular faction but permeated the entire movement. Codreanu's incorporation of Romanian orthodox Christianity within what remained at bottom a deeply secular form of racist nationalism led to an ideological discourse in which the resurrection of Romania from decadence was evoked in terms strongly reminiscent of the millennarian[89] fantasies of 14th-century Serb nationalists in which personal death became equated with national rebirth. The more fanatical of Codreanu's followers took the willingness to die for the higher cause to the point where only self-sacrifice could guarantee the success of the revolutionary project, at which point the exoteric language of militarist rhetoric crosses the Rubicon into the realm of a genuine cult of death. Thus we are assured that Ion Mota, Codreanu's brother-in-law and lieutenant, left to fight the republicans in Spain, 'with the firm intent of dying there', persuaded as he was that 'death is a creative and fertile act'.[90]

The Italian expert on European esotericism, Furio Jesi, suggests that the death cult in the Iron Guard went further than that of other fascisms because it was rooted in a deep-seated Balkan tradition that sanctified sacrifice and eroticized death, and is epitomized in the ballad 'The Legend of Mastro Manole', about a character who immures his wife alive in order to complete a building. Mircea Eliade saw this legend as one of countless permutations of the mystic notion that, in order to last, a major project (the building of a house, a bridge, but also a spiritual undertaking) must be animated, receive a life and a soul through a ritual act of 'transfer', and that this in turn demands a sacrifice, a violent death through which the victim accedes to a new life in a metaphysical dimension. Arguably the combined impact of Romanian orthodoxy and pagan folklore on Codreanu's conception of the Iron Guard was to imbue it with a cult of death that permeated it at every level. It was a component reinforced by the dedication of the movement to the Archangel Michael whose icon adorned the chapel of the prison where Codreanu was interned in 1926 for his involvement in a plot to assassinate a deputy who had voted for granting citizenship to Jews. For the Iron Guard the Archangel symbolized the 'active principle of good and eternal light struggling with dark outside us and in us',[91] and the Messianic role that

Codreanu assumed in the fight for his nation involved 'taking upon himself all the sins of his race'.[92] Furio Jesi, one of the few genuine scholars to have probed into this murky area, which lends itself so readily to sensationalization, suggests that such acts of martyrdom are only needed in the absence of God:

> Where God is present the sword is not drawn: in the presence of Jesus the sword taken out of its scabbard by Peter is the sign of unnecessary guilt. Where God has withdrawn into exile within himself and where only sub-divine entities are the only ones accessible, such as the archangel, the just must become guilty and must kill: the *miles Christi*, the *athleta Christi*, the knight-crusader, the Templar, the Legionary of the Iron Guard, must choose to become martyrs since they are guilty.[93]

The rebirth of Romania is a heroic undertaking that demands sacrificial blood, which the killers must expiate with their own. Consistent with this mystic principle of sacrifice are some of the phrases found in *The Nest Leader's Handbook*. For example, Codreanu tells his Legionaries that by joining the movement they have entered a 'school of suffering' for 'he who bears suffering will win', 'every suffering is a step towards redemption', and 'He who knows how to die will never become a slave'.[94] Thus for the most fanatical activists of the Iron Guard the emancipation of the Romanian race was not the exoteric principle of 'win or die', but the esoteric concept of 'winning by dying'. In contrast to even the most fanatical SS officers, Legionaries could justify their violence only when it was expiated, with the result that some gave themselves up after carrying out an assassination, in some instances remaining passive as they were mown down by a hail of bullets.[95]

## *The Role of Self-sacrifice in Post-war Fascism*

No matter how much it grew out of a reaction to the black hole that drives the galaxy of modernity,[96] the Legionaries of the Archangel Michael were still able to operate as a travesty of a medieval order. However, in the post-war era, at least in Europe and the USA, a nexus of forces has eroded the basis for mass movements infused with the charismatic political energies generated by a shared utopia. The revolutionary right has fragmented just at the time when the progressive decay of organized religion has made the projection of the auratic and the numinous on to secular causes more random and idiosyncratic than ever. This is the age, not of mass assaults on the citadels of liberal decadence led by paramilitary troops in coloured shirts and sporting sinister emblems, but of leaderless resistance,[97] the lone, uniformless warrior priest, the political soldier, the Kshatriya, who remains

inwardly loyal to the cause and retains his anonymity in the midst of the pleasure-seeking crowd. The national phoenix is grounded for the duration. The coming of the new order is indefinitely postponed.

For the true revolutionary determined not to compromise his ideological purity by association with electoral populism, this period of history is an interregnum, the time of withdrawal from the political arena, of *apoliteia*.[98] His Bible is no longer *Mein Kampf* with its programme for building up a political party and an irresistible mass movement. Instead its ethos is summed up in books like *The Turner Diaries*, which explains how true Aryans, denied the possibility of belonging to a cohesive movement such as the NSDAP, should react when the race war breaks out; *The Hunter*, which tells the story of a lone idealist resolved to fight a 'vigilante' war against the Federal State; or *Unintended Consequences* depicting a terrorist war against civil society in which leading government officials are picked off one by one.[99] Yet the loss of the historical conditions that bred the fascist mass movement has done nothing to eradicate the capacity of a handful of human beings to conceive 'projective narratives' that compel them to carry out acts of symbolic violence against the state or society. Thereby they subliminally re-enact in modern guise the archetypal role of the hero, despite the lack of heavenly rewards for his death. As two experts tell us in their investigation of the 'psychopolitics of hatred':

The individual whose world is falling apart is experiencing his own psychological apocalypse. From this state of ultimate powerlessness and meaninglessness some create a world of meaning in their mind, a new world in which they have power and significance. Through this vision they have found personal redemption.[100]

What is missing from this statement is recognition that such an individual may find him or herself in a world which can *objectively* be seen as falling apart, and that the key to personal redemption lies in the decision to do something about it at whatever personal cost. Nor should such an impulse be automatically equated with 'psychopathology' or hatred. The psychological template for this is the role played by Robert de Niro in *Taxi Driver*: a character who, feeling let down by politicians, decides to fight a one-man crusade to clean up New York and fight the vice that is corrupting the city, undergoing in the process a dramatic metamorphosis from lost soul to iron-willed and -bodied urban vigilante, a walking arsenal complete with Mohican haircut. He tells Palantine, the election candidate who hires his cab, that the most important thing the next president should do is 'to clean up this city here. It's full of filth and scum; scum and filth. It's like an open sewer … We need a President that would clean up this whole mess. Flush it out.'[101] In like manner both Timothy McVeigh (the Oklahoma bomber) and David Copeland (the London nail-bomber) made the transition from an

obsession with their nation's decay to a sense of personal mission (dictated by their own conscience with a moral force that came from beyond them) to 'do something about it'.[102] An echo of the primordial mystic fantasy of regeneration through sacrifice lurks in McVeigh's statement in a letter sent to a newspaper three years before the Oklahoma bombing. Having catalogued symptoms of the breakdown of the American Dream, he asked 'Do we have to shed blood to reform the current system?' It is no coincidence that the T-shirt he wore when he carried out the attack was inscribed with a quotation from Jefferson: 'The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants'.

After his arrest he steadfastly maintained the composure of a captured soldier and one of his statements made while awaiting execution is revealing: 'A shrink might look at what I have to say and decide "He's a psychopath or sociopath. He has no respect for human life". Far from that – I have great respect for human life. My decision to take human life at the Murrah Building –… I did it for the larger good.'[103] His expressionless stare into the TV cameras as he succumbed to the lethal injection points to a powerful subjective sense that he was expiating the blood he had shed in the fulfilment of his mission, and that he was in a sense already dead.

A feature of David Copeland's own account of his emotional state during his bombing campaign in London is his sense of being a robot (a term he uses several times to describe his state of mind). He was emotionally numbed, incapable of empathy with his victims. The authors of his biography ascribe this to the fact that he was a 'classic psychopath, someone who usually appeared quite normal but was also devoid of feeling and capable of inflicting severe violence.'[104] Their assumption was endorsed by his barrister who declared to the judge at Copeland's trial that he was suffering from 'serious schizophrenia, delusions and emotional disorders', and much of the subsequent proceedings centred on the issue of his sanity. The authors insist he embarked on his bombing campaign 'fuelled by a desire to be famous' and by the personality disorders of a lonely underachiever.

Instead I would suggest a chrono-ethological explanation of his behaviour. Once he had found his sense of mission ('I just had to do it. It was my destiny'),[105] Copeland literally left ordinary, personal time, and the whole moral sensibility that goes with it, behind him: he was beyond. Elsewhere. Certainly, it was a mission that resolved his own acute sense of impotence, failure and anomie ('I had no life anyway … I'm shot-away – a loner – just weird in the fucking head').[106] However, the key to its success in doing this lay in the conviction, fed by apocalyptic fantasies of living at a turning point in history, that his actions would trigger a race war that would lead to the resurgence of the white race, or at least strike a serious

blow against the decadence of a multicultural and permissive society. It was the possibility his mission gave him of acting on behalf of a higher cause at whatever personal risk that enabled him to access a state of identificatory transcendence. This helps explain his personal use of biblical references culled from the Christian Identity movement to rationalize and justify his actions, the implication that he sometimes felt he had been chosen by God to fulfil his mission on behalf of his race, his willingness to confess, his incapacity for remorse.

Copeland's subliminal mythopoeic and palingenetic drive, rationalized and articulated thanks to the neo-fascist and racist subculture he had frequented, had enabled him to perform the disturbing feat of becoming, not the Buddha of Suburbia, but a latter-day Knight Templar in a baseball cap and trainers, a modern jihadic warrior delivered to his enemy not astride a white charger but sitting in the back of a black London taxi-cab. Though neither McVeigh nor Copeland fall into the category of suicide bombers as such, both seem to have generated within themselves largely spontaneously an unshakeable belief that they were called upon to sacrifice the lives of fellow human beings in order to reverse the process of decay, which anaesthetized them both to the suffering they inflicted on their victims and to the consequences to their own lives. They had both become heroes, playing the star role in a private palingenetic drama, displaying a lethal brand of 'home-brew' fanaticism. The intense sense of mission that motivated them would 'normally' only be produced either from a combination of intensive cultural and religious conditioning with extreme socio-political conditions (as in Palestine) or from ideological indoctrination in the severest of training regimes (as in the Ordensburgen of the Third Reich). David in *A.I.* was conceived as 'a robot who could dream'. David Copeland used his dreaming faculty to conjure up such a total sense of mission that he effectively programmed himself to become a dreamer of the day, and hence a robot dedicated to carrying out orders that took shape in his head thanks to a virtual community of racial fanatics to which he belonged.

## Tentative Inferences for the Study of Terrorist Violence

The conclusions to be drawn from this highly speculative foray into the extraordinarily complex phenomenon of 'self-sacrificial' political violence and terrorism can be summarized as follows.
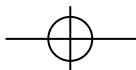
1. Lines of enquiry that associate the fanaticism which causes extreme acts of terrorism with psychopathological states are likely to prove as unproductive, limited and misleading as the Frankfurt School's futile search for the identikit of the 'authoritarian personality' as the key to fascism and Nazism 50 years ago.
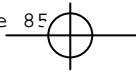
2. No less **[???]** helpful are attempts to identify the genetic, biochemical, evolutionary substratum of fanatical devotion to a cause, since they tend to lead to crudely reductionist positions reminiscent of the behaviourist fallacies of a generation ago.

3. Rather, a more heuristically fruitful approach is one that applies the principle of methodological empathy to self-sacrificial forms of political violence, and that thus gives due weight in the interpretation of human behaviour to the sphere of cognition, value-formation and ideals. It thus looks for clues to extreme acts of violence in the uniquely human craving to make fairy-tales real, 'chase down dreams', and inject meaning and narrative shape ('projective narratives') into each individual existence. In this article the time aspect has been given particular emphasis by postulating the existence of a new virtual discipline, 'chrono-ethology'.

4. This subjective sphere of human ideation and goal-centred aspirations should be probed forensically in a spirit of methodological pluralism and empathy, informed by that sense of complexity, awe and compassion that is at the heart of all humanistic enquiry. For as Kafka reminds us:

> When you stand before me and look at me, what do you know of the pain that is in me and what do I know of yours. And even if I were to throw myself down in front of you and weep and pour my heart out, what would you know about me more than you know about hell when someone tells you it is hot and terrifying. If only for this reason we human beings should stand before each other with the thoughtfulness, with the awe and with the love we should feel at the entrance to hell.[107]

5. Given the complexity of the phenomenon of political and terroristic violence, and the questionable value of conventional explanatory strategies based on abnormal psychology or evolutionary ethics, it is worth exploring the heuristic potential of the thesis that each act of self-sacrificial political extremism, even the most apparently secular, contains a 'micro-millennaristic' dimension. In other words, it involves a sense of 'mission' that *by definition* carries with it a *chronos*-defying bid to access a self-transcending 'dream time' that redeems the loss of individual life in ordinary time, which thereby becomes emptied of significance. At a psychodynamic level this involves the experience of 'dying' in 'this' world in order to be 'reborn' in a higher, more substantial reality.

6. Such a hypothesis opens up the prospect of identifying the single pixels of individual psychology that collectively form the 'movements', and sometimes even 'mass movements', of the age of modern 'democratic' politics. It promises to be particularly relevant to understanding
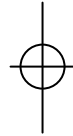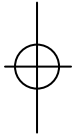
movements that are generated by political and politicized religions whose ideological core contains the mythic goal of ridding the world of decadence and bringing about total rebirth. In other words, the 'charismatic' dynamism of palingenetic movements may one day prove to derive from countless individual senses of personal regeneration, of a sacralization of individual existence raised to a higher power by the sense of belonging to a revolutionary community destined to inaugurate a new age. (The modern 'lone-wolf' terrorist has to resort to diagnoses of the present 'decadence' that draw a sense of strength from the very absence of such a mass movement. This feat often involves the elaboration of a conspiracy theory to explain why the vast majority live like somnambulists blissfully ignorant of the Truth.)

7. It is possible to postulate at least three distinct forms of political fanaticism existing in the world today that can lead to kamikaze behaviour:

   a) The fanaticism of politicized religions. Traditional, 'pre-modern' religions have survived with millions of orthodox believers into a world flooded with the forces of modernization, secularization and globalization and containing numerous sites of deep political conflict between rival historical, ethnic or religious communities fomented by conditions of desperate social deprivation and state oppression. This tends to generate extreme forms of *politicization* of religion, which in crises can mass-produce fanaticism, and create a steady supply of volunteers for potential suicide (or better martyr) missions in a spirit of self-sacrifice.

   b) The fanaticism of political religions. The 20th century saw the emergence of a number of 'totalitarian' movements which, driven by the myth of total rebirth,[108] were able to generate manifestations of self-sacrificial fanaticism, as we have seen in the case of some inter-war fascist movements. The ideology drawn on to rationalize such acts derived its ideological coherence from established currents within the movement or regime, and was linked to a sense of hierarchy and leadership. However, genuine self-sacrificial devotion was the exception in behavioural terms within both fascism and communism, even if the rhetoric of fanaticism and self-sacrifice has been a feature of all totalitarian and militaristic movements.

   c) The fanaticism of 'the loner'. In contrast to the organized, structured behaviour of the fanatics associated with the totalitarian movements and regimes of inter-war Western society, the drive towards self-transcendence and the re-enchantment of the world has undergone an extensive process of fragmentation and randomization. The culmination of this process is the lone terrorist, ideologically

programmed by an eclectic mixture of extremist diagnoses of the crisis of the modern world or of national decline. These will typically have been absorbed in post-modern fashion from a variety of sources, but welded into a coherent narrative and sense of mission in a profound rebellion against the bottomless relativism of the post-modern sensibility. It is a sense of mission pervaded by a urge to 'flush out' the mess of society, and thereby to purify and sanctify the world on a symbolic level, which can all too easily translate itself into what appear to be random, nihilistic acts of violence and destruction, but which for the perpetrator are ritual acts of catharsis. It is a scenario that makes predicting and counteracting politically motivated fanatical acts extremely difficult in the contemporary age.

### The Prognosis for Terroristic Fanaticism

I am all too conscious of the fact that this article blurs important taxonomic distinctions that can be made between (a) the political violence of movements such as inter-war fascism and the terrorism of groupuscules or lone wolves; (b) the acts of fanaticism of individuals who have no intention of dying and those in which death is welcomed as part of a (quasi-)sacred *rite de passage*; (c) political religions (such as fascism) and politicized religions (such as political Islam). Even in the restricted area of 'extreme right terrorism' one expert, Ehud Sprinzak, found it necessary to distinguish 'revolutionary', 'reactive', 'vigilante', 'racist', 'millennarian' and 'youth counter-culture' forms (ideal types) of terrorism and correctly states that 'the huge political, historical and cultural variation among right-wing extremist groups makes it difficult to generalize their behavioural dynamics'.[109] Superficially the fascist and black types of terrorism focused on here are close to his categories 'revolutionary' and 'millennarian'. However, I would suggest that the phenomenon of the 'sacralization of time' explored here is at least worth exploring heuristically as a fundamental psychological component of the dynamics of *all* political fanaticism, however diverse the social, organizational or ideological constitution of individual acts of political violence or terrorism at the level of external historical phenomenon.

It is perhaps significant that in another article in the same issue of *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 'Right-wing Violence in North America', Jeffrey Kaplan levels the criticism at Sprinzak's article that it 'seriously underestimates the religiosity, and thus the millennarianism and concomitant chiliasm, inherent in the radical right wing in North America',[110] which is surely an intuitive allusion to the underlying process of sacralizing time that is the subject of this analysis. It is the historicization of this urge to access 'dream time' that would explain why, according to

Kaplan, 'the literature of Odinism, National Socialism and Creativity, no less than that of Christian Identity are deeply apocalyptic, and foresees a period of tribulation as the necessary birth pangs of the desired new world' (and hence of a new time).[111]

Finally, the line of interpretation pursued in this article leads to the conclusion that the prognosis for the continued vitality of fanaticism is disturbingly good. The world is full of suffering, social injustice and unresolved economic, ethnic, cultural, religious and political tensions. It is entering an unprecedented ecological and demographic crisis. Meanwhile, the human longing to access transcendent time remains an integral part of our psyches. It is a structural situation that cannot but generate myriad causes, holy wars, private epiphanies and missions, and pretexts for martyrdom. Certainly it is one that makes Fukuyamian rumours of the imminent death of History a decade ago seem greatly exaggerated. Indeed, it is precisely the perennially human Terror of History, which Eliade identified, that guarantees that History as Fukuyama understands it will survive as long as substantive equality and social justice in a sustainable economic and ecological system remain a distant utopia.

## NOTES

This article is based on a paper written for the conference Fanaticism and Modern Conflict held at the University of Salford, 14–16 June 2002.

1. A good example of this approach is Robert S. Robins and Jerrold M. Post, MD, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), which reduces terrorist movements and state terror to forms of sociopathology, albeit ones that generally stop short of actual psychosis.
2. Ehud Sprinzak, 'Right-wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimation', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7/1 (Spring 1995) p.40.
3. Walter Reich, *The Origins of Terrorism* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson, 1990).
4. The classic text that attempts to offer an evolutionary explanation of altruism is Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). An example of more recent attempts to explore this issue is Elliott Sober, 'Evolutionary Altruism, Psychological Altruism, and Morality: Disentangling the Phenotypes', in M.H. Nitecki and D.V. Nitecki (eds.), *Evolutionary Ethics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993). For an excellent brief introduction to the topic see Michael Byron, 'Evolutionary Ethics and Biologically Supportable Morality', Kent State University, at http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/TEth/TEthByro.htm.
5. Colin Tudge, *The Engineer in the Garden* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993).
6. Colin Tudge, 'Natural Born Killers', *New Scientist* 174/2342 (11 May 2002) p.36. For an important refutation of this sort of crude 'behaviourist' reductionism (published over 30 years ago but still sadly relevant today) see Arthur Koestler and J.R. Smythies, *Beyond Reductionism* (London: Hutchinson, 1969); Arthur Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* (New York: Random House, 1982).
7. Tudge (note 6) p.39. **[???]**
8. Kevin Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day* (New York: Autonomedia, 1999).
9. E.g. Roger Penrose in *The Emperor's New Mind* (London: Vintage 1990), in the chapter
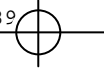
'Cosmology and the Arrow of Time' comments on the 'puzzling discrepancy between our perception of time and what modern physical theory tells us to believe' (p.392).

10. Mircea Eliade's **[???]** most sustained treatment of this theme is to be found in *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971). See also his *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harvest, 1959).

11. See Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1970) pp.252–5.

12. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

13. Cf. especially Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949).

14. For a popular version see C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffé) (London: Flamingo/Fontana Paperbacks, 1983).

15. E.g. the pioneering work of G. Creuzer and E. Durkheim and influential books by such modern experts as L. Lévi-Bruhl, J.J. Bachofen, E. Cassirer, K. Kerényi, B. Malinowski, E. Cassirer, C. Lévi-Strauss, M. Eliade and F. Jesi.

16. The 'megamachine' concept is expounded in Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine: Technics and Human Development* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967).

17. E.g. Mona Ouzof, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988).

18. R. Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Dreams and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

19. Mabel Berezin, *The Making of the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

20. Eric Michaud, *Un art de l'eternité: L'image et le temps du national-socialisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

21. For a more 'synoptic' view of the relationship between the 'palingenetic' right and the temporal engineering that accompanied its attempted revolution in the inter-war period, see Günter Berghaus, 'The Ritual Core of Fascist Theatre: An Anthropological Perspective', in G. Berghaus (ed.), *Fascism and Theatre* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1996); Roger Griffin, '"I am no longer human. I am a Titan. A god!" The Fascist Quest to Regenerate Time', *Electronic Seminars in History*, History of Political Thought, at http://www.ihrinfo.ac.uk/esh/quest.html (first published May 1998); Mark Antliff, 'Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity', *The Art Bulletin* 84/1 (March 2002). **[???]**

22. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) p.166.

23. David C. Rapoport, 'Sacred Terror: A Contemporary Example from Islam', in Reich (note 3) p.118.

24. This term is not to be taken as an endorsement of Jung's idiosyncratic theory of archetypes (which seem to reside for him in a 'scientistic' equivalent of Aboriginal 'Dream Time'). My use of the term is to be particularly dissociated from the way Jung conceived it in the proto-fascist phase of his life, where he too succumbed to the lure of identificatory self-transcendence and conceived a supra-personal mission to help restore the primordial purity of the Aryan race. See Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult* (New York: Free Press, 1994) and *The Aryan Christ* (New York: Random House, 1997).

25. Cf. especially Campbell (note 13).

26. Despite its pre-academic methodology and conceptual framework, which by the standards of contemporary anthropology are inevitably extremely flawed, Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* (12 vols. 1890–1915; Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions reference version, 1993) remains a remarkably panoramic thesaurus of the myths and rituals of sacrifice and palingenesis which, as he documented, existed all over the world and informed not only Classical mythology but 'pagan' folklore long after the Christianization of Europe.

27. It may not be generally realized that the custom of smashing a bottle of champagne at the launching of a ship derives from the custom of breaking a bottle of red wine as the substitution for the blood of sacrifice.

28. The Germanic 'sky' is cognate with the Latin *scutum* a shield.

29. The allusion here is, of course, to Paul Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky* (London: Penguin, 2000) and in particular to the following passage (p.79):
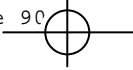
'You know, the sky here's strange. I often have the sensation when I look at it that it's a solid thing up there, protecting us from what's behind.' Kit shuddered slightly as she said: 'From what's behind?' 'Yes' 'But what *is* behind?' Her voice was very small. 'Nothing, I suppose. Just darkness. Absolute night.'

30. Not surprisingly, the concept of the 'warrior priest' plays an important role in the alternative philosophy of history offered by Julius Evola in his *Il rivolta contro il mondo moderno* (Rome: Edizioni mediterranee, 1976) ch.13, where it symbolizes the values of a 'traditional' society that has not yet succumbed to decadence. Evola is one of the most influential ideologues of post-war fascism and the New Right.

31. Qur'an, 56: 12–37.

32. *New Scientist* 174/2342 (11 May 2002) p.43.

33. Anon., 'The Last Notes of the Kamikaze Pilots and the Japanese View of Death and Afterlife', at http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~liminal/papers/matsuo/kamikaze.html (last accessed 1 Sept. 2002). Similar conclusions are drawn in the web article by Mako Sasaki, 'Who Became Kamikaze Pilots, and How Did They Feel about Their Suicide Mission?', *The Concord Review*, at http://www.tcr.org/kamikaze.html (last accessed 1 Sept. 2002).

34. A parallel metaphor is central to Andrzei Wajda's 1958 film *Ashes and Diamonds*, where the image of ashes refers to the insubstantiality of a human life that has failed to achieve a self-transcendent purpose.

35. These quotes are taken from Edith Schnapper, *The Inward Odyssey* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965) pp.113, 114, 124. Section II of this book is an excellent introduction to the mystic meanings of self-surrender and self-sacrifice.

36. E.g. 1 Corinthians 4: 15; Colossians 3: 10.

37. See, for example, the chapter 'The Belly of the Whale', in Campbell (note 13); Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (note 26) chs 28–46; Piers Vitebsky, *The Shaman* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

38. I.e. the scientistic concept pioneered by C.G. Jung.

39. The metaphor used in Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible as Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press, 1982) p.261.

40. Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakura* (*The Book of the Samurai*) (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2000) p.20. Yamamoto expressed his distilled wisdom about the vocation of the warrior to a younger samurai in the early years of the 18th century. By this time he had become a Buddhist priest, having been forbidden to commit suicide on the death of his own master, another hint at the subterranean link between warrior and priest.

41. For more on Mishima's highly sophisticated metapolitical philosophy of terroristic violence see Rox Starrs, 'The Road to Violent Action', *Deadly Dialectics* : *Yukio Mishima* (Folkestone: Curzon Press, 1994).

42. Sean O'Dubhchonna, 2000, at www.terrorism.com/-trcctforum5/00000078.htm (last accessed 1 Oct. 2002).

43. There is a description of the worship of Cybele by castrated priests known as *Galli* in Lucretius: see http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/lucretius-reruma.html (last accessed 1 Oct. 2002). One passage reads:

A living progeny. The Galli come:
And hollow cymbals, tight-skinned tambourines
Resound around to bangings of their hands;
The fierce horns threaten with a raucous bray;
The tubed pipe excites their maddened minds
In Phrygian measures; they bear before them knives,
Wild emblems of their frenzy, which have power
The rabble's ingrate heads and impious hearts
To panic with terror of the goddess' might.

44. This theme is central to H.G. Wells' short story *The Door in the Wall.*

45. It is perhaps symptomatic of what I referred to earlier as the 'purblindness' to the temporal dimension of the faith that inspires terroristic violence explored here that Walter Laqueur, one of the greatest experts on contemporary terrorism, refers to the etymology of 'fanatic' given here in *The New Terrorism* (London: Phoenix Press, 1999) pp.97–8, but apparently
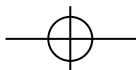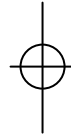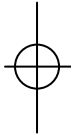
attaches no significance to it as a clue to the psychodynamics of the terrorist mind-set. At least he concedes that 'one need not conclude that fanaticism itself is pathological' (ibid. p.99).

46. Michael Foss, *The People of the First Crusade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1997) pp.37–42.

47. R. Thomas, *Serbia under Milosevic: Politics in the 1990s* (London: Hurst, C. and Company, 1999) pp.12–13.

48. 'Die Stadt Lucca', in Heinrich Heine, *Reisebilder* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1966). The passage reads (my translation):

> Dear reader, if you want to complain about feeling torn apart, then you would do better to lament the fact that the world itself has been rent in two. Since the heart of the poet is the centre point of the world, in the present age it has been reduced to a pitiful state. Anyone who boasts that his heart has stayed whole, is only confessing that he has a prosaic heart tucked away in a corner out of harm's way. My heart was torn apart by the great rip in the fabric of the world, and it is precisely for this reason that the great gods have bestowed their favour on me before many others, and considered me worthy of the martyrdom of the poet. Once the world was whole. In classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, despite all the external conflicts, there was nevertheless a world unity and there were whole poets. We want to honour these poets and derive pleasure from their works; but any attempt to imitate their wholeness is a lie, a lie which can be seen through by every healthy eye and deserves only scorn.

49. Charles Baudelaire, 'La cloche fêlée', *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857): 'As for me, my soul is cracked and when in its troubles it wants to populate the cold air of the night with its songs, it often happens that its weakened voice sounds like the thick death rattle of a wounded man left to die at the side of a lake of blood under a huge pile of corpses.' For the seminal importance of Baudelaire as a harbinger of the rise of modernity see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) ch.2.

50. 'L'horloge', 'Au lecteur', 'L'irrémédiable', and the four poems called 'Spleen'.

51. On the proliferation of conflicting 'logics' as symptom of modernity see Hermann Broch, *The Sleepwalkers* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964) pp.444–5. Like Musil's more famous *Man without Qualities*, this novel, a sort of anti-*Bildungsroman* published in German in 1931, is an extraordinary study of the breakdown of cultural homogeneity and meaning under the impact of modernity and contains a remarkable treatise on the 'breakdown of values' interpolated into the narrative.

52. Cf. W.B. Yeats' famous lines from 'The Second Coming':

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.

53. See Richard Sheppard, 'The Crisis of Language', in M. Bradbury and James McFarlane, *Modernism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), which is an excellent introduction to the generalized intellectual and artistic climate I am evoking here.

54. The allusion is to Rimbaud's description of a personal episode of loss of self and figurative palingenesis, *A Season in Hell*.

55. Yeats' poem (note 52) continues with the lines:
'Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand' only to cancel the revelation with the image of a
'… rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born'.

56. Cf. Peter Berger (ed.), *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

57. Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind: Essays in German Literature and Consciousness*

(Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

58.   Sarah Dunant and Roy Porter (eds.), *The Age of Anxiety* (London: Virago, 1996).
59.   Zygmunt Bauman, *The Age of Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).
60.   The allusion is to Gerard de Nerval's poem 'El Desdichado':
          Je suis le Ténébreux, – le Veuf, – l'Inconsolé,
          Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la Tour abolie:
          Ma seule Etoile est morte, – et mon luth constellé
          Porte le Soleil noir de la Mélancolie.
          Dans la nuit du Tombeau, Toi qui m'as consolé,
          Rends-moi le Pausilippe et la mer d'Italie,
          La fleur qui plaisait tant à mon coeur désolé,
          Et la treille où le Pampre à la Rose s'allie.
          Suis-je Amour ou Phébus? … Lusignan ou Biron?
          Mon front est rouge encor du baiser de la Reine;
          J'ai rêvé dans la Grotte où nage la sirène …
          Et j'ai deux fois vainqueur traversé l'Achéron:
          Modulant tour à tour sur la lyre d'Orphée
          Les soupirs de la Sainte et les cris de la Fée.
61.   The allusion is to Rowling's *Harry Potter* cycle.
62.   An image used both by Martin Heidegger as a philosophical concept and The Doors as a song lyric.
63.   Bob Dylan, 'One too many mornings', *The Times They Are A-changing* (1964).
64.   This is a 'forced' interpretation of Kafka's tale, since, like all his stories, it is irreducible to a single meaning or unambiguous exegesis, which is why he has become an emblem of modernism.
65.   Offer comes from *ob-ferre*, to present for sacrifice, cf. German *Opfer*, *aufopfern*.
66.   The theme of working at the outer limits of the range of comprehensible language is also central to the works of Samuel Beckett, another beacon of modernism.
67.   For a brilliant sociological exploration of the profound link between modernity, ontological insecurity and reflexivity see Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991). Long before him, on the threshold of modernity William Blake railed against the tyranny of 'single vision', a grotesque travesty of the fourfold vision that emerged once the doors of perception were cleansed.
68.   *The Duino Elegies*, The Eighth Elegy. Cf. Hamlet's famous lines: 'conscience doth make cowards of us all; and thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'. The task of many practices associated with so-called Eastern philosophy, such as martial arts and yoga, which blend physical and spiritual self-discipline, can be seen as techniques designed to free the human mind from the 'traps' that Rilke refers to.
69.   The Sixth Elegy.
70.   See Roger Griffin, 'Identification and Integration: Conflicting Aspects of the Human Need for Self-transcendence within Ideological Communities', *Journal for the Study of European Ideas* 18/1 (March 1993) pp.11–23.
71.   The name of the extended excursus on the collapse of the unifying vision of Christianity and its consequences for the coherence of spiritual life in the West in Broch (note 51).
72.   The Hippy era generated no end of new sources of self-transcendence, which were conceived originally as integrative and laid the basis for myriad 'New Age' beliefs and causes. However, they too had the potential to degenerate into identificatory ones, as the Manson killings so vividly demonstrated.
73.   Emilio Gentile elaborates on these distinctions in *Le religioni della politica* (Bari: Laterza, 2001).
74.   The zeal with which official nationalism in every combatant country, whatever the religious orthodoxy or type of political system that promoted it, enlisted its subjects or citizens in a holy crusade against the enemy in World War I, and the millions who responded voluntarily in their readiness to make the so-called sacrifices demanded of them by their 'sacred duty' are unintelligible without this instinctive readiness to sanctify secular reality in order to imbue it with meaning and legitimacy and the corresponding willingness
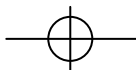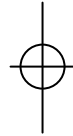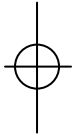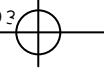
of ordinary people to devote themselves to the national community in circumstances of crisis when it seems threatened. On the transposition of Christian ideas of resurrection to the cult of the fallen soldier see G.L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) ch.3.

75. The section 'Gli arditi e la rivoluzione', in A. Monti and G. Stefanelli (eds.), *Rapsodia eroica: 'Dall'intervento all'impero'* (Milan: Editoriale Patriotica, 1937).

76. See G.L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1980).

77. Broch (note 51) p.548.

78. See Klaus Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation: Ideologischer Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971).

79. Cf. Linda Schulte-Sass, *Entertaining the Third Reich* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) p.268, who describes the film as 'the story of a subject who finds his "natural" place in two stages, a bodily stage of fusion with the uniform and a transcendent stage of death, which is his third and final stage of "rebirth"'. This is presented in the context of Schulte-Sass's analysis as no more than an especially intense version of the 'oceanic feeling' of transcending 'a particular time and space' imparted through the carefully contrived aesthetic 'illusion of wholeness' that this excellent book demonstrates to have been a defining feature of all Nazi cinema (see particular chapter one, 'Mass Spectacle, History, Cinema: Embodiments of Social Fantasy').

80. This paper thus disagrees with a curious website entitled 'Fascism as a Necrophiliac Phenomenon', at http://www.anti-fascism.org/speci…%20as%20-%20May%2024.hmtl (last accessed on 10 Sept. 2002), which tries to prove the presence of a 'strong necrophillic [*sic*] propensity in modern fascist ideology'.

81. Claus-Ekkehard Bärsch, *Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998).

82. René Alleau, *Hitler et les sociétés secrètes* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1969).

83. Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, *Le matin des magiciens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) pp.446–50.

84. See Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (Northamptonshire: The Aquarian Press, 1985) pp.186–91.

85. E.g. Pauwels and Bergier (note 83) and the video series *Occult Reich* (Edinburgh: Lamancha Productions, 1993, distributed by Columbia Tristar Home Video, 1993).

86. See the chapter 'Ariosophy and Adolf Hitler', in Goodrick-Clarke (note 84).

87. See Michael Burleigh, 'National Socialism as a Political Religion', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 1/2 (2000) pp.1–26.

88. R. Segala, 'La Legge del Tercio', *La Lettura* 37/**[???]** (Dec. 1937) p.1091, cited in Furio Jesi, *Cultura di destra* (Milan: Garzanti, 1979) p.33.

89. I choose to spell this term etymologically to reflect the meaning 'thousand years' (cf. chiliasm, from *chile* a thousand), rather than with one 'n', which would suggest it was derived not from the Latin 'annus' but from 'anus'.

90. P. Giraud, 'Codreanu e la Guardia de Ferro', in M. Bardèche (ed.), *I fascismi sconosciuti* (Milan: le Edizioni del Borghese, 1969) p.48.

91. C. Papanace, *La genesi ed il martirio del movimento legionario romeno* (Rome: Il Cinabro, 1959) p.21.

92. Ibid. p.65.

93. Jesi (note 88) p.48. Jesi is building on a highly idiosyncratic theory of the history of religion which, as Eliade suggests in a diary note, informs his *Trattato di storia delle religioni* with a fascinating and highly 'modern' explanation for the extreme forms of religious and mythic behaviour that are a permanent feature of human history. He postulates that they originate in attempts to fill the void left by the withdrawal of God from the immanent source of religious experience accessible to 'primitive man' into a transcendent realm in which he now exists as an idle or hidden God (*deus otiosus* or *deus absconditus*). Thus God's '"transcendence" merges and coincides with his eclipse', and the 'aspiration of the religious man towards "transcendence" reminds him of "the desperate gesture of the orphan left alone in the world"' (see Jesi, note 88, p.42). (Georg Büchner
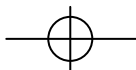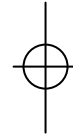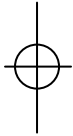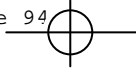
uses precisely this image of the orphan as a metaphor for 'Man's' existential abandonment in *Woyzeck* written in the 1830s.) If Eliade's theory were right this would require an extra stage to be added to the scheme of the evolution of modernity from religion that I have sketched above.

94. Corneliu Codreanu, *Legion: The Nest Leader's Handbook* (London: The Rising Press, 2001) p.56.

95. This aspect of Legionary behaviour is explored by Eugen Weber in his chapter on Romania in H. Rogger and E. Weber (eds.), *The European Right* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965).

96. Astrophysicists have recently discovered that every galaxy contains a black hole, which guarantees its structural and dynamic processes of birth and death at a micro- and macro-physical level.

97. L.R. Beam, 'Leaderless Resistance', at http://www.mathaba.net/rcm/ercm/leaderless.html (last accessed 6 June 2002).

98. Julius Evola, *Gli uomini e le rovine* (Rome: Volpe, 1967). See also Roger Griffin, 'Between Metapolitics and *Apoliteía* : The New Right's Strategy for Conserving the Fascist Vision in the 'Interregnum', *Contemporary French Studies* 8/2 (Feb. 2000), at http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/humanities/Roger/2457/APOLIT.PT1.htm.

99. First two works are by William Pierce, head of the US neo-Nazi National Alliance, the third by gun-rights advocate John Ross.

100. Robins and Post (note 1) p.113.

101. Paul Shrader, *Taxi Driver* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990) p.28.

102. See Timothy McVeigh's attack on the collapse of the American dream and the decline of the USA in L. Michel and D. Herbeck, *American Terrorist* (New York: Avon Books, 2001) pp.114–18. Cf. also David Copeland's remark: 'You look at every white country, they're now in disarray, falling apart', cited in Graeme McLagan and Nick Lowles, *Mr Evil: The Secret Life of the Racist Bomber and Killer David Copeland* (London: John Blake, 2000) p.193.

103. Michel and Herbeck (note 102) p.455.

104. Lowles (note 95) p.187. **[???]**

105. Ibid. p.189.

106. Ibid. pp.183–4.

107. H. Politzer, *Das Kafka Buch* (Hamburg: Fischer Verlag, 1965) p.245.

108. See Emilio Gentile, 'The Sacralisation of Politics: Definitions, Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism', trans. Robert Mallet, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* 1/1 (2000) pp.18–55.

109. Sprinzak (note 2), p.37.

110. Jeffrey Kaplan, 'Right-wing Violence in North America', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7/1 (Spring 1995) p.84.

111. Ibid. p.86.