The Enlightenment is one of the greatest cultural, social, and philosophical achievements of modern times [1]. However, it has not achieved its goal of freeing humanity from its immaturity and bondage to dogmatic beliefs, political power ambitions, and moral constraints. Instead, it has died a quiet death. Editorial writers and columnists have neither noticed nor commented on its demise. A new religion has taken hold, one that is more intolerant, dogmatic, and at least as violent as the old one from which the Enlightenment sought to liberate us. This new religion is the belief in science, scientism, with its transhumanist creed that man is God and can therefore execute everything that he can technically accomplish and socially enforce [2-8].

Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a gradual process. It is often associated with great names such as Leibniz, Kant, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Holbach, and Diderot in the philosophical realm, as well as with "enlightened" monarchs like Joseph II and Frederick the Great and the founding fathers of the United States of America. However, at its core, it was an ongoing process. It was made possible by the insights of science, which provided humans with a deeper understanding of the world, thus offering new means of control. Simultaneously, it rendered certain aspects of religion, particularly those verging on superstition, more questionable—for example, the notion that an earthquake or plague was divine punishment. Nonetheless, it must not be forgotten: Without religion, there would never have been an Enlightenment. The Enlightenment essentially began in the Middle Ages with those thinkers and philosophers—clergy, all of them—who used their intellects to explore the fundamental questions of existence [11].

Galileo Galilei's struggle against the clerical narrow-mindedness is often cited as emblematic of the Enlightenment. Yet, it is overlooked that the true narrow-mindedness did not reside with the churchmen, but rather with Galileo's academic rivals. Leading church figures, such as Cardinal Bellarmin, who would later become Pope, were actually supportive of Galileo and his astronomical discoveries. The house arrest he had to endure at the end of his life was due to his political imprudence, as he had, in his Dialogue, made Bellarmin easily recognizable as a fool and had ventured beyond his domain of astronomy and mathematics into theology, which he had been expressly forbidden as a non-theologian [12-14].

In general, the widely circulated narrative is historically inaccurate, which constructs a dichotomy between religion, the church, and reactionary political forces on one side, and science, free spirits, and the Enlightenment on the other. This is a founding myth of a certain form of scientism, popularized by philosophers like Auguste Comte [16, 17]. He believed that history advances through three major phases: the phase of magic, religion,

and finally, science (which, naturally, began with his own philosophy). This grand three-step progression is easily seen as mythical, even though many 19th-century thinkers enthusiastically embraced it.

It is likely that there were just as many religiously inspired scientists as there were atheists or agnostics. Here, a bit of empiricism is helpful. A few years ago, we conducted a representative survey among 600 German psychotherapists [18]. These individuals undergo thoroughly secular training, and neither during their studies nor in their additional training do they learn anything about religion or spirituality. Of these, two-thirds stated that they consider themselves spiritual or religious, and just as many reported having had a spiritual experience at least once. Our data replicates similar surveys conducted in Canada, New Zealand, and the USA [19].

Surveys among scientists in the United States show that the religious often represent the majority there as well [20]. The situation differs, however, when one surveys the elite scientists of the National Academy of Sciences: Less than 10% of them believe in God or identify as religious [21]. Yet, these scientists are the ones who set the tone, who act as reviewers, distribute funds, and serve as gatekeepers for major journals.

What seems to be happening here is this: The belief in science, scientism, is the religion of a small group of thinkers and scientists—presumably a minority—which is concentrated like in a distillery through the educational process. Thus, it appears as though the scientistic worldview is identical to science.

Part of the Enlightenment motif is, of course, also the liberation of mankind from the constraints of nature, be it the dependence on weather and temperature in housing, heating, and agriculture, or the vulnerability to diseases or social hardships. Science has always provided useful achievements, from hygiene to antibiotics, from the understanding of soil fertility to the breeding of plant species.

However, it is misguided to play off this surge of Enlightenment and innovation in science against religion or spirituality. After all, the founder of modern genetics, Mendel, was an Augustinian monk, and many physicists and biologists, at the root of their discoveries, found God—such as Planck, Heisenberg, Weizsäcker, Dobzhansky, or Teilhard de Chardin. The fact that the Christian churches have criminally neglected to engage in a dialogue on equal terms and to adjust their dogma and proclamation accordingly is another matter entirely.

Enlightenment, when not grounded in an internal value structure, operates under an internal dialectic, as Horkheimer and Adorno have already noted [22]. They identified a dark form of the Enlightenment impulse in National Socialism. In National Socialism, the belief in science and the rejection of Christian religion led to a deeply inhuman and anti-

Enlightenment political nomenclature and to the betrayal of all values sacred to Enlightenment, science, and religion. However, and this is very important to understand, National Socialism was the first secular science-religion of modern times, indeed of history itself. It was committed to "progress." It insisted on the "scientific foundation" of its actions, such as the notion of the superiority of the "Aryan race." [23, 24]

The New Religion: Transhumanist Scientism

Scientism, or belief in the power of the natural sciences, is fundamentally an old worldview [25]. It made its resurgence in the mid-19th century. The aforementioned Auguste Comte and other contemporaries were its heralds. The French philosophers of the Enlightenment, D'Alembert, Holbach, Diderot, were its forerunners. They all shared a materialistic fundamental outlook [26]—the notion that everything can be explained through matter and the physical-chemical laws governing it. In such a worldview, natural science holds a critical, indeed the only critical, role.

Incidentally, the instrument to advance the Enlightenment and this worldview at the time was the encyclopedia, the grand lexicon in which the "modern findings"—but not just those, also the associated worldview—were conveyed. This made the encyclopedia suspect, and therefore it was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Church. Despite this, the encyclopedia and its worldview prevailed. Today, once again, an encyclopedia serves as the instrument to advance a new worldview: the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. It provides universally useful knowledge, and where it is not about knowledge but rather about value, worldview, or moral questions, or judgments about persons, the scientistic worldview is "mainstreamed."

As early as 1909, the Freiburg philosopher Edmund Husserl warned against scientism and criticized it [27]. His student Heidegger followed in his footsteps [28, 29]. That did little to help. Heidegger even stumbled over his own analysis in his sympathy for the National Socialists. To this day, one can read the inscription "Dem deutschen Volke" ("To the German People") above the Freiburg University, which Heidegger had engraved there as rector. Scientism was the starting position of the "progressive" intellectual in the 20th century.

How it came to be that a religious attitude that was the fundamental and "natural" position of humans for centuries was replaced by a scientistic-agnostic or even aggressively atheistic stance is a complex story that I do not wish to unravel here. The philosopher Charles Taylor dedicates several hundred closely printed and densely argued pages to this phenomenon [30]. Suffice it to say: It is too simplistic and short-sighted to think that religion withdrew, and into the vacuum flowed the belief in science. That is partly true as well. Religion has indeed withdrawn from many areas of life. From others, it was actively displaced. This has

indeed created a vacuum. The rise of scientism as a substitute religion is not understandable without the staleness of Christian proclamation and the lack of credibility of its representatives.

Scientism has become the new substitute religion of the intellectual elites. And the latest exponent of this scientism is transhumanism. Scientism, or the belief in science, is the opinion that natural science has the valid answer to all questions of life and that questions to which it cannot provide answers are irrelevant. Transhumanism is the logical further development of scientism. It is the idea that, as an evolutionary being, man has now taken evolution into its own hands and has thus grown beyond his own biological and social limitations. From this, sooner or later, an "Übermensch" will emerge, as a kind of evolutionary necessity.

This attitude comes in different colors and flavors, but it is always transhumanism: Some believe that through advances in medicine, pharmacology, and genetics, we can correct the errors that nature has obviously made, such as humans getting sick and dying [3]. Disease and death are curable—through genetic interventions, through nanotechnology that delivers pharmacologically intelligent bots into the body that can monitor and treat, through regenerative immunologically identical organs that will replace the decaying ones and thus postpone death for a foreseeable time, virtually abolishing it. One of the great projects of postmodernity is the abolition of death [2].

Some transhumanists dream that the new developments in robotics and artificial intelligence will lead to us losing our limitations in cognitive processing and memory [31]. Indeed, artificial intelligence, as we see in the first prototypes today, can access knowledge elements that would completely overwhelm a single human being [32]. Transhumanists think that if one were to combine this artificial intelligence and technical cognition with human cognition, for example through interfaces between brain or body and machine, then we could develop unforeseen powers in all areas.

The American military is leading the way, showing the spirit of these ideas: Cyborg warriors with exoskeletons and devices that eliminate the limitations of human senses will be incredibly fast and efficient. In the foreseeable future, they will have nanobots implanted that will overcome the blood-brain barrier and disable fear centers while increasing aggressiveness. Or more elegantly, AI-controlled "slaughter birds," mini-drones equipped with facial recognition software that can reach and eliminate enemies anywhere. Or AI-controlled robotic armies.

Why should what the military develops not go into mass production? So, in the foreseeable future, there will be all sorts of nano-interventions in the body, the most exciting of which may be the brain interface. To be clear: I find minimally invasive surgical techniques that

use small robots to perform major surgeries with good success to be grandiose advances, as well as insulin pumps and pacemakers. But we need a very detailed debate about where the limit of what is feasible is reached.

Until recently, genetic intervention was only allowed in exceptional cases. The genetic preventive therapies against COVID-19, which were euphemistically termed "vaccinations," were the transhumanist original sin. On one hand, this involved genetic intervention in the body, where body cells were forced to process the genetic information of a foreign gene. On the other hand, a new transhumanist business model was also implemented: the commodification of the human body.

Traditional commodities—land, natural resources, crop yields—have reached their limits in terms of profitability. One can speculate and win some money with bets, and if one speculates well, even a lot. The arable and cultivable lands have been allocated. New land is scarce. But seven billion bodies have not yet been fully exploited.

Klaus Schwab has clearly seen—or more likely: conveyed the clear vision of others—that the commodification of the body, coupled with nanotechnology, genetic technology, and artificial intelligence, will drive the next industrial revolution [33, 34].

For this to be possible, we must leave scruples behind—the scruples that have so far prohibited us from interfering with the genetic integrity of a human being, the scruples that tell us life is sacred, the scruples that likely still hold most people back from letting computers dictate their actions.

The modified RNA injections for the prevention of COVID-19 were accepted by more than two-thirds of the population. Another push, for example, now with avian flu or monkeypocks, and that can also be checked off.

Moderna already holds a patent on modRNA "vaccination" against avian flu. The U.S. government has supported Moderna with USD 176 million to bring this patent to market maturity. Finland has already made comprehensive purchases, though apparently of a traditional preparation. Avian flu has been ramped up in recent years through gain-of-function research, i.e., bioweapon research. Soon, we will also hear the shamans of transhumanism drumming in our own country. Prof. Drosten has already announced that avian flu is on its way. What failed in 2006, when Wolfgang Wodarg exposed the entire charade—sometimes real Enlightenment can still help—could soon succeed. Namely, turning a flu virus into a threat to humanity in order to trivialize and mainstream a new economic and medical intervention. Or perhaps better, the monkeypox virus? The WHO Director-General is just consulting his war council. Let's see what conclusion they come to.

Such modRNA interventions are the key to the medical-transhumanist agenda. They can be

used to introduce new genes into the body, they could be used to perform genetic repairs, changes, and “improvements,” or “enhancements.” In any case, this would be the complete commodification of the human body. Trillions in profits are waiting here. For one thing, there are thousands of pathogens that can be quickly weaponized through appropriate PR or bioengineering. On the other hand, these genetic interventions will themselves cause significant harm, which of course no one will associate with these interventions. Armies of the exhausted, depressed, and fearful will then be patched up with the corresponding pharmacological blessings. An everlasting fountain of value creation.

Then it is only a small step to the introduction of nanobots [35, 36]. They can be marketed as benefactors. They deliver the exact dose of something to the exact spot in the body where it is needed. One can build a networked bot system within the body with them. And one can do other things with them as well; see above.

All of this will only work with a comprehensive digital identity [23]. After all, one must know who has implemented what and how to control it. This digital identity was already tried out somewhat clumsily with the digital vaccination pass. In other countries, they are further ahead. In India, the poor receive their social benefits and food rations only if they can identify themselves digitally.

The New Elite, the New Sacraments, and the Question of Values

It is immediately apparent: All of this rapidly divides the world into those who determine the course and those who follow. Who was it that ordered that only vaccination could bring salvation? From the RKI protocols, we know that the Ministry of Health was heavily involved. The person responsible for the vaccination campaign at the Ministry of Health was a general of the Bundeswehr, Dr. Holtherm, who was requested from NATO. Who was really in charge in the background, no one knows. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. showed in his book about Fauci that the strings led to the intelligence services and U.S. military circles [37]. In my interview study, I saw that as early as October and November 2019, the conditions for the so-called Emergency Use Authorization of the new COVID-19 “vaccines” were created in the USA: by systematically banning alternative treatments for COVID-19, such as Ivermectin and Hydroxychloroquine, and storing the available stocks in central locations. This only works through a strict organization in the hierarchies, probably through quiet channels bypassing politics.

This shows: There is an elite, and in the future, there will be an even stronger elite that makes and enforces decisions past or perhaps even partially identical with democratically

elected representatives, decisions that are not necessarily in the interest of the people but serve the well-being of a small clique. In the USA, the workings of these elites are no secret. You can see it in how power is supported and built up through generous sponsorship, how influential people co-determine research agendas at universities through philanthropic donations, and thus also anticipate research results.

Wealthy foundations also influence the generally accepted and spread narrative through the way they operate in the media. They train journalists and thus determine the horizon of what can be said for those who want to be positioned within the mainstream culture and advance [38].

The process of how the new ideology of scientism spreads, becomes generally accepted, and finally the only acceptable worldview is highly complex—far too complex for a blog article. But perhaps it becomes clearer if one looks back historically at the emergence of the previous leading religion, Christianity.

The Emergence of Christianity as an Example

Initially, only a few fanatics were at work, later revered as saints. The new religion was initially a phenomenon of the lower classes and the underprivileged. Therefore, it was long taken lightly by the otherwise tolerant Roman power. When the new religion finally allied with state power in the 4th century AD—more precisely, when state power under Constantine appropriated the new religion and made use of it—the situation completely changed. Previously, every Roman citizen was obligated to serve the old gods, regardless of their private beliefs; suddenly, the situation was exactly the opposite: one had to become a Christian by state mandate, or face problems.

When the first missionaries brought Christianity northward, they used the same strategy: The kings and chiefs were converted, and thus the rest of the people were deemed converted by definition, as these leaders regularly forced their subjects to be baptized [39]. The following centuries were spent solidifying the vaguely understood new faith among the population.

You see: It only takes a few fanatical followers who are completely convinced of their belief, some open-minded influential figures and political leaders, a little time, and a new religion is installed.

This is also the case here: Scientism has become a self-evident fact for some leading figures in science, politics, and culture. Perhaps many opinion leaders in religions have already embraced it. This has been the case for quite some time. Now, during the Corona crisis, it has become the new cultural standard by decree (“follow the science,” “science alone,” “but

science says”). The climate crisis is contributing to this; more on that another time.

And thus, a new religion is installed, more precisely, it has already been installed. We feel its effects without the majority of us having formally agreed to it. It is somewhat similar to how the Vikings or Native Americans were driven into a river for forced baptism without understanding what was happening.

The modRNA injections were the baptism by fire of the new religion, more precisely, its sacrament of salvation. Whoever received it became a new person: They were allowed to participate in community life again, to mingle with people in restaurants, cinemas, airplanes, vacation paradises, and social gathering places. This was no different in the Middle Ages: Whoever was excommunicated had to undergo the sacrament of penance and was then reintegrated.

The scientific high priests of the new religion, inventors of the new modRNA technology, or the announcers of bulletins, did not proclaim scientific and thus fallible knowledge but infallible truths. Such truths exist only in religions, and there they exist in abundance. “These statements must never be doubted,” was one of the memorable sayings of such a high priest.

Those who, like me, did not agree with the introduction of a new religion, faced the full severity with which heretics were once persecuted. The terminology gave it away: We were “deniers,” even though we did not deny anything but rather raised legitimate doubts. This term is usually used to label people who deny facts that are taken as indisputable within a religion. For instance, the Cathars “denied” the validity of the priestly ordination regardless of the moral maturity of the priest, and they denied the principle that there is only one creator in the cosmos. Luther “denied” the ultimate representation claim of the Pope, Calvin the freedom of the will. One could fill entire books with examples of how “denying” truths is precisely not a scientific but a religious confrontation.

Other “measures,” such as the effectiveness of lockdowns, face masks, and social distancing rules, all of which were implemented completely without empirical foundation—”evidence-free,” as the saying goes—became matters of the new creed and symbols of the new religion. A careful examination, by the way, shows that even after the worldwide implementation of such measures, there is no empirical support for them [40].

The Holy Office, the Inquisition, has been reinstated. During the Catholic Inquisition, anonymous accusations could be filed, which were then investigated, and those accused had little chance of defense. Politicians, as loyal henchmen of the new religion, called on citizens to report dissenters, even anonymously. The Inquisition of the scientistic religion is the tribunal of public opinion and social media. Those who are put through this mill suffer not

only pain but often the destruction of their existence. They are recorded in the book of sins of the new religion, as social media spreads hate, allegedly respectable platforms like Wikipedia archive their missteps, and social media channels erase their existence.

The Holy Office imposed harsh penalties, often destroying economic livelihoods. However, the goal was always the "salvation of souls" and the reintegration of the sinner. The modern Inquisition has only one goal: the annihilation of the dissenter. In this, it resembles its ideological counterparts, the communist and National Socialist dictatorships, both also scientistic religions.

Those persecuted for other beliefs could once escape into physical exile. The King of Prussia took in the Huguenots expelled from France. Even the Catholic Habsburg Emperor allowed the Protestants to inhabit certain valleys in southern Carinthia and Styria (the Protestant Kepler was the court astronomer). The dissenters of the new way of thinking have no refuge. In the future digitized society, they will quickly become apparent. Facial recognition algorithms will sort them out into political and civic irrelevance and enforce a compulsory Biedermeier existence upon them.

Once this religion becomes widespread and normalized, there will be no refuge left. For this religion will be associated with the worst form of fascism [23]. Because in that society, there will no longer be universally binding values, and it is precisely the question of values, of ethics and morality, that is the Archimedean point and the Achilles' heel of this religious model.

Values and Ethics

Natural science, or empirical science, which views the world from the outside, has no means of securing values and morality. This is because values do not exist as objects in nature. Values and morality are social-cultural, or perhaps more accurately, religious-cultural constructs—not natural-biological ones. It is possible to argue that certain values were evolutionarily beneficial. However, values as such do not appear in nature in the same way that genes, molecules, or atoms do.

A scientistic worldview, therefore, can only conceive of values as being secured by social consensus and guaranteed by state power. This was the view first advocated by Thomas Hobbes in the early 17th century [41]. A materialistic conception of the world always goes hand in hand with a conventionalist conception of ethics—meaning the notion that norms, morals, and ethics are pure conventions and can, therefore, be changed if the majority wishes so.

At the moment, at least in theory, we regard human dignity as inviolable. But what if one

day the majority of people—or computers—no longer see it that way? Perhaps one day, a revised constitution might state: “The dignity of computers, dogs, and cows is inviolable,” because a two-thirds majority has decided so.

By appealing to questionable scientific findings, it is easy to generate majorities. What is often forgotten is that the half-life of scientific findings is very short, depending on the discipline. Thus, ethical-moral norms that rest on such findings and are fueled by such majorities would also be short-lived. What was considered a crime yesterday could become a required act today, and revert to being a crime again in a few years.

This shows that a scientistic worldview cannot function as a religion or as a foundation for a worldview because no values can be derived from it.

The Christian religion—and as far as I can see, all the great world religions—assumes a naturally transcendent foundation for ethical norms, a kind of natural law. In this view, ethical norms are a sort of inner fabric of the world. Destroying them is to commit a sin. In secular language, this means: One causes harm to oneself and to one’s surroundings, inflicting evil on oneself.

I like to compare values and norms with mathematical structures: One cannot “see” mathematical structures. They are not materially tangible, but are purely ideational constructs—abstract and comprehensible by the human mind. Yet they fundamentally govern the events of the material world, as physical theories expressed in pure mathematical language show us.

Similarly, I believe one must understand ethical norms—such as the prohibition of killing, stealing, or bearing false witness and lying. They are somehow the inner workings of the world. And therefore, they are not freely negotiable or distortable by social conventions. There may be more room for interpretation than many previously thought, but that is precisely what needs to be explored.

If this is so, then the task is to recognize these values—not to reshape them within the framework of a new arbitrary religion to suit the needs of a dominant social group. Therefore, the attitude of “we are God, and we shape the world as we please,” this Pippi Longstocking morality of the transhumanists, is not only arrogant; it is also wrong, and above all, it may be dangerous. Because if my suspicion is correct that values and norms represent a kind of inner structure of the world, then violating them is not trivial—it means self-harm, and indeed self-harm in a collective sense. We harm ourselves as a society when we throw the binding nature of our values to the wind.

One of the great values and realities of the Judeo-Christian culture is the goodness of creation. The creation narrative ends each time with the sentence: “And God saw that it was

good.” From this, Christian theology has derived over the centuries that there is only one good principle, and anything that seems flawed to us is a lack, a deficiency of the good. Critics of religion have always countered with the problem of theodicy: How can God, the principle of good, allow evil? This problem of theodicy only arises if one sees the Creator completely outside his creation, like a puppeteer. Any great Christian theology worthy of the name has always seen the Creator as intimately connected with his creation, and thus also as sharing in its suffering.

If creation, and what it shows us, is good in essence and in the true sense, then the attempt to fundamentally remodel it, to play the role of a better God and Creator, is a fundamental act of rebellion and the quintessential satanic temptation. And in this sense, the new transhumanist-scientistic religion is a deliberate affront to the previous religious-cultural self-understanding of Western cultures, which rely on the Judeo-Christian heritage.

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