

Post-Modern Christianity: An Internally Consistent Model for Western Thought

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Introduction

As a graduate it student it became extremely apparent to me that the assumptions of the Enlightenment were no longer accepted by a large and growing section of academics across all disciplines. I still remember a moment in a seminar when the professor said “I don’t know if you can handle this, or are ready for it” and then gently summarized much of what we had read in the course – essentially that the ideas of universal Truth and Knowledge are false. Basically, there is no bedrock truth or knowledge – it is all socially constructed, it is all a manifestation of a power structure, and it all changes as a society changes. This was great news! It meant that the Enlightenment was dead. The great movement that replaced Christianity as the bedrock for intellectual life was internally inconsistent and its own disciples no longer believed in it. What an opportunity! Since many of the arguments against the Enlightenment centered around language and linguistics, it became apparent that an internally consistent faith based framework could be constructed – one which “Enlightenment” scholars could only refute as a matter of faith (which would be inconsistent for them), and one which

post-Modern scholars could only reject as a matter of preference, not because it was internally inconsistent. A linguistic textual framework defining truth and making it accessible to man is, of course, centered upon Jesus (the Word). This paper explains post-Modern Christianity.

This article discusses post-Modernism, defines some of its ideas, explains why it has undermined the rational foundation of the Enlightenment, and proposes an internally consistent framework for carrying the Western ideas of knowledge and truth forward. It compares and contrasts Eastern and Western views of knowledge, examines the internal inconsistencies of the Enlightenment, and ultimately offers a text based framework for knowledge – Christianity. As with any post-Modern work, this short article starts in the middle – I’ve taken some ideas from others (such as the “modern,” “other” and “western”) to begin a discussion.

Modern, Post-Modern, and the Enlightenment

The “Modern” moment occurs as we are able to stand apart from what we observe and describe those “other” objects without engaging them directly. Thus, a Modern thinker can observe something exterior to himself and then represent it with words or language – thus controlling it, manipulating it through semiotics. The “Post-Modern” moment occurs when the thinker understands that discourse creates and conveys meanings that do not discretely represent some other. The thinker realizes that he is as much a captive of language as the object he seeks to capture. The crisis of the post-modern moment is the loss of perspective – we no longer stand apart from the world – we

are no longer able to represent it discretely and objectively. The post-Modern moment is a loss of faith – the icon of the Enlightenment, Rational Independent Man, is dead.

We are left with a struggle for power, not for truth. Since discourse is understood as a means to power instead of truth (and the power regime emits its own truth), we are left musing the possibility of no single unified ordering of reality. That is one of the central themes of the post-Modern. Thus, the Western idea of Man standing apart from the world, studying it, mastering it, and learning Truth is nullified. The implications of post-Modernism are essentially Eastern.

Being Eastern is to be a Hindu – it makes no sense to try to make sense out of competing truth claims – all may be accepted. This is the obverse of the Western idea. Essentially, the concept of a unified, ordered, internally consistent Truth is a Western idea. This belief has driven the Western quest for truth since at least the time of the Greeks.

Language

The core of post-Modernism is semiotics – the study of signs. Signs represent “other” and thus give us the ability to abstract, represent, and manipulate. The project of the Enlightenment assumed that signs (words, languages) were neutral representations of things. This notion came as thinkers adopted mathematics as a model – one that worked so well for the thinkers of the Scientific Revolution. This engagement of signs has left us understanding that we are captives of language as much as users of it. That is the act of defining and representing others defines and constrains ourselves as well. Language with its power to create and convey meaning captivates the observers as much as the

observed. The only escape to freedom is an exit to the East – to Nirvana¹ – it is the one place humans can escape control of language. The thinking life exists in seas of words, and only mental oblivion achieves a kind of relief from these structures of thought.

The Enlightenment Falters

The core of the Enlightenment is the belief in the ability of man to objectify the world. It is a faith that man can rationally and logically, seek and represent Truth without recourse to presumed foundations (especially religious axioms). It places knowledge as the pathway to Truth, that knowledge is knowable. This presupposes a belief that Truth exists for discovery by rational man. In the post-Modern instant, man loses his faith in his ability to objectify the world. Man is incapable of escaping foundations and he can never leave immaturity because his intelligence is always “subject to the guidance of another,”² if at the very least that guidance emerges from the values inherent in his own language. The Enlightenment died when faith in an ordered unity of reality (implying rationality and logic) ceases. It ceased because it came to be understood that the multiplicity of tongues and the characteristics within each tongue create many culturally derived (transient, non-objective, irrational, polymorphic) “truth paradigms.”

The critical elements of a Western tradition allows us the following: faith in Man’s ability to know, faith in Man’s ability to reason, faith that knowledge is worthwhile because knowledge exists in a unity of Truth; but now these can be accepted only if we consciously submit to these foundations. The Enlightenment was a rigid

¹ “Nirvana: blowing out, extinction, disappearance, etc. 1. In Buddhist theology, the extinction of individual existence and absorption into the supreme spirit, or the extinction of all desires and passions and attainment of perfect beatitude.” From “The Oxford English Dictionary,” Second Edition, Prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, Volume X, Moul-Ovum (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 435.

² Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”, 1787.

rejection of religion as a means toward Truth, and that was OK because it has been a very productive experiment.

Ultimately, the experiment of the Enlightenment showed us that thinkers are forever bounded by foundations, where linguistic structures, words, or assumptions about reality limit and guide them. The greatest gift of the Enlightenment is the understanding that man does not stand apart from what he studies or the tools he uses: we are neither independent nor omniscient nor can we be. Thinking man cannot escape foundations or assumptions; thus leading lights of the Enlightenment including Immanuel Kant, Thomas Paine, and the Marquis de Condorcet, were fundamentally (or foundationally) wrong even though this great exploration moved us forward immensely.

The Enlightenment presumed the general “faiths” of the Western experience without really understanding them (until the post-Modern moment) as cultural artifacts, or more specifically as foundations of faith. The Enlightenment project confused methods with foundations by “believing” that “reason” from the mind of man was bedrock truth. Upon reflection over the past two centuries we have collectively concluded that reason and logic are tools which operate within a framework that provides values and meaning (such as “truth,” its value, and man’s ability to know it). That framework can always be characterized as faith even though that term is politically/religiously charged (and rejected by the Enlightenment). Suitable synonyms for faith are pre-conceptions, foundations, assumptions, axioms, ideologies, *mentalities*, worldviews or even the generic term “framework.”

Truth as Power

The post-Modern conversation is about power; and truth and knowledge are subsets of power. It is about creating or moving the discourse in directions suitable to one's claims to power – be it feminist, gay, or anything else. Traditionalists (Enlightenment fundamentalists) are at a distinct disadvantage since they cling to notions of Truth and Knowledge without acknowledging that these “truths” about Truth proceed from regimes of power, most notably from the intellectual script/cannon of Western civilization. They react to the post-Modernists because that moment destroys a faith in the Enlightenment concept of Truth and Knowledge which posits that they exist independent of man and can be accessed objectively and truthfully via man's rational mental faculties. In a sense, the post-Modern moment is when the West ceases to exist. However disconcerting to the Fundamentalists³, this is the greatest gift of the Enlightenment. It has happened.

That the Enlightenment (the supposed rejection of faith) offers no rational avenue to Truth does not mean that Truth does not exist. It does mean that the thinker (Man) cannot prove what Truth is using the mechanics of the Enlightenment. On the contrary, the Enlightenment “proves” (via Enlightenment methods) that man cannot be omniscient, nor fully rational, nor unbiased. Ironically, it was scholars trained within the Enlightenment (including Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Hayden White, Antonio Gramsci, Jurgen Habermas, Ferdinand de Saussure and many others) that unveiled the

³ I.e. Enlightenment Fundamentalists: those who instinctively cling to its assumptions despite its increasingly self destructive internal inconsistencies because they fear a loss of “Truth” and thus invalidate their own life, scholarship, and existence.

foundational (that is to say pre-suppositional, axiomatic, extra-rational) strata hidden under the motif of the Enlightenment.

Search for Truth

So what is the next step? If thought cannot be “purely scientific” can we go forward? Is Martin Heidegger’s observation that “philosophy is hounded by the fear that it loses prestige and validity if it is not a science”⁴ so clutching that we remain frozen in self-doubt? Or, have we come to a place where we can consciously and emphatically choose our foundational awarenesses (to whatever extent that is fully possible) and move forward? The towering concept of science, which we have striven to emulate since the Scientific Revolution, at least offers a good model. From the periphery, perhaps, we can break into the dialog with a fundamentally new set of assumptions⁵ the same way that physicists and mathematicians were able to introduce what is now the idea of Einstein’s model of physics to overlay the limited Newtonian model. It is time to seriously explore new frameworks for understanding by radically breaking with the Enlightenment prohibition against foundations (faiths).

Even the post-Modern thinker chooses as a matter of faith/belief/morality which way to move the discourse/power struggle – otherwise they would seek Nirvana and

⁴ Heidegger, Martin. “Letter on Humanism.” Chapter 21, from Lawrence Cahoon, Editor, “From Modern to Post-Modern: An Anthology,” (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), p. 276: “Since then ‘philosophy’ has been in the constant predicament of having to justify its existence before the ‘sciences.’ It believes it can do that most effectively by elevating itself to the rank of a science. But such an effort is the abandonment of the essence of thinking. Philosophy is hounded by the fear that it loses prestige and validity if it is not a science. Not to be a science is taken as failing which is the equivalent to being unscientific.”

⁵ See Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 3rd Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

abandon any pretense of thought. Thus, every thinker adopts (a conscious act) or is adopted by a truth regime. The Western journey is a journey of faith since faith is to grasp and believe in one's mind as much as in one's heart. Post-Modernists engaged in discourse retain the Western trait of faith as much as the Enlightenment Fundamentalists. Faith is inescapable. Post-Modernism forces us to acknowledge this central fact of the post-Enlightenment age.

Internal Consistency

The very best a thinker can do is create an internally consistent⁶ framework for discourse. By common consent (i.e., by universal practice) this discourse values reason and logic and places words as the central fact/act of thought. In order to avoid Nirvana, we must reject nothingness – we must grasp as true within our minds some thing around which thought may orient itself. Let us make an act of faith and declare that we believe in Truth – that is a unified ordering of reality that is consistent within itself. This definition invites – even demands – logical and rational thought to approach it. Logic and rationality demands the use of language/words because they determine what is logical and rational. They are not purely logical or rational or neutral but they are a necessary condition for rationality; indeed language defines logic.

The next question is to define “a unified ordering of reality.” One can assume that exists, but without fleshing it out there remains no direction – in what direction to we search for those things? And, is the search for this ordering really meaningful? And, who

⁶ To be “consistent” implies a search for a unified ordering; to restrict the demand to “internally” conceded the limits of human abilities, i.e., that we cannot be omniscient.

is to say there are not many such orderings or reality? This is a question that cannot be answered except as a foundation. Thinkers have already assumed (at least implicitly) a unified ordering otherwise they could not engage in Western discourse – that is to say in a search for what is true and real. Without axioms, we are truly lost – there is no rational bridge to the “other side.” But since we are engaging in extra-rational assumptions already (by reading this you assume is worth your while to learn), let’s play.

An Old Framework

I am an extra-rational thinker. That has been determined because I’m engaging in the Western quest for understanding and knowledge by assuming it exists. There is no strictly rational/logical demand for this – it requires a belief, if only one buried and hidden in the structures of language itself. It just so happens that I personally, explicitly, and consciously am an adherent to a belief system which has a relatively long presence within the Western tradition: I believe in a unified Creator.

Now at this point, many Modern and post-Modern thinkers may just say to themselves “OK, I stop here, religion has no place in this discourse.” And that’s fine since discourse is about power and you, but submitting yourself to this interlude, submit to whatever influence (power) I can muster. But if there really is a unified ordering or reality, then you may learn something from this conversation.

Objectivity, Truth, and Power

The objectifying nature of the West – the ability to separate observer from observant – and all the power inherent therein is a notion available in the Creator/Creation dichotomy. In the modern idea of observing “other” (beings external to one self) and representing them with words, we seek to represent them truthfully – without prejudice or bias. Yet the post-Modern argument is that naming creates truth that is specific to the one who names – it is culturally derived if the one who names is a historical being. But imagine, just theoretically, of a Being external to human history and culture. Imagine the Creator which calls beings into existence by naming. In a Heideggerian way, imagine Being calling beings into existence via language.⁷ The only truth/value propositions extended over creation exude from the Creator, and if he created all things, that all things share (in this theoretical model) a unified ordering or reality in relation to the Creator. This Creator is objectifying the creation and exercising power over it in the process. This Creator knows everything about the object – his knowledge is perfect – and the Creator is distinct from the creation. In this idea we have a theoretical model to continue the Modern idea of object and subject and of Truth and Objectivity. Theoretically, the only point of Truth/Objectivity in a unified system of ordering of reality is from the Creator’s perspective, and it is the Creator’s perspective that we must seek however imperfectly we are able to do so. Herein we have a solid theoretical model for Truth. The Creator, unhampered by a historical/cultural identify imposed upon himself, imposes an understanding of Truth; it emanates from his own being and identity.

⁷ In some passages of Martin Heidegger, one can almost imagine substituting “Being” for God, and his arguments still work. See Heidegger, Martin. “Letter on Humanism.” From Lawrence Cahoon, Editor, “From Modern to Post-Modern: An Anthology,” (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), Pages 274-308.

His naming imposes his unified ordering of truth on his creation. The unity of God⁸ implies this unified ordering of truth. These ideas support Western thought. The creator remains distinct from Creation, thus establishing a framework of “objectifying” reality, or of being objective. Thus, when the post-Modern thinker adopts a Creator/Creation framework he is able to understand, or create, a theoretical means of representing other without becoming one with other. Theoretically, it can be done because theoretically this is what the Creator has done. Yes, it creates an immediate discourse of power, but it does not theoretically integrate Creator with creation and the Creator is able to manipulate the representation of that other with signifiers (words). If a man is unable to escape language to properly and truly “represent,” we may still retain a theoretical model that validates the concept of the unity of truth and of objectivity by utilizing the theory of a unified Creator in the tradition of the discourse offered in the Story of Genesis.

So while power structures inherent in naming and discourse remain in Creator/creation theory, a thinker can maintain that “Truth” (a unified ordering of reality) exists in relation to the Creator. The thinker can theoretically maintain the validity of the subject/object dichotomy even if he is not able to approach it perfectly himself, and thus he preserves the legitimacy of representation of other. The thinker’s inability to represent truth without bias or prejudice is his acknowledgement that he is “not the Creator;” he is neither omniscient nor objective. Rather, the thinker is a part of the Creation who was named and thus controlled in a discourse emanating from the Creator. Man is not theoretically autonomous (this is in agreement with the post-Modern moment and is at disagreement with the Enlightenment/Modern man).

⁸ The unity of the person of God, God as one person, as opposed to thousands of competing Gods accepted in the Hindu religion.

If a separate being exists who is external to creation and who knows all about creation,⁹ then we have a theoretical point of reference for Truth. It is the job of the thinker to find Truth. It is this belief in a Creator/Creation dichotomy that fundamentally allows an internally consistent approach to truth; this allows the West to move forward in spite of post-Modern angst. The rejection of a Creator “out of hand” by thinkers who believe it is “irrational” are correct in that it is extra-rational, but we have already found that this is unavoidable for any thinker. “Out of hand” rejections of a Creator are every bit as limiting to intellectual thought as any other cultural baggage – the rejection of a Creator is not “purely logical” – it is a product of a cultural/historical system which discounts its validity as a theoretical model; specifically, such a rejection is the heritage of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Those rejecting this model without serious consideration are not yet desperate enough to escape their own historical/cultural grotto – and that is fine as long as they allow that it is just that. The key is to find an internally consistent grotto – and we have discovered that the Enlightenment does not offer one. A Creator/Creation model provides an internally consistent framework with Western ideas in a post-Modern understanding. Couple this with the idea of man as the “Image of God” (not vice-versa) and we achieve the humanistic ideal of an intelligent being positing himself within creation, seeking knowledge, truth, meaning, and, yes, power.

⁹ Someone with perfect knowledge, someone omniscient.

Language as Link

Now the semiotician will argue that one cannot posit “other” without language and that language undermines the self/other framework. In other words, “how real is the dichotomy of the Creator and Creation which is posited via linguistic acrobatics?” That concern is addressed by examining the purpose and “location” of “the Word.” Existence proceeds from the Creator via words in the story of Genesis. Indeed, there is a flow from one to the “other” – the Creator spoke and it came into being. To this understanding of genesis I would like to add an idea from a most interesting thinker (the apostle John) that God has represented (named) himself to his Creation through a man called “the Word.” The Creator has named his representative and his representer “the Word.” It is claimed that this representative of the Creator is the only way to the Creator – it is rejected that there is any way to Truth except through the Word. It is also claimed that this Word is one with the Creator. This understanding is the foci of post-Modern Christianity:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.¹⁰

So what we have is a representation of a “unified ordering of reality” (Creator/Truth) that claims that the only way to both represent and access that reality is via the Word: The only way to access, or know, or understand truth is via the Word. It places semiotics at the crux of the representation of Reality. It places Words or the Word as the only way a cultural/historical artifact (man) can access what is true. And,

¹⁰ John1:1-3, and verse 14. New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, CA: Lockman Foundation, 2000).

crucially, it recognizes the unity of Word with Creator, in other words, words are not discrete objects – they are not only discrete from the user of them – they proceed from and indeed are a part of the Originator of speech.

This new model recognizes script as central to knowledge and power and yet by no means demands literalism. “Literalists” are captives of an earlier Enlightenment idea that insists on a one to one correlation between signifier and signified. If we are to move forward with a scripted culture we must wrestle with issues of interpretation of script: How do we know that what a script says means what we think it says? Ultimately, whatever we believe it says will be conditioned by our historical/cultural moment and by the “fact” of our limited state of knowledge. Yet understanding this is the first point of departure. Literalism is not Christian – it is a historical product of the Scientific Revolution and more proximately of the Enlightenment. This does not discount all “literal” interpretations – it discounts literalism as the framework for understanding script.¹¹ For example, the Church rejected a heliocentric solar system – not because the

¹¹ I know I’m going to lose some Christians on this, but that is OK. Paul “literally” parsed some scripture by recognizing the difference between the singular and plural: Gal 3:16: “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.” But Paul also interpreted scripture allegorically. For example, Paul interpreted the proscription against muzzling an ox to really mean allowing a preacher to get money from his flock. Jesus taught almost strictly by analogy – in parables – by telling stories of one thing when referring to others. Though neither were strict literalists, both understood and taught that the collections of texts, specifically the Law, Prophets, and books of Wisdom, should form the “Gramscian hegemony” within which truth may be discerned. Later, of course, Christians include the Gospels and Epistles as part of this scripted canon within which the reality of the Creator and his creation is succinctly guided.

[It is an error to term the former books as “Old Testament” and the Gospels and Epistles as “New Testament” because that terminology is not found anywhere in the text itself when referring to those sets of scripts. When the scripture speaks of the “Old” being replaced by the “New,” is not dividing a set of scripts: it is speaking of the replacement of one agreement/covenant/testament (faith in the ongoing sacrifice of animals as propitiation for sins) with a new agreement/covenant/testament (faith in one sacrifice which was performed once for all time). The former (Old) testament did not change the heart while the latter (New) testament did. The naming convention imposed by declaring an earlier set of scripts as “old” and a smaller collection as “new” effectively implies that one set of scriptures replaced another.

text really said so, but because their own cultural blinders kept them from seeing anything else. This is why the Church in general has not been trusted as the repository/adjudicator of what is true – their own historical/cultural identities are unrecognized and the Church remains captive until it transcends the moment.¹² In other words, Christians can be ignorant and blind and have left glorious explorations to atheists. But that’s OK, they have done splendidly without the Church.

The source of language and words is not (within this model) the creation, but the Creator. The Creator speaks originally. The Creator gives man speech. At Babel, he divides the speech into many languages. Since the source was the Creator, one may presume that all languages are sufficient to represent some aspects of Truth regardless of how the idioms have morphed over time. Better yet, one may presume that each tongue carries a unique value/truth paradigm that reflects Truth in ways no other language can. Thus, the multiplicity of tongues multiplies the avenues approaching Truth, each offering some different insight and clue and consciousness of a unified ordering of reality. Because Christians need not be literalists they need a unified linguistic or cultural source to presumably strengthen their interpretation of text (in contrast to Muslims). The script for a Christian idea is a byproduct of Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew and perhaps other tongues, as well as Chaldean, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew cultures. This polysyllabic representation of script de-thrones script as Creator, and enthrones the Creator speaking through the script. This keeps the focus on the origin of script/language

This has substantially subverted the meaning, power and foundations of most of the Bible to a majority of Christians.]

¹² An example of “transcending the moment” may be the Protestant reinterpretation of scripture in the 16th Century.

and the values inherent while recognizing they can only be communicated via script. Yet this is not perfectly distinct either when we understand that the Word and the Creator are one. If this is difficult to accept, perhaps you'll find the Quantum ideas of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle an applicable analogy. Do not let the demand for either/or statements limit the possibilities. Some cannot accept "logically" the description of God as one and a Trinity, or that a sacrament is blood and wine, and yet have no trouble at all "accepting by faith" equally paradoxical statements from their own priests.¹³ Once initiated into the arcana of their respected disciplines, these ideas make sense, but on their face they are by no means intuitive. If the post-Modern denies the possibility of a complete division between speech and the user of speech, these should be acceptable. In any respect, this canon is received as a guide, a context, and a discourse within which we may seek direction.

The concept of "in Him we live and move and have our being"¹⁴ takes on a whole new meaning when we understand that this is not just a physical reality – it is an epistemological, ontological and linguistic description when applied to the world of thought – it is only in Words that we live and move and exist as thinkers.

Conclusion

This should be considered only a departure point for introducing the possibility of an internally consistent framework of knowledge. The offering herein is Christian

¹³ Here of course I'm talking about college and university professors who mediate truth to the untutored. They are in every respect priests – intermediaries and interpreters of truth and knowledge who retain a powerful and privileged cultic status in Enlightenment societies.

As teachers, they will be held to a stricter standard on the Judgment Day.

¹⁴ Acts 17:28

because that is what I (a creature of a particular historical moment) bring to the table and add to the discussion. There may be other frameworks that offer internally consistent models to continue the Western experiment; certainly Judaism and Islam offer a Creator/Creation paradigm, but unique to Christianity is the post-Modern placement of the Word as intermediary. The Word is the savior who gives light to the blind, he links the finite (Man) with the Infinite (the Creator), the ignorant (Man) with the omniscient (the Creator). This Word is not merely “knowledge about” the Creator as understood in Modern terms, but it is intricately linked with the Creator, indeed is one with the Creator. This Word is personal and living, an intermediary who transcends the self/other dichotomy fluidly and who imposes a direct power regime and value framework while interacting with both Creator and creation.

Let there be no misunderstanding – accepting this framework is to submit to a specific power regime, a prison of Truth, constructed by someone seeking the theoretical Truth.¹⁵ It is hoped that this framework is internally consistent; if so, it provides a convenient stepping off point for those embracing the new consciousness of position raised by the post-Modern critique. If the Enlightenment and the Modern are unsustainable because of internal inconsistencies, this new model may not be so limited – it may provide a framework for carrying the Western forward.

Most of all, this framework posits the inescapability of a textual matrix. Foundations are always “script”-ural. Some collection of scripts, the “Western Canon,” a post-Modern anthology, readings from a Liberal education, the literature of Marxist scientific-materialism, the daily newspaper and television shows, regional chants from

¹⁵ A unified ordering of reality – a Western quest for knowledge.

pre-Modern tribes, or some combination of the above, always informs and limits discourse. Incursions by new scripts enrich this reality and move the stream of thought in new directions, they do not change the fundamental understanding of a scripted culture of thought. This structure, this imposed power, this Gramscian hegemony, this Foucauldian regime, should be familiar ground to people consciously referring to a set of scripts as authoritative,¹⁶ yet have not had the creativity to reconceive their faith in this manner. Perhaps the secularists will complete the journey (having already laid bare the internally inconsistent foundations of the Enlightenment) and will consciously embrace this familiar set of scripts that offer the hope of a journey forward.

¹⁶ I'm talking about Christians.

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