



Immanence and Transcendence: The Gnostic Seductions of Our Time

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SUMMARY

This article examines how contemporary ideologies—techno-utopianism, dialectical materialism, mystical nationalism, and identitarian progressivism—reproduce ancient Gnostic structures by eliminating the constitutive tension between immanence and transcendence. Humanity lives as creatures perpetually tense between the world they inhabit and something that infinitely exceeds it. It is the existence of travelers who carry maps of distant lands while treading the familiar ground of each day.

The danger arises when movements promise to definitively resolve this fundamental tension, offering syntheses that eliminate the paradox of the human condition through esoteric knowledge for elites and total redemption through the transformation of the structures of reality. Drawing on Eric Voegelin's analysis of political gnosticism and Hannah Arendt's insights on totalitarianism, this investigation reveals how these manipulations destroy authentic mediations—language, art, ritual, and tradition—that allow for a simultaneous experience of the transcendent and immanent without artificially resolving their tension.

Keywords: Political Gnosticism; Authentic Mediations; Immanence; Transcendence; Ideological Seductions; Cultural Resistance

ABSTRACT

This article examines how contemporary ideologies, techno-utopianism, dialectical materialism, mystical nationalism, and identity progressivism, reproduce gnostic structures by eliminating the constitutive tension between immanence and transcendence. The analysis carefully distinguishes between legitimate concerns (environmental conservation, social justice, technological progress) and their gnostic distortions, which promise esoteric knowledge for elites and total redemption through transformation in the structure of reality. The central argument demonstrates that these manipulations destroy authentic mediations, language, art, ritual, tradition, that allow simultaneous experience of the transcendent and immanent without artificially resolving their tension.

Keywords: Political Gnosticism; Authentic Mediations; Immanence; Transcendence; Mass Ideologies; Cultural Resistance.

ABSTRACT

This article examines how contemporary ideologies, techno-utopianism, dialectical materialism, mystical nationalism and identity progressivism, reproduce ancient gnostic structures while eliminating the constitutive tension between immanence and transcendence. Humanity lives as creatures perpetually tensioned between the world they inhabit and something that infinitely exceeds it. This is the existence of travelers who carry maps of distant lands while treading the familiar soil of each day. The danger arises when movements promise to definitively resolve this fundamental tension, offering synthesis that eliminates the paradox of the human condition through



of esoteric knowledge for elites and total redemption via transformation of the structures of reality. Based on Eric Voegelin's analysis of political gnosticism and Hannah Arendt's perceptions of totalitarianism, this investigation reveals how these manipulations destroy authentic mediations, language, art, ritual, tradition, which allow for simultaneous experience of the transcendent and inherent without artificially resolving their tension.

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1. Introduction

Modern times have brought something disturbing that is shaking the atmosphere of this time, revealing a movement that recalls distant heresies, only dressed in modern garb. It is walking among the ruins of certainties that long ago seemed unquestionable. But everywhere, a new type of spiritual leadership is emerging: the prophets of modernity. They are no longer on street corners, with a tired Bible in their hands, but rather with futuristic visions that promise to change everything. There are technology visionaries, who speak of an eternal life in the digitalization of being. There are also revolutionaries, who believe they can create a completely new world. In addition to them, the defenders of identity, that promise salvation through self-knowledge and radical self-acceptance. Ultimately, the great defenders of continuous progress, convinced that human perfectibility is within reach through innovation and personal evolution over time. Each of these new spiritual leaders present their own ways of achieving human salvation.

This contradiction reveals something essential about the human condition: being constitutively tense between the world one inhabits, what philosophers call immanence, and something that exceeds and transcends it. It is living simultaneously immersed in the materiality of everyday life and oriented beyond it, like travelers who carry maps of distant lands in their pockets as they tread the familiar ground of every day.

To clarify these fundamental concepts that will permeate this entire investigation: immanence refers to that which remains within, which dwells with us in the sensible world, material, historical and social experience, the tangible weight of the things we touch and that touch us. Transcendence designates what goes beyond immediate understanding, guiding towards territories that exceed direct control, be it the divine, the absolute, or dimensions of meaning that transcend the pure materiality.

Authentic mediation, a central concept for this analysis, designates the legitimate forms through which humanity simultaneously experiences immanence and transcendence without eliminate the tension between them. Mediations such as language, art, ritual, tradition, and community allow the transcendent to manifest itself in the immanent without being reduced to it, preserving the mystery and openness that constitute human experience, like windows that allow us to glimpse landscapes that extend beyond the visible horizon.

Carl Schmitt observed that mass ideologies are secular forms of theology. For him, "all significant concepts of the theory of the modern state are theological concepts secularized" (Schmitt, 2006, p. 35). This observation indicates a structural continuity between religious and political forms that goes far beyond mere analogy, reveals, rather, the persistence of deep spiritual structures beneath the veneer of secular modernity.

The problem arises when intellectual and political movements promise to solve definitively resolves this constitutive tension, offering syntheses that eliminate the fundamental paradox of the human condition. It is at this moment that systems of thought emerge that Eric Voegelin identified as dangerous manifestations of gnosticism applied to politics.¹ According to him, these systems promise exclusive knowledge that, if followed, will eliminate once and for all for all the uncertainty, suffering and limits inherent in the human condition. He says that "The Gnostic speculation overcame the uncertainty of faith, retreating from transcendence and endowing man and its intra-worldly radius of action with the meaning of eschatological fulfillment" (Voegelin, 1979, p. 125).

The hypothesis that guides this investigation is that the weakening of mediations traditional symbolic relations between the immanent and the transcendent opened space for the emergence of totalizing ideologies with a gnostic structure, which promise privileged access to truth, elimination of suffering and radical overcoming of the human condition. Far from constituting mere conceptual inheritances of the past, these new secular gnososes operate as devices of symbolic reorganization of the structure of reality, obscuring the constitutive openness of the human to mystery and producing concrete effects of dehumanization. This article will seek to demonstrate that

¹ Gnosticism emerged in the early centuries of the Christian era as a diverse set of religious movements that shared certain fundamental structural characteristics. Contrary to simplified interpretations, Gnosticism did not constitute a single sect, but rather a family of spiritual traditions that included groups such as the Valentinians, Basilidians, Sethites, and Mandeans, each with their own particular cosmologies and practices (Kurt, 1987).



the suppression of the immanence/transcendence tension not only impoverishes spiritual experience and politics, but legitimizes power structures based on intra-worldly eschatological promises that disfigure human dignity.

2. Methodology

The analysis used in this article opted for the phenomenological-hermeneutic method unfolded into three related stages:

- a) Detailed analysis of texts, statements and practices of the movements studied, aiming identify the structural characteristics that reveal the Gnostic nature of their proposals.
- b) Comparative analysis of the promises of tension elimination: examine how different contemporary ideologies reproduce the Gnostic pattern of promising to definitively resolve the tensions constitutive of human experience.
- c) Assessment of anthropological and political consequences: investigate the concrete effects of these Gnostic manipulations on the understanding of the human person and on the structures of life policy.

d) 2.1. Limitations and restrictive criteria of the Gnostic concept

To avoid imprecise application that would discredit this analysis, we establish strict restrictive criteria. Not every movement that promises radical change or has authoritarian characteristics is necessarily Gnostic. The classification as political Gnosticism requires:

- a) Simultaneous presence of the three central criteria: esoteric knowledge, elimination of tensions existential, instrumentalization of the transcendent.
- b) Sufficient intensity to distinguish from isolated Gnostic elements.
- c) Temporal persistence that demonstrates a structural pattern, not a momentary aberration.
- d) Resistance to falsification through contradictory evidence.

3. The eternal dance between immanence and transcendence

To understand the ideological seductions of this time, one must first examine carefully these two fundamental dimensions of human experience and their relationship complex, a relationship that resembles an eternal dance, where partners come closer and they move apart without ever completely merging or separating definitively.

In the 17th century, Baruch Spinoza attempted a bold fusion by equating God with nature in a single universal substance. "Everything that is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God" (Spinoza, 2008, p. 31), declared the philosopher from Amsterdam with the audacity of those who seek to resolve once and for all the metaphysical enigmas that have tormented generations of thinkers. Spinoza did not propose a vulgar materialism, but a vision in which spiritual and material constituted aspects of a single infinite reality, like the two faces of the same cosmic currency.

The genius of this position lies in its philosophical elegance, in its almost mathematics of its simplicity. Its danger, however, lies in the ease with which it can be simplified and manipulated: if everything is divine, then certain worldly realities can be sacralized, transformed into earthly absolutes that demand total submission.

Traditional Christianity has found a different, more subtle, and perhaps more close to the true nature of things: maintaining tension without resolving it, especially from of the medieval synthesis: God was simultaneously transcendent, infinitely superior to the world, and immanent, present in every moment of creation, like a composer who is at the same time above its symphony and present in every note that resounds. As Gilson demonstrates, "Christianity medieval times managed to maintain this tension through the doctrine of analogy: God is simultaneously similar and dissimilar to his creatures, present and absent, knowable and unknowable" (Gilson, 2006, p. 78).

This paradoxical structure prevented both the divinization of the world and its complete desacralization. The tension preserved both the dignity of the created world and the transcendence absolute of the creator, keeping open the space for authentic religious and political experience, a breathing space where the human could flourish without trying to become divine.

3.1. Political Gnosticism: Anatomy of a Seduction

To properly understand the phenomena that this article proposes to analyze, it is necessary to shed light on what is understood by political gnosticism. It is a structure of thought that, although it manifests itself in apparently secular forms, reproduces spiritual patterns characteristic of the ancient Gnostic heresies, adapted to the conditions of modernity².

Political Gnosticism presents four fundamental structural characteristics that distinguish both from authentic religious thought and from prudential policy:

- a) The Gnostic movement tends to be structured around an elite that claims access exclusive to hidden truths about reality. This elite, whether composed of techno-visionaries of the Silicon Valley, by theorists of revolution or by interpreters of the so-called identity consciousness, presents itself as possessing a superior understanding, inaccessible to common understanding. It is this reserved knowledge that underpins its authority and legitimizes its directive role in the processes of social transformation.
- b) Another characteristic feature is the suppression of the tension between immanence and transcendence. While genuine religious experience retains this tension as a source of openness to the mystery, the political gnosticism aims to dissolve it through the absolutization of historical instances or worldly. Transcendence, in this context, is downgraded and confused with technical progress, with the course of history or with the realization of social utopias, thus erasing otherness radical that defines the transcendent.
- c) Political Gnosticism transfers the promises of salvation from the spiritual to the temporal realm, promising that the adequate transformation of material, economic, technological and social will result in the definitive elimination of suffering, ignorance and death. This promise of intra-worldly redemption becomes the driving force behind totalizing projects that do not tolerate resistance.
- d) The world is conceived from a radical split between the forces of light and darkness, establishing a dichotomy between the enlightened, who claim to hold true knowledge, and the ignorant, seen as obstacles to Gnostic revelation. This cleavage feeds a logic of confrontation

² The comparison between contemporary movements and ancient Gnosticism is a heuristic tool, not a literal historical identity. The term political Gnosticism is used analogically to identify similar structural patterns, but it is recognized that each historical context has its own irreducible specificities.

absolute, in which opponents are not legitimate interlocutors, but enemies of the truth. With this, the space for dissent is suppressed, and politics degrades into a Manichaeian dispute, where there is no room for debate, only for the symbolic, or even literal, annihilation of the other.

3.2. Authentic Transcendence Versus Pseudo-Transcendence: A Comparative Framework³

To clearly distinguish between legitimate experiences of the transcendent and their Gnostic falsifications, the following analytical framework is presented:

Table I -- Transcendental Experiences

Dimension	Authentic transcendence	Gnostic pseudo-transcendence
Relationship with mystery	Preserves and cultivates mystery as a dimension constitutive of reality.	It promises to eliminate mystery through total knowledge.
Instrumentalization	Resists instrumentalization for political or personal ends.	It allows and promotes instrumentalization for ideological projects.
Temporal tension	It maintains a fruitful tension between the present and the eternal.	Eliminates tension through definitive temporal syntheses.
Universality	Recognizes universal dignity while maintaining particularities.	It imposes uniformity through totalitarian categories.
Knowledge	Accepts limits of human knowledge.	Claims absolute knowledge for the special elite.
Transformation	Promotes gradual transformation while respecting the human nature.	It promises a radical transformation of the human condition.

Source: Created by the author himself

This picture reveals a disturbing pattern: while authentic transcendence operates as a force of resistance that preserves the radical otherness and constitutive openness of the human, their Gnostic forgeries function as capture devices that tame the infinite to serve finite power projects. The difference is not merely theoretical, it is two incompatible existential orientations that produce opposing anthropological fruits.

Gnostic pseudo-transcendence reveals its nature through a characteristic paradoxical: the more it promises to elevate man above his condition, the more brutally it reduces him to one-dimensionality. It offers total knowledge to produce systematic ignorance; it promises definitive liberation to generate absolute submission; it declares war on mystery to plunge its followers into even deeper obscurity. It is as if a forger, trying to reproduce a masterpiece, betrayed its fraud precisely through the excess of technical perfection, concealing the absence of those subtle imperfections that give life to authentic creation.

³ This work examines trends within ideological movements, not movements as totalities. It is recognized that most of the phenomena analyzed contain legitimate elements and that radical criticism does not completely invalidate their positive contributions.

True transcendence, on the contrary, operates according to a logic of *kenosis*, which is the emptying that paradoxically fulfills, humility that genuinely elevates, recognition of limits that opens infinite horizons. It does not eliminate suffering, but transfigures; it does not solve the mystery, but teaches how to inhabit it; it does not promise omniscience, but cultivates that *docta ignorantia* that Nicholas of Cusa (2012) identified as supreme wisdom.

These distinctions, far from constituting abstract subtleties for specialists, manifest themselves with dramatic clarity in contemporary ideological phenomena that will take place to examine. Each movement analyzed in the following sections can be measured against these criteria, revealing how the promise of transcendence can mask sophisticated forms of total immanentization.

4. The New Gnosis: Salvation Through the World

4.1. Dialectical Materialism as Secular Eschatology

Dialectical materialism represents one of the most sophisticated secularizations of Christian eschatology, transferring the promise of redemption to the purely temporal plane with a almost blasphemous audacity. As Voegelin demonstrates, "gnostic speculation overcame uncertainty of faith, stepping back from transcendence and endowing man and his intra-worldly range of action with the meaning of eschatological fulfillment" (Voegelin, 1979, p. 98).

This conception projects human redemption into the very course of history, converting the materialist dialectic into a kind of immanent providence, in charge of guiding, of inexorably, humanity to the desired communist paradise. Mao Zedong's China offers perhaps the most dramatic and tragic example of this Gnostic temptation: there, the Communist Party assumed almost sacral contours, establishing itself as the sole interpreter of the secret hieroglyphics of history and as a guide capable of leading the people to a radiant future, where they would cease forever the contradictions that have plagued humanity since its beginnings.

The Party has taken on the role of guardian of scientific knowledge about the movements hidden from history, a reserved knowledge that would allow him to establish, through revolution permanent and definitive suppression of social antagonisms, a kind of earthly paradise. This modern Gnostic elite, according to their own claims, held the keys to decipher the



immutable laws of social development, becoming the enlightened vanguard of a process cosmic of redemption.

The Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) was perhaps the most reckless of all undertakings. generated by such a worldview, an episode that exposes, with disturbing clarity, the consequences practices of political gnosticism taken to its extreme. In those years of collective delirium, Mao launched into a desperate attempt to violate historical time, as if it were possible to tear it out of the Chinese land, by the sheer force of revolutionary will and dialectical knowledge, a transformation which the very nature of things refused to grant.

Peasants were removed from their ancestral fields and placed in front of ovens improvised, where they were to forge the steel that would build the socialist future. The ancient wisdom of agriculture was disregarded in favor of the imperatives of ideology, as if the laws of nature could be revoked by party decree. Meanwhile, agricultural production figures were inflated with the same fantasy that feeds the dreams of drunken men by absolute power (Chang and Halliday, 2006, p. 484-497).

What followed was a collapse of biblical proportions, a catastrophe that revealed with undeniable brutality the abysmal distance between the Gnostic promises and reality concrete. Harvests failed without precedent, and a relentless famine swept across China north to south, reaping lives like a gigantic scythe wielded by invisible hands. Between 1959 and 1961, about 30 million souls perished, one of the darkest episodes of the century XX, already so prodigal in horrors, bequeathed to posterity (Smil, 1999).

Thus ended that audacious attempt to artificially accelerate the course of history through Gnostic knowledge: not with the promised paradise, but with a catastrophe which revealed, brutally and definitively, the insurmountable limits of human ambition when it comes to divorces itself from reality and becomes intoxicated with visions of temporal omnipotence. However, it is necessary clarify, without dismay, that Marxist criticism, the basis of this model of political movement, social, is partially valid: Marxism in its original formulation maintains elements of rigor scientific and avoids some Gnostic pitfalls. However, certain interpretations of Marxism (particularly in the Leninist and Maoist versions) have developed problematic features and disastrous for humanity, as demonstrated.



4.2. Techno-utopianism as a new religion

The most visible and seductive form of contemporary techno-utopianism manifests itself in transhumanist movement, which promises to radically overcome the human condition through systematic application of technologies for eternal life. Among the protagonists of this endeavor, stands out Aubrey de Grey, whose scientific militancy against aging and death takes on the fervent tone of an eschatological crusade. His rhetoric, imbued with messianic conviction, reveals the impetus of a visionary who transforms longevity into a promise of redemption. In his works, he advocates a radical extension of human life, promising that future generations will be able to live indefinitely through precise technological interventions (Grey, 2019). This movement sees natural evolution as a cruel and inefficient process, marked by waste and suffering, and presents itself as a herald of a new era in which technology will finally liberate humanity from the ancestral limitations of death and entropy.

Among the most ardent prophets of this new technological world, Ray stands out Kurzweil, whose views clearly take on messianic characteristics. For him, computers will have human-equivalent intelligence by 2029, when, twenty years later, brain and computing will merge into a superior synthesis that will create genuinely superhuman beings. Kurzweil states with the conviction of a seer that medical nanorobots will be available to repair human bodies indefinitely, and that by the 2040s, afterlife technologies will allow the restoration of human minds on digital media, allowing them immortality (Kurzweil, 2024).

Entrepreneurs like Elon Musk expand this Promethean vision with projects like *Neuralink*, a company that develops brain-computer interfaces designed to translate signals neural pathways in direct action. In clinical trials that border on science fiction, people are already controlling computers and robotic arms with just thoughts, while the company promises that this technology will not only restore autonomy to people with medical needs, but "will unlock new dimensions of human potential" that are still unimaginable (Captech, nd).

The leaders of large technology corporations are increasingly taking on the role of a new gnostic class, developing an increasingly esoteric language about algorithms transcendentals and artificial consciousness, as if they were the only ones capable of understanding the

deep mysteries of technological evolution that will radically and definitively transform the condition human (Harari, 2016; Zuboff, 2019; Beiguelman, 2021).

4.3. Radical environmentalism and the deification of nature

It must be recognized that ecological concerns are always legitimate and urgent, representing a genuine responsibility of contemporary humanity in the face of threats to the natural balance. However, certain currents of the environmental movement transcend this legitimate concern to assume mystical-religious characteristics that reproduce patterns classical gnostics.

Movements like *Deep Ecology* and *Earth First!* exemplify a form of environmentalism that sacralizes nature, dispensing with any transcendent reference and transforming the Earth itself into an immanent divinity. These radical currents see nature as a self-organizing system endowed with intrinsic wisdom superior to human reason, demanding total submission of human beings to their ecological imperatives (Scruton, 2017, p. 10).

Greta Thunberg has become a prophetic figure in a movement that has taken on almost religious, where the Earth (Gaia) becomes a new immanent divinity, a self-regulating system that possesses a superior and benevolent intelligence. This sacralization of nature reproduces the pattern gnostic to eliminate the tension between immanence and transcendence, locating the absolute directly in the material world.

The phenomenon reproduces Gnostic patterns by Manicheanly dividing reality between saviors of the planet, bearers of esoteric knowledge about natural laws and rhythms depths of Gaia, and the destroyers of nature, representatives of the forces of evil who, by ignorance or malice, resist ecological imperatives. The crucial difference between conservation responsible for natural resources and the Gnostic sacralization of nature lies in the fact that first maintains the fruitful tension between human responsibility and divine transcendence, while the second locates the absolute in natural immanence itself, eliminating any higher critical instance.

This fundamental distinction is clearly manifested in the practice of ecological actions. One example is the conservation movement based on private property, such as the work of



Nature Conservancy (2025), which, in partnership with farmers, exemplifies an approach effective conservation of environmental problems. Instead of sacralizing nature, this approach recognizes the human responsibility for stewardship, combining conservation with economic prosperity through market incentives and local land management traditions.

4.4. Religious syncretism and new global spirituality

A phenomenon particularly illustrative of contemporary Gnostic manipulation can be observed in the world religion movement promoted by organizations such as the *United Religions Initiative* (URI). As Lee Penn documents, these movements "merge and correlate beliefs and practices of a huge range of religions and spiritual movements, taking the most attractive parts out of context, redefining them, and using them in unimaginable ways for a traditional believer" (Penn, 2020, p. 25).

This dynamic perfectly reproduces the Gnostic pattern of tension elimination. constitutive between immanence and transcendence. By creating a syncretistic jumble that mixes elements of diverse traditions as ingredients in a cosmic recipe, these movements destroy precisely what makes each tradition authentically transcendent: its historical specificity, its particular demands and its resistance to instrumentalization policy.

The result is a domesticated spirituality that promises easy access to transcendent without the difficulties, contradictions and moral demands that characterize traditions authentic. This new world religion perfectly serves the purposes of globalist elites who need spiritual legitimacy for their political projects, offering a transcendence controlled that does not question or challenge established power structures (Penn, 2020, p. 100-108).

5. The new absolutes: escape from the world through the world

5.1. Sacralization of identities: national and group

Responsible love for one's country and community of origin constitutes a feeling natural and morally legitimate, a healthy expression of the recognition that humanity is



composed of situated beings, rooted in specific traditions that shape identity. However, when this feeling turns into a mystical sacralization of the nation or group ethnic, a dangerous form of pseudo-transcendence emerges that locates the absolute in the very private community.

The case of Hungary under Viktor Orbán clearly illustrates how nationalism can transcend its legitimate political dimension to assume mystical-religious characteristics deeply problematic. Hungarian National Christianity promoted by Orbán sacralizes the ethnic nation, dispensing with reference to the transcendent God of historical Christianity and transforming the national community into the ultimate source of meaning and value (Brubaker, 2017).

This ideology locates the absolute in the national community itself, establishing a fundamental difference between legitimate patriotism, responsible love of country within limits clear morals, and national sacralization, the deification of the ethnic community that places it above any external moral judgment. The sacralization of the nation eliminates any critical instance superior that can judge national actions, transforming the country into a kind of divinity tribal that demands unconditional submission.

5.2. Identity Progressivism and Secular Eschatology

It is undeniable that historical discrimination based on race, gender and other characteristics have created genuine structural injustices that demand moral correction. The experience of marginalization offers valuable *insights* into aspects of social reality often neglected by dominant perspectives. The problem arises not in the recognition of these injustices, but when the correction takes on Gnostic characteristics: the identity ceases to be a contingent and historical characteristic and becomes the most essential deep within the person, a source of privileged knowledge about the reality that escapes those situated in less oppressed positions.

In certain expressions of contemporary progressive activism, a mutation is revealed subtle, but decisive, in the way the modern subject begins to conceive of himself and his identity. Committing to fighting all forms of discrimination and injustice remains, not can deny, a fundamental moral requirement, important for the establishment of dignity universal human. Thomas Sowell dedicated his life to fighting all forms of injustice based on skin color. In his analyses, he reiterates that true justice is not built on

privileges granted to certain groups, but on the substantial equality between men, regardless of race, origin, or creed. His approach stems from his examination of privileges (quotas) in countries such as South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia, for example (Sowell, 2016, p. 224-259).

However, this tradition of thought that balances denunciation of injustice with ethical universality has encountered, in recent decades, an unexpected challenge coming not from its opponents, but supposed allies. In the 21st century, the called *woke* movement which, while sharing legitimate concerns about injustice, extrapolates this just aspiration to give rise to a more complex and disturbing phenomenon: the sacralization of identities. In this new symbolic order, identity ceases to be a contingent fact of experience and acquires a metaphysical, almost inviolable aura. It is at this point that the emancipatory impulse gives way to a gnostic logic, where only the initiated, bearers of legitimizing suffering, have access to knowledge and moral authority. The justice, in this scenario, is no longer a common horizon, but a segmented territory, in which the value of a speech is measured by the identity of the person delivering it.

An eloquent example of this Gnostic-based inclination can be found in critical race theory, as formulated by theorists such as Derrick Bell (1993) and popularized by figures such as Robin DiAngelo (2018). This current attributes to identity categories a density that goes beyond the sociological plane, giving them an almost metaphysical status, in a form of secular religion.

The symbolic expression of the subjective experience of suffering began to acquire value absolute epistemic, preventing any common space for dialogue. The truth, once shared by all, becomes the prerogative of some, and dialogue gives way to proclamation oracular of those initiated by pain. As Lindsay and Pluckrose note, this logic engenders an epistemological hierarchy based on identity, according to which the legitimacy of discourse depends on the position occupied on the scale of oppression. It is, therefore, a Gnostic reconfiguration of knowledge, in which knowledge becomes the prerogative of groups initiates, bearers of esoteric knowledge inaccessible to the privileged (Lindsay; Pluckrose, 2020).



Parallel to this epistemological hierarchy based on identity, Gnosticism progressive is also manifested in the sacralization of historical time. Progressivism contemporary develops a sophisticated form of purely temporal transcendence, locating the absolute not in the eternal, but in the utopian future that is inexorably approaching. Being on the right side of history becomes a new form of salvation, a promise of final justification that legitimizes any action in the present. As Löwith observes, "the modern philosophy of history originated with eschatological secularization. Its main theme is progressive worldliness of Christian hope in a transcendent providence" (Löwith, 1991, p. 67).

It is crucial, however, to distinguish these Gnostic manifestations from political traditions legitimate aspects of modernity. When it comes to liberal democracy, it must be clarified that it maintains a non-gnostic character when it recognizes its limits and operates within the horizon of transcendence that underpins fundamental rights. It becomes problematic when transforms into a totalizing ideology that promises to solve all social problems through indefinite extension of democratic procedures. If liberal democracy can present problems, in the same way capitalism does, when it promises redemption through infinite growth and reduces human complexity to economic behavior, develops characteristics similar to Gnostic ideologies.

This distinction is crucial for a balanced assessment. It cannot be denied that liberal modernity has effectively created valuable spaces for freedom and human dignity. I need to understand that the analysis of political gnosticism should not be used to reject all modern achievements, but to identify totalitarian tendencies that threaten these same achievements. Some classical liberals (such as Madison, Tocqueville) effectively maintained a sensitivity to transcendence that avoided Gnostic tendencies.

6. Consequences of Gnostic Manipulation

Gnostic manipulation produces an anthropological devastation that extends as concentric waves through all human experience, reducing existential richness to a single dimension and eliminating the constitutive openness to the transcendent that defines the human being. This reduction has devastating practical consequences: people are instrumentalized in function of totalizing projects that promise redemption through the radical transformation of worldly structures.



As E. Michael Jones observes, "In intellectual life, there are only two alternatives ultimate: either the thinker conforms desire to truth, or he conforms truth to desire" (Jones, 2021, p. 15). Gnostic corruption operates precisely through this second alternative, subordinating reality to ideological demands, creating artificial worlds in which truth is shaped to satisfy the needs of the established power system.

This process results, as Scruton (2015) analyzes, in the progressive loss of the sense of sacredness of the human person. When the transcendent is eliminated or falsified, the human being loses its fundamental dignity, which derives precisely from its openness to infinity, becoming if mere material for social or technological experiments.

The political implications of this are equally grave and terrifying. As Robert Nisbet rightly asserts in his analysis of totalitarianism:

Contemporary prophets of the totalitarian community seek, with all the techniques of modern science at their disposal, to transmute popular longings for community into an age-old sense of participation in celestial power over earth. When imbued with popular spiritual devotions, the political party becomes more than a party. It becomes a moral community of almost religious intensity, a profoundly evocative symbol of collective and redemptive purpose, a passion that implicates every element of belief and behavior in the individual's existence (Nisbet, 1962, p. 33).

Totalitarianism emerges as a logical consequence of the Gnostic claim to realize completely the sacred in the world, eliminating the intermediate spaces where political life authentic can flourish.

If on the political level Gnosticism produces totalitarianism, on the cultural level its consequences are equally destructive. On a cultural level, there is an impoverishment progressive loss of symbolic imagination, the gradual loss of the sense of mystery and the trivialization systematics of the transcendent. As Romano Guardini (2018) diagnoses with the clairvoyance of who lived through the upheavals of the 20th century, modern culture is progressively losing its capacity of genuinely religious experience, replacing it with ideological substitutes that promise fill the existential void through secular forms of transcendence.

Paradoxically, these pseudo-transcendences destroy the very possibility of authentically transcendent experience, closing the windows of the soul that allow us to breathe the air pure spiritual heights. The result is a culture suffocated in its own immanence, as a hermetically sealed room where oxygen is slowly depleted.

7. Forms of Resistance: Recovering Authentic Tension

Historical experience demonstrates that resistance to ideological Gnosticism requires practical strategies that transcend mere theoretical criticism, operating simultaneously in multiple levels of human experience like a complex symphony in which each instrument contributes to the harmony of the whole.

In the educational field, the most successful experiences of resistance to intellectual totalitarianism emerged from institutions that managed to preserve spaces for fundamental questions. Examples are Charter schools in the US and the model applied in University of Chicago, under the deanship of Robert Maynard Hutchins, which offers a model instructive. Through emphasis on fundamental books and direct confrontation with perennial questions, the university has managed to train generations of students capable of resisting ideological seductions of his time (Hutchins, 1936).

The formation of authentic critical thinking, distinct from critical thinking instrumentalized by contemporary ideologies, requires the cultivation of the capacity to inhabit productively the tension between deep questions and provisional answers. This develops through direct study of classical texts that preserve open questions, from the practice of dialogical argumentation that respects the complexity of fundamental problems, and tolerance cultivated to the ambiguity that characterizes the great themes of human existence.

Practical resistance also requires the strengthening of intermediary institutions that promote authentic mediation between immanence and transcendence: as universities that remain faithful to their primary vocation of disinterested pursuit of truth, resisting pressures ideological communities of any hue; religious communities that keep alive the fruitful tension between divine transcendence and ethical commitment to the world; civil organizations that still cultivate public debate as a meeting place for different views; all these institutions act as dams against the leveling torrent of totalitarianism.

It was in contexts of more acute oppression that they were revealed, with admirable clarity, experiences of this resistance. Václav Havel (1978), in Czechoslovakia, and Czesław Miłosz (1990), in Poland, left examples of lucidity and moral firmness. Both conceived forms refined forms of cultural opposition that, even under the shadow of authoritarian regimes, managed to preserve the inner space of consciousness, safeguarded by informal memory networks,

language and tradition, which although discreet but resilient structures, which kept alive the spark of freedom.

Against the all-encompassing seductions of the age, all that remains is to cultivate what the ancients called *askesis*, which are spiritual exercises that keep the soul in a state of vigilance. It's not about recipes, but about an inner ecology: the meditative reading of texts that refuse surrender their secrets to ideological seductions; participation in rituals that keep the sense of the sacred as irreducible otherness; the political engagement that resists both paralysis cynical about the redemptive fury; and perhaps the most difficult, the patience to build friendships where each person remains a mystery that is never exhausted in the understanding that one has of him.

Paul Ricoeur captured something fundamental when he observed that "there is no understanding of itself that is not mediated by signs, symbols and texts; the understanding of oneself coincides with the interpretation applied to these mediating terms" (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 123). Humanity is constitutively mediated by beings who always access reality through symbols, language, traditions, and communities. For this reason, any ideology that promises immediate access to the absolute, whether through salvific algorithms or definitive revolutions, offers precisely what human nature makes impossible: direct fusion with the transcendent. It is precisely in this constitutive limitation, in this need for mediation, that human dignity resides, because it is in it that both our finitude and our openness to infinity are preserved.

It is through these fragile but persistent mediations that consciousness remains open to the other and to the mystery that sustains being. This essentially mediate structure of human experience implies that every promise of immediacy, whether technological, political or spiritual, constitutes an anthropological illusion that opens space for ideological manipulation.

8. Conclusion

At the end of this investigation into the Gnostic seductions that mark the imaginary contemporary, a decisive observation clearly emerges: to adequately understand the relationship between immanence and transcendence requires recognizing the essential role of mediation in human experience. It is to be, by nature, mediated beings, traversed by symbols, rituals, narratives and forms, which access the infinite through the finite, the eternal through time, the absolute in the form of the relative. Mediation does not dissolve otherness, but makes it accessible

without nullifying it; it keeps, at the same time, proximity and mystery, intimacy and distance that configure the density of the spiritual and existential experience.

Authentic mediations, such as poetic language, genuine art, sacred ritual, tradition living, community of friendship, allow the simultaneous experience of immanence and transcendence without promising to definitively resolve this constitutive tension. Like bridges that allow crossing between opposite banks without erasing the difference that distinguishes them, these mediations keep open the space where the transcendent can manifest itself in the immanent without being reduced to he.

False Gnostic mediations, on the contrary, promise to eliminate tension through syntheses that, in reality, destroy it. They are like mirrors that reflect only their own image expanded, making one believe that the absolute has been reached when, in fact, one remains trapped in cave of one's own projections.

The contemporary challenge is to keep alive the constitutive tension of existence human without falling into the pseudo-gnostic syntheses that promise to resolve it definitively. This requires ancient virtues that need to be rediscovered and cultivated with patience: the courage to live in tension without promising its definitive resolution; the wisdom to distinguish between mediations authentic and false ideological mediations; constant vigilance against totalitarian temptations that emerge when the political assumes absolute characteristics.

True wisdom, that which the ancients called *sophia* and which transcends the mere accumulation of information does not consist in definitively resolving the tension between immanence and transcendence, but in learning to inhabit it with the grace of someone who dances between two worlds without pretending to possess any of them completely. This dwelling is not resignation passive in the face of the world's problems, but active vigilance against the totalitarian temptations that emerge when the sense of human measure is lost.

As travelers in a land that is simultaneously home and exile, it is to be called to build temporary homes that honor both the need for rooting and the vocation to infinity. Only in this way can the fragile and precious spaces of freedom be preserved where human beings can meet as equals in fundamental dignity, different in particular perspectives, and united in the common task of building a habitable world for creatures that are simultaneously of this world and called beyond it.



Resistance to the Gnostic temptations of the present time is not consummated in gestures epics or in the solitary glow of enlightened heroes, but in the silent labor of gardeners of the soul, men and women who, with discreet and persistent hands, cultivate small corners where human life, in all its fragility and greatness, can blossom without being suffocated by promises of total redemption.

It is in this almost invisible daily life, in the seclusion of reading that preserves the mystery, in the free gesture of true friendship, in the prayer murmured at dusk, or in contemplation silent of a beauty that does not impose itself, where the seeds of a resistance lie lasting. Seeds thrown into the soil without haste, without guarantees, without calculation. Perhaps they will never see its flowering, but that doesn't matter.

The most intimate truth, the one that resists the noise of totalizing systems, is simple and austere: it is not about saving the world through grandiose projects of collective salvation, but about remaining faithful, in the intervals of life, to the founding tension that constitutes the human being. It is about being liminal creatures, inhabitants of the crack between the ground and infinity, between the now and the not-yet, between what is given and what is only glimpsed. And it is in this gap that the human call resides. This is how humanity was made.

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