DIVINING THE DREAM MACHINE:
*Science-Fiction, Hollywood,
and the Technology of Antichrist*

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PREFACE

"Divining the Dream Machine" is my effort to describe a feedback loop between malign technology and corrupt imagination. That process is untethering humanity from God-given reality and subjecting us to ever-intensifying sinful abstractions. I believe these concerns are of immediate relevance to the South, particularly if its plight is viewed through an Orthodox lens. One manifestation of this spiritual assault on humanity is the so-called "Fourth Industrial Revolution." As described by World Economic Forum chairman Klaus Schwab, this fourth revolution represents a digital outgrowth of previous industrial advances, one that will result in the total trans-formation of human life through hybridization with technology. As we seek to remain faithful Orthodox Christians, defending the integrity of our humanity against the advances of the Machine, we would do well to look to civilizational paradigms like that of the South, that have long stood as an alternative to the siren song of technological modernity.

For its non-compliance with the paradigm of totalizing industrial progressivism, the South was subjected to brutal invasion. Over the past century, the political forces that serve the Machine have employed

a technique that is more subtle but no less wicked: psychological warfare. Hollywood and similar organs of technological entertainment work tirelessly to propagandize society and engineer culture, with most consumers lacking any meaningful awareness of how their existences are being reshaped by the digital grid of the Machine. To be sure, the South is often explicitly demonized by the contents of regime sponsored media. But more nefarious still is how the very form of self-amplifying techno-culture serves to erode what Dixie has represented in American history; the possibility of agrarian Christian civilization resisting the pull to oblivion.

In its conceptualization of both humanity and nature, the global Machine empire represents the worst of both worlds. The ultimate pride and idolatry of worshipping creation rather than Creator, melded with the utter humiliation and debasement that comes with the loss of all coherence and boundary. The Christ-haunted people of the South have the chance to recover the best of both worlds, as uniquely revealed by the Orthodox Church. Sober and humble recognition of the fallenness of creation and of our own sin-clouded perceptions, combined with a joyful receptivity to the mystical process of salvation and God's indwelling within all the world. Southern agrarianism is more than a rival political vision to that of the globalists. It is a reminder of the potential for civilization to cultivate a godly orientation to nature, neither demeaning it nor idolizing it. If followed consistently enough, such reminders will always guide us toward the true key to the relationship between the world and its Creator, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

My essay details how industrial modernity, the genre of science-fiction, and the artistic medium of film have converged to form a global apparatus intended to condition humanity into the most ungodly way of life. More than most civilizations, the South has the capacity to recognize this Dream Machine for the nightmare that it is.

## SCI-FI AND FALSE SIGNS

In his seminal work, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*, Fr. Seraphim Rose condemned "the spirit of science fiction."[1] His critique of that literary genre is found within the chapter "Signs from Heaven: An Orthodox Christian Understanding of UFOs."[2] Fr. Seraphim incisively argued that the so-called 'UFO phenomenon' would be a major component of the emerging religion of the future, the religion of Antichrist. By examining the descriptions of supposed 'alien encounters' and the beliefs of UFO enthusiasts, he demonstrated that an Orthodox perspective can only consider this phenomenon to be demonic. Before launching into this critique, he contextualized it by looking at the sector of pop-culture which had done the most work to prime society to accept outlandish spiritual beliefs about extraterrestrials. He turned to the popularity of science-fiction to answer the question "What were men prepared to see in the sky?"[3]

Providing a standard history of the genre, Fr. Seraphim references its prehistory in the work of authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley, its solidification through HG Wells and Jules Verne, and its flourishing in then-contemporary pop-culture (the

second edition of the book was first printed in 1979) through film and television such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. He identified a dangerous underlying philosophy to the genre, listing four traits of science-fiction narratives that lend themselves to the subversion of traditional Christianity and the pro-pagation of the religion of Antichrist. Firstly, traditional religion is absent; the science-fiction universe is either secular or it contains vague mysticisms that are inspired by Eastern religions or the Western occult. Secondly, human meaning is oriented not toward God but toward highly evolved beings encountered in journeys across time and space (sometimes these evolved intelligences are super-human versions of ourselves). Thirdly, "the standard practices and claims of sorcerers and demons"[4] (telepathy, direct human flight, dematerialization, shapeshifting, the creation of illusory environments, augmented intelligences becoming totally free of matter, etc.) are depicted as technological achieve-ments, implicitly or explicitly affirming that the scientific future of humanity is a realization of the longstanding aspirations of the occult. Fourthly, science-fiction is utopian, not usually in the sense of depicting a perfect society, but rather through portraying society as reorganized through encounters with the aforementioned 'more advanced' intel-ligences.

In the decades since Fr. Seraphim's death, the continued direction of the genre has vindicated his critique. We can see this through the persistence of the anti-Christian traits that he identified, the relationship of those elements to the alternative spiritualities (New

Age, spiritual but not religious, occult, syncretic, psychedelic, etc.) that are now closer than ever to the cultural mainstream, and through the highly suspicious ongoing process of Pentagon 'UFO disclosure.'[5] Fr. Seraphim saw science-fictions depictions of UFOs as one major trend among several that heralded the arrival of the demonic religion of the future (others included ecumenism, interest in Eastern religions and their meditation techniques, charismatic revivalism in Christianity, and the proliferation of interest in paganism and the occult). He quotes Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov, "The miracles of antichrist will be chiefly manifested in the aerial realm, where Satan chiefly has his dominion."[6] However, the genre holds an even greater key to understanding the religion of the future than described by Fr. Seraphim. Without contradicting any of his insights, it is the purpose of this essay to suggest that in the very name 'science-fiction' (which describes the intersection of imagination and technology) we see the blueprints for both the form and content of the rapidly emerging Antichrist religion.

## THE MACHINE AND ITS RELIGION

On his Substack, the Abbey of Misrule, recovering environmentalist Paul Kingsnorth has been warning about the Machine. For many years, he was a high-profile ecological and anti-globalization activist, co-founding the Dark Mountain Project in 2009, which mourned modernity's destruction of the natural world, while calling into question environmentalist assumptions about progress and technological solutions. His 2021 essay "The Cross and the Machine"

describes how his shifting perspective regarding environmental activism was accompanied by a series of successively adopted religious identities.[7] Growing up nonreligious with a moribund English Protestantism as his reference for Christianity, he turned first to Zen Buddhism, then to Wicca, and finally to Orthodox Christianity.

Convinced as ever of the deadly effects of technological globalized modernity, Kingsnorth's newfound Orthodoxy has given him the religious framework to diagnose the true spiritual pathology of our age. "…the rebellion against nature, against life, against God - has […] made us homeless. It has also wrecked and ravaged the living Earth to the point of disaster, in pursuit of a universal human empire of calculation and control."[8] Kingsnorth describes this rebellion as the global instantiation of the Machine, characterized by "the breaking of bounds, the destruction of limits, the homogenisation of everything in its pursuit of its continued growth…. to its core, anti-limits and anti-form…The Machine is aimed squarely at what C S Lewis termed the abolition of Man, which is also the abolition of nature itself."[9] The Machine is not a form of wickedness unique to modernity but rather a temptation that societies have faced throughout history, having manifested previously in Sumeria, Egypt, Babylon, Rome, and other eras. Technological advancements from the Industrial Revolution onward have simply provided the mechanisms by which the Machine can now proceed unimpeded across the globe.

In the first entry of his series "Divining the Machine" (a phrase that inspired the title of this present essay), Kingsnorth lists its characteristics,

including centralized/hierarchical/large-scale society, bureaucracy (able to order and monitor citizenry), mostly urban/metropolitan concentrated populations, a centrally directed economy with powerful financial institutions, a drive to replace the human with technology, advanced universal communications networks, and a propaganda system that normalizes all of this.[10] He then describes its corresponding values—progress, openness, futurism, universalism, individualism, technologism, scientism, commercialism, materialism, and TINA ("there is no alternative"). "The Machine…rips up our roots in nature, in real cultures connected to time and place, in our connection to the divine centre. In their stead we are offered an anti-culture, an endless consumer present..."[11] Later essays make it clear that leftist environmentalist critiques of capitalism are not alternatives but rather part of the Machine, the voice of "Machine Greens," playing a central role in sinister efforts toward the World Economic Forum's "Fourth Industrial Revolution" and similar totalizing technocratic agendas. "…the left and global capitalism are, at base, the same thing: engines for destroying customary ways of living and replacing them with the new world of the Machine… one attacks the culture, deconstructing everything from history to 'heteronormativity' to national identities; the other moves in to monetise the resulting fragments."[12]

In a December 2022 essay, "God in the Age of Iron," Kingsnorth puts his conception of the Machine in conversation with Seraphim Rose' description of the religion of the future.[13] He aptly describes Fr. Seraphim as "a kind of patron Saint of Lost Western People," as he was an admirer of Jack Kerouac, a follower of Alan

Watts, and infatuated with Taoism and Zen before he found his home in Orthodoxy (a journey with some parallels to Kingsnorth's). Kingsnorth unsurprisingly finds Fr. Seraphim's analysis of the coming worldwide religion of Antichrist extremely relevant to his own critique of the global monoculture produced by technological modernity. The religion of the future is the religion of the Machine, found in the interface of the trends examined by Fr. Seraphim (UFO cults, witchcraft, neo-paganisms, shamanism, Eastern-inspired mysticisms, etc.) and technocratic totalitarianism. Kingsnorth provides another list of traits, this time as an initial attempt to discern the characteristics of the religious beliefs generated by the Machine: the self-as-idol, "Do what thou wilt," ecumenism, religious inversion, salvation in this world, creation over Creator, sex as sacred expression, relativism, self-creation through technology, and the transhumanist quest for godhood.

The thread tying all of this together is the worship of self, the promise of the serpent in Eden that we will become like God. Kingsnorth mentions nineteenth century theosophist Helena Blavatsky's claim that the serpent Satan was the true God of the Genesis story, the light-bringing genuine father of human spirituality, adding that "This kind of talk was probably outrageous in the 1880s, but today it would just make a good few seasons of drama on Netflix, or a funky series of Instagram images… What better symbol of the great rebellion of modernity, after all, than Lucifer-as-liberator: a Fallen Angel, exiled for resisting unearned privilege? Like Narcissus, Lucifer is entranced by his own beauty and power. Like both of them, we gaze

entranced at our own avatars in the black mirrors in our hands, unable to tear our gaze away."

Along with self, he names science and sex as the other two pillars of a triad of Machine values that have replaced the "prayer, people, and place" triad of traditional religious societies[14]. The heirs of the sexual revolution are relentlessly 'queering' all which is normative, while the totalitarian mantra of "trust the science" makes it increasingly easier to imagine the world prophesied in Revelation 13:17, in which "no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark." A society increasingly defined by scientistic technocracy and unrestrained sexuality allows inhabitants of its digital grid to indulge in unlimited projects of self-creation and experimentation. "How can a human become like a god? By doing what gods do: creating. And how can a human create? Through our unique gift: the power of technology."[15]

It is on this note, technology as the means to engage in Luciferian endeavors of self-creation, that I wish to add to the description of the religion of the Machine. Kingsnorth's essay on Seraphim Rose does not mention his critique of science-fiction that I recounted earlier. That lack of reference is understandable, as Fr. Seraphim does not attribute any special significance to the spiritual pitfalls of sci-fi, viewing it mostly as a literary phenomenon with the function of preparing society for Antichrist-related UFO beliefs and false signs. However, latent within Fr. Seraphim's warnings about science-fiction is a possible deeper critique, one that unveils a fuller picture of how contemporary civilization was seduced by the Machine. Having examined the science (technology) side of the equation with my brief summary of

Kingsnorth's penetrating essays, we must now turn to the fiction side, to a crucial node of the Machine not much treated by Kingsnorth, one that has worked tirelessly to ensnare our attention and imaginations. We need to look at Hollywood.

## "THE ART OF DREAMING"

After decades of obsession with movies and pop-culture, Jasun Horsley realized that Hollywood is hell. His book *16 Maps of Hell: The Unraveling of Hollywood Superculture* documents numerous case studies of disturbing figures and events within the history of the entertainment industry, as well as the damage he personally accrued through buying into the Hollywood myth (including failed attempts to become a filmmaker himself, a failure that he is now thankful for). Underneath all these personal and historical examples of Hollywood darkness and deviance, he finds an underlying pathology, an explanation of how and why the film industry has played such a significant role in mass-dehumanization. Hollywood represents "an advanced alienation agenda."[16] "Simply put, both as individuals and as a collective, we have been lured—and lured ourselves—into a counterfeit reality, a dream world. Hollywood, as a place and a state of mind, is both a primary causal agency of this condition (over the past century), and a crucial (because visible) symptom of it. It is the equivalent of a metastasized tumor on the world psyche."[17]

The horrors of Hollywood run deeper than its surface level celebration of deviancy, criminality, and psychopathy/manipulation (on and off screen),

although this is an essential piece of the puzzle. "Insofar as Hollywood is a place where mobsters, psy-operatives, and murderous madmen have chosen to ply their trade—or maybe even built it from the ground up—then the products it creates, the dreams it manufactures, may not only be a cover for their activities, but a kind of covert celebration of them."[18] The perennial active behind-the-scenes presence of intelligence agencies and the military in Hollywood is a well-documented uncontroversial reality, as is the long history of industry-insiders' connections to organized crime. Multiple stars have also publicly alleged that widespread child abuse is a problem in Hollywood.[19]

These individual manifestations of Hollywood pathology arise from the true driving force of the film industry; the fetishization of fame and celebrity. The immersive nature of film as an artistic medium dulls our ability to mark the boundary between fiction and reality. Techniques such as the close-up shot blur the line between actor and character, incepting a fixation on both within the mind of the audience and tantalizing us through the subtle invitation to let that boundary fade. The viewer is invited to implicitly imagine themselves as both filmmaker and film star, despite the fact that literally speaking, few in society are selected for such roles of mega-celebrity. "All this leaves is to increase the fervor of one's identification with, and allegiance to, the chosen few, the self-made Übermenschen whose station is, like the stars, one of high visibility."[20] By worshipping the stars on the screen, we worship ourselves. Conversely, our self-worship is fed back into the Hollywood Dream Machine (through our time, money, attention, and

altered self-perceptions), augmenting the seemingly ethereal power of the images on screen and those who produce them. Chief among the commercialized illusions produced by the entertainment industry is the deification of the industry itself, which proudly advertises both its glamor and its corruption as part of an ouroboric cycle of self-mythologization. The Machine and its dreaming apparatus want nothing more than an endless expansion of its all-consuming emptiness.

Just as technological modernity is not identical to the Machine, but rather the circumstance that has allowed the Machine to assume an unprecedentedly pervasive form, Hollywood is not the originator of art's corrupting capabilities. For warnings of the dangers that artists pose to the spiritual health of the individual and of society, we can look to Plato's condemnation of poets ("And therefore we shall be right in refusing to admit [the poet] into a well-ordered state, because he awakens and nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason…")[21] or St. Augustine's denunciations of the theater ("Stage plays also captivated me, with their sights full of the images of my own miseries: fuel for my own fire. Now, why does a man like to be made sad by viewing doleful and tragic scenes, which he himself could not by any means endure? Yet, as a spectator, he wishes to experience from them a sense of grief, and in this very sense of grief his pleasure consists. What is this but wretched madness?").[22] Imagination has always threatened to carry us away from God-given reality into delusion. Horsley points out that "The adoption of roles by a performer, via the indirect mining of his or her unconscious, might be seen as a healthier and more

volitional form of dissociative identity disorder (DID)."[23]

Whatever line we choose to draw in separating out edifying fiction from that which distorts and distracts, it remains the case that the emergence of the medium of film and the culture that surrounds it (Hollywood itself and a viewing public enthralled to it) represents a unique amplification of the pre-existing dangers of aesthetic pursuits, through subverting any natural sense of distance that the consumer might feel between themselves and the artistic product. "Movies create narratives, using characters embodied by stars, to capture our attention. If done consistently and effectively enough, these characters, so to speak, colonize our unconscious."[24] "…whenever we enter into a film narrative, we may actually be taking on all of the elements of that narrative as if it was our own creation. If so, we would not only become inextricably bound up in these narratives while we are 'innocently' enjoying them, we would also be allowing our consciousness—our very identities—to become permanently spliced to them."[25]

Kingsnorth and Horsley converge in seeing our modern technological monstrosities as simply the contemporary expression of the longstanding aspirations of occultists and their sorcery. Kingsnorth has compared Francis Bacon's definition of science ("The knowledge of causes and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible.") to Aleister Crowley's definition of magick ("The science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with the will.").[26] "These could be swapped around without anybody really noticing. The thread that links them together is

control… Our world is still run by magicians, working from the 'sacred temples' of their laboratories to discover how humanity may reshape the world in accordance with its will."[27]

The religion of the future emerges from the convergence of Bacon and Crowley's aspirations, with the Machine glorified as "the creator of the future, bringer of immortality, and the only force worthy of worship in the Reign of Quantity."[28] Hollywood's alienation agenda reflects this same desire for totalization via technological wizardry. Horsley writes, "Filmmaking is sorcery, the modern technological development of an ancient art…This 'art' (or dark science) is essential to filmmakers, above all to those with a Surrealist bent. It is the art of inducing trance states, the art of dreaming…Central to this sorcerous endeavor is the removal of any element of unpredictability or chaos that originally made that space unsafe or hostile to us."[29] Hollywood-driven pop-culture is a series of artificially constructed dream worlds, a dissociative prison built by sadists, psychopaths, sexual deviants, criminals, and spies. A false and tortured form of immortality is as much the goal of Hollywood dissociation as it is of the Machine at large. "The creation of a surrogate reality to escape into and rule over, a matrix-womb that is a simulation of the lost maternal body, is achieved through the meticulous and painstaking assemblage of a mosaic of eidetic memory images, a celluloid (and cellular?) panopticon made up of copies of reality. A matrix."[30]

## "SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY"

There are some essential points of my Fr. Seraphim/Kingsnorth/Horsley-inspired analysis that are worth making explicit at this point. Hollywood is a kind of mega-psyop, one that propels itself largely through self-mythologization. It is also a primary propagator of the religion of the Machine, which hybridizes the most spiritually destructive aspects of technology (science) and imagination (fiction), in order to ensnare us within a diabolically conceived system of nested dreams/narratives/delusions. It should then be no surprise that a key fulfillment of the Dream Machine's self-mythologizing function would come in its production of science-fiction films in particular.

Each decade, *Sight and Sound* magazine conducts a large poll of filmmakers, concerning the greatest films of all time. The 2022 iteration of the poll was the largest ever version of this survey, asking 480 directors this question.[31] The number one entry on the list of greatest films — Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The ending of *2001* is among the most famous sequences in all of cinema. How does Kubrick explain its enigmatic imagery? "The idea was supposed to be that [the protagonist] is taken in by god-like entities, creatures of pure energy and intelligence with no shape or form. They put him in what I suppose you could describe as a human zoo to study him, and his whole life passes from that point on in that room… when they get finished with him, as happens in so many myths of all cultures in the world, he is…transformed and made some kind of superman."[32] Is *2001* the story that the Machine is telling about itself? No decoding or unveiling is necessary with regard to its worldview,

the Luciferian transhumanist messaging is perfectly explicit.

The director of what is considered to be perhaps the greatest film ever produced believed himself to be telling a modern scientific version of an archetypal human myth of deification. Spiritual entities treat the protagonist Dave Bowman as a zoo animal or object of an experiment and successfully make him into a god. Arthur C. Clarke, author of the novel and coauthor with Kubrick of the screenplay famously wrote that "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," a sentiment that again evokes the resonance of Crowleyan occultism and Bacon's scientism. Hence, the 'spiritual entities' referred to by Kubrick use *technology* to evolve humanity. The iconic monolith shows up in prehistoric Africa and inspires the first instance of toolmaking and then thousands of years later it returns, this time allowing humanity to break free of our limited physical form altogether, a technological upgrade indistinguishable from an occult initiation. Notice that the initiation is completed only after Bowman survives the malfunctioning of HAL-9000, the last piece of technology from which humanity is meaningfully separate.

In *American Cosmic*, a 2019 book by religion scholar Diana Pasulka, about how technology is transforming human religiosity (including through beliefs in UFOs), she discusses comparisons of the extraterrestrial monolith to movie screens and smart phones, writing that the monolith is "both the cinema screen and the alien."[33] And in the final shot of the film, what appearance does the transformed human take? Bowman (functioning as an audience stand-in) becomes a supposedly divinized baby, a 'star-child'

floating in space within a bubble of light. It is the key sequence of the most iconic of films and it is centered upon a literal illustration of cinematic techno-sorcery as regressing its audience to a state of infantile power-lessness. *2001* is a microcosm of the fractal logic of the Dream Machine, a technology-made story about stories about technology, enacting the Machine's capture of humanity by immersing humanity within the story of that capture.

*2001* represents the logic of science-fiction's role within the Machine as well as any artifact of the genre, largely because of its enduring influence, which would be hard to overstate (the ability to haunt the human imagination through pop-cultural influence is a major function of the Dream Machine). There would be no difficulty in naming other examples though. Eight of the top ten all-time domestically grossing films have science-fiction elements – *Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Avengers: Endgame, Spider-Man: No Way Home, Avatar, Black Panther, Avengers: Infinity War, Jurassic World,* and *Avatar: The Way of Water.*[34] That list is not adjusted for inflation so it has a strong recency bias but accurately reveals telling trends within the box office of the last decade. Note the prevalence of superhero films and franchise filmmaking on that list. Horsley writes at length in *16 Maps* about how "The cinematic universe (whether Disney, Star Wars, Marvel, or DC) takes immersive entertainment to a new level,"[35] furthering the colonization of the imagination by making 'fandom' a part of the identity of the global audiences of these franchises.

Most of these cinematic universes are modeled after the success of Marvel Studios, which has fashioned the ideal mythology for the Machine—a

perpetually expanding set of multicultural narratives which allows its audiences to fantasize about being made 'super' through science, magic, or both. Hundreds of millions of fans, many of them adults, immersing themselves in childlike dream worlds born from the Machine. Another version of *2001*'s star child, more infantilization disguised as divinization by way of technological augmentation. Whether high-art or low-art, optimistic and romantic or pessimistic and horrific, sci-fi functions all the same. In all their variations, these stories are agents of Machine conditioning, recycling the same narratives about the inevitability of technological transformation, either cheerfully or darkly glamorizing the disintegration of the human.

## WESTON'S EVOLVING WORLDVIEW

The worldview of sci-fi has spilled out from fiction into pop-intellectualism from the beginning. Father of the genre HG Wells was also a social critic, whose books such as *The Open Conspiracy* and *The New World Order* provided extensive arguments for a Fabian socialist ideal of global government, in which traditional religion and nation states are done away with and humanity is brought under the control of a benevolent scientific elite (whose rule would include population control).[36] Such techno-utopianism is simply the flipside of the cosmic meaninglessness portrayed in Wells' science-fiction literature, both indicating the displacing of God by the evolutionary process. The spirit of Wells is alive and well in contemporary figures such as Yuval Noah Harari, bestselling author of books such as *Sapiens* and *Homo*

*Deus*, and the World Economic Forum's favored public intellectual.

Harari has made a career of confident pronouncements of the obsolescence of traditional views of humanity. "We humans should get used to the idea that we are no longer mysterious souls—we are now hackable animals."[37] He also believes that "In the early twenty-first century, perhaps the most important artistic genre is science fiction."[38] Harari hopes that scientists can use the genre to influence public perception to an even greater degree, especially in overcoming the idea of a stable human self. Perhaps we can trace the confluence of science-fiction and technocratic globalist ideology all the way back to Machine prophet Francis Bacon, as his utopian novel *New Atlantis* is considered by some to be the first real work of science-fiction.[39] Of the political tradition of the World Economic Forum and its predecessors, Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin has perceptively written, "The power of the globalists, after all, is based on insinuations and 'black miracles.' They rule not on the basis of real power, but on illusions, simulacra, and artificial images, which they maniacally try to instill in the minds of mankind."[40]

The scientistic fictions of megalomaniacal technocrats may ultimately be sold to the public largely through the spiritual iterations of these same narratives. A key passage from CS Lewis's novel *Perelandra*, the second installment in his Ransom trilogy, illustrates this point.[41] Lewis' trilogy is not so much a Christian version of science-fiction as it is a rebuttal of the very premises of the genre, depicting a cosmos beyond earth that is not the infinite void of "outer space" but rather "deep heaven," saturated

with God's glory and untainted by Satan's rebellion against the divine order.  His first novel of the trilogy *Out of the Silent Planet* explicitly contrasts the grace-filled reality of what the protagonist Ransom finds on Mars with Wellsian expectations of cosmic terrors ("insect-like, vermiculate or crustacean Abominable … witching feelers, — rasping wings, slimy coils, curling tentacles...monstrous union of superhuman intel-ligence and insatiable cruelty").[42] The antagonist Weston's aspiration of humanity conquering the stars is implicitly associated with the godless sci-fi worldview that Lewis at times called "Wellsianity" (and a minor villain in the third installment of the trilogy, *That Hideous Strength*, is purposefully modeled on Wells).[43]

In *Perelandra*, Ransom encounters Weston a second time, but now Weston has followed his scientistic imperialism to its spiritually radical conclusions. He is no longer "fighting for Man against his non-human environment" but has given up any conception of separation between humanity and nature.[44] His loyalty is now to "the Life-Force," accepting divinity's existence while equating it with a cosmic process of creative evolution.[45] Lewis understood well that atheistic materialism is simply a cultural waiting room for demonic pantheism. *Perelandra* was published 25 years before *2001: A Space Odyssey* but largely anticipates its worldview and refutes it in advance.

The panpsychist pantheist cosmic evolutionary sci-fi worldview found other popular expression in the psychedelically-influenced spirituality of the 1960s and its countercultural successors of later decades. Terence McKenna, pop-spirituality's primary pro-ponent of psilocybin mushrooms, was influenced by

both the Western occult tradition and the sci-fi narratives of Clarke and Kubrick. He compared psychedelics to the monolith, seeing them as tools of techno-magical higher intelligences calling us into a blissful future.[46] McKenna declared that we will "[dream] awake at the end of time" and he expected virtual reality technology to enable such dreaming.[47] [48] Timothy Leary, the acid-prophet of the 1960s, held the same enthusiasm for VR, eventually modifying his original slogan of "turn on, tune in, drop out" into "turn on, boot up, jack in," after deciding that personal computers have essentially the same effect on humanity as LSD.[49] Leary also wrote that "Higher Intelligence…has already sent a message to this planet. The U.F.O. message is in the form of the DNA code."[50] More of the same sci-fi story, the same techno-sorcerous evolutionary delusions. The so-called counterculture allows those who wish to see themselves as anti-establishment to enthusiastically partake in the Machine religion and its dissociative dreams of artificial immortality. The psychedelic experience itself is more infantilization disguised as divinizing enlightenment, no different from the consumer glued to the screen from which they stream the latest Disney show, or the hero of *2001* becoming a baby floating in a bright space-bubble.

Clarke, Kubrick, McKenna, and Leary all correspond to second-phase Weston, the secularist who has found the technology-driven spiritual narrative by which they may justify the re-introduction of occult concepts of apotheosis. The tech-deification story has even been given a Christian presentation, through the influential work of Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin, who made spiritualized evolution rather

than Christ the center of the "new religion…an improved Christianity" that he hoped to establish.[51] Even more so than the beliefs of the aforementioned figures, Weston's conviction that creative evolution is a spiritual process with the goal of "a final vortex of self-thinking, self-originating activity" nearly perfectly predicts the concept that Teilhard called "the Omega Point"[52] [53] (which Terence McKenna took direct inspiration from, admiringly recognizing that Teilhard was "crafty enough in his Jesuitical way" to use Christian language to popularize radical ideas no different than his own psychedelic eschatology).[54] When Lewis eventually read Teilhard's *The Phenomenon of Man*, published over a decade after *Perelandra*, he called it "a radically bad book" and "pantheistic-biolatrous waffle."[55]

Teilhard's concept of the emerging "noosphere" describes "a planetary neo-envelope," the biosphere linked with "an autonomous circulatory, nervous, and finally, cerebral system."[56] A worldwide Dream Machine, another externalized matrix-womb, the worship of technological divinity, justified through fanciful accounts of natural processes. Whether through the veneration of computers, or drugs, or blasphemous appropriations of Christian theology, the Machine appeals to our compromised imagination to pull us into the vortex of its deceptions. While figures like Wells and Harari condition the public to believe that science proves the cosmos and humankind to be devoid of meaning, it is the occultic evolutionary narratives which prime humanity to view its disintegration into the Machine as a spiritual ecstasy, an ascent to godhood. Lewis' novels should serve as a cautionary tale to the real-life would-be prophets of the

Machine science-fiction religion: "what Pantheists falsely hoped of Heaven bad men really received in Hell. They were melted down into their Master…"[57]

## "By Means of Cunning Artifice"

In Kingsnorth's talk "The Coming Transhuman Future," he asks a terrifying question. "The transhumanists tell us they're building God. But what if they're building (whether by accident or by design) His opponent?"[58] In the same talk, he quotes St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, from the same writing that contains the warning about aerial signs of the Antichrist. "The antichrist will reveal before mankind by means of cunning artifice, as in a theatre, a show of astonishing miracles, unexplainable by contemporary science…" If the Man of Sin's miracles are unexplainable by contemporary science, perhaps he will use them to promote a science of the future, a science indistinguishable from magic and (as the saint tells us) revealed to mankind *as if in a theater*.

The religion of the future/the Machine has historical roots that long precede Hollywood science-fiction filmmaking and it is already starting to leave the medium of film behind, gravitating toward technological diversions that are even more schizophrenic in character. Horsley draws on philosopher Brian Rotman to describe the low-intensity DID effects naturally induced by digital technology in general. "Our digital technology does not operate by the rules of 'I,' of individual linear thinking, but by those of 'distributed bio-social phenomena,'…"[59] Of the internet, Kingsnorth writes, "I think of the words we use to describe this interface… the web; the net. I think

these are things designed to trap prey."[60] Yet I believe that glancing slightly backwards in the Satanic scheme, to a recent time when movies in particular represented the cutting edge of technological entertainment, can reveal the devilish fractal logic by which the black oozing technology of Antichrist creeps into the world. Its advance is propelled by an endless cycle of our corrupted imaginations conjuring increasingly deadly technologies and those deadly technologies con-ditioning our imaginations into greater states of corruption, a demonic feedback loop of delusional pride and false creativity.

The research and development arm of Disney is tellingly called "Imagineering," a portmanteau that summarizes the dynamics of the Dream Machine. A global entertainment empire, which has spent a century (precisely one hundred years this fall) building a brand associated with both enchantment and futurism and now owns virtually every culturally relevant cinematic franchise, proudly advertising its goal of engineering our imaginations. The title of the Kingsnorth essay from which I just quoted is the ominous phrase "You Are Harvest." Horsley's diagnosis of the goal of the Hollywood superculture is almost identical - "shaping and directing the collective dreaming mind by harvesting the energy of our rapt attentions. We are being farmed."[61] Our incessant deification of self has led us to bow down before the imagineering powers of the Dream Machine. All of this is building to the eventual emergence of an individual, the final Antichrist, the last celebrity, a man who will be in perfect sinister harmony with the Machine. As with any practice of devotion to celebrity, his followers

taking his mark will be an act of worship directed toward both him and themselves.

While not every component of the religion of the Machine is reducible to science-fiction, at its foundation this religion *is* a science-fiction story, a delusion about technology that stretches back to the Tower of Babel (that hideous strength!), the lie that through technological innovation we can collapse the Creator/created distinction. Neither human imagination nor technology may be wholly irredeemable but the potential of digital technologies to manipulate our imaginations and fracture our self of sense may by the portal through which the infrastructure of hell is emerging onto the earth. Whether this will finally look like an advancement of VR (or AR) technology, or literal pods in which we must live where we will be given bugs to eat, or some yet unforeseen technological abomination, the Machine will promise the false wonder of permanent gratification, encasing us in bubbles of dull and sinful ecstasy for demons to feed upon. Thinking one more time to *2001*, the tech-spirits being conjured look less like HAL-9000 trying to kill Bowman and more like the unseen entities' successful transformation of Bowman into the 'Star Child.' It is a Machine not meant to annihilate us or even to replace us but rather to engulf us, to put every human that it can into a permanent state of tortured debasement, where the image of God within us can be maximally defiled and every passion that has haunted mankind since the fall can be automated and amplified.[62]

Those who become the bricks of the new Babel - simultaneously the Machine's constructors, batteries, and products – will experience what Terence McKenna called "dreaming awake at the end time" and find it to

be a waking nightmare before the end of the age. We cannot know how close we are to that true ending, but we can recognize the infernal machinery of Antichrist when we see it, the matrix-womb of the Whore of Babylon. I can end only by first circling back to the wisdom of Seraphim Rose and then turning to scripture itself. From Father Seraphim - "It is later than you think! Hasten, therefore, to do the work of God."[63] And Revelation 18:4, "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.'"

[1] Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future* (Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1979), 72.
[2] Ibid., 70.
[3] Ibid., 71.
[4] Ibid., 75.
[5] Gideon Lewis-Kraus, "How the Pentagon Started Taking U.F.O.s Seriously," The New Yorker (2021). https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/05/10/how-the-pentagon-started-taking-ufos-seriously
[6] St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, *Of Miracles and Signs* (1870).
[7] Paul Kingsnorth, "The Cross and the Machine," First Things (2021).
[8] Paul Kingsnorth, "The Green Grace," (2021). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/the-green-grace

[9] Paul Kingsnorth, "Blanched Sun, Blinded Man" (2021). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/blanched-sun-blinded-man

[10] Ibid.

[11] Paul Kingsnorth, "You Are Harvest," (2021). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/you-are-harvest

[12] Paul Kingsnorth, "Down the River," (2022). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/down-the-river

[13] Paul Kingsnorth, "God in the Age of Iron," (2022). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/god-in-the-age-of-iron

[14] Paul Kingsnorth, "The Migration of the Holy," (2022). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/the-migration-of-the-holy

[15] Kingsnorth, "Age of Iron."

[16] Jasun Horsley, 16 Maps of Hell: The Unraveling of Hollywood Superculture (Auticulture, 2020), xxiii.

[17] Ibid., xxii.

[18] Ibid., 20.

[19] Ibid., 123 – 127.

[20] Ibid., 346.

[21] Plato, *Republic*, Book X.

[22] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book III.

[23] Horsley, *16 Maps*, 63.

[24] Ibid., 69.

[25] Ibid., 300.

[26] Paul Kingsnorth, "Do What Thou Wilt," (2021). https://paulkingsnorth.substack.com/p/do-what-thou-wilt

[27] Ibid.

[28] Kingsnorth, "Migration of the Holy."

[29] Horsley, *16 Maps*, 439.

[30] Ibid., 441. Horsley's analysis of the womb-like and darkly maternal nature of these artificial dream worlds is an important argument that I lack the space to properly

treat in this essay. A longer version of this piece would explore in-depth the relationship between anti-human technology and the worship of the dark mother goddess. The phrase "the technology of Antichrist" in my subtitle is partially inspired by the subtitle of Horsley's forthcoming book, *Big Mother: The Technology of Evil*.

[31] "Directors' 100 Greatest Films of All Time" https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound/directors-100-greatest-films-all-time

[32] "Stanley Kubrick on the meaning of the ending of 2001 in a rare 1980 interview" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=er_o82OMlNM

[33] Diana Walsh Pasulka, American Cosmic: UFOs, Religion, Technology (2019).

[34] "All Time Domestic Box Office" https://www.the-numbers.com/box-office-records/domestic/all-movies/cumulative/all-time

[35] Horsley, *16 Maps*, 315.

[36] HG Wells, The Open Conspiracy (1928), (The New World Order (1940).

[37] "Read Yuval Harari's blistering warning to Davos in full," World Economic Forum https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/yuval-hararis-warning-davos-speech-future-predications/

[38] Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* (2018).

[39] Brian Merchant, "The First Scientific Utopia Still Matters 400 Years Later" (2020). https://onezero.medium.com/the-first-scientific-utopia-still-matters-400-years-later-395d1bb3184a

[40] Alexander Dugin, "The Manifesto of Great Awakening. Against Great Reset." https://katehon.com/en/article/manifesto-great-awakening-against-great-reset

[41] CS Lewis, *Perelandra* (1943).

[42] CS Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), 37.

[43] CS Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (1945). Joe R. Christopher "C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy" Mythlore (2010).

[44] Lewis, *Perelandra*, 78.

[45] Ibid., 80.

[46] "Terence McKenna ~ Apes Shouting At The Monolith ~ May 1990" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p_ei5LPIZI

[47] Terence Mckenna, "Dreaming Awake at the End of Time" (1998). https://www.organism.earth/library/document/dreaming-awake-at-the-end-of-time

[48] "The Future Is Virtual (Terence McKenna VR Documentary)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXEj666l-rs

[49] Psychedelics and Virtual Reality – "Turn On, Boot Up, And Jack In" https://chemical-collective.com/blog/psychedelics-and-virtual-reality-turn-on-boot-up-and-jack-in/

[50] Timothy Leary, *Exo-Psychology: A Manual on The Use of the Nervous System According to the Instructions of the Manufacturers* (1977).

[51] Matthew Ehret, "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's Transhumanism and the Cult of the Fourth Industrial Revolution" https://matthewehret.substack.com/p/pierre-teilhard-de-chardins-transhumanism

[52] Lewis, *Perelandra*, 79.

[53] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (1955).

[54] Terence Mckenna, "Permitting Smart People to Hope" (1994). https://www.organism.earth/library/document/permitting-smart-people-to-hope

55 John G. West, "Darwin in the Dock: C.S. Lewis's Doubts about the Creative Power of Natural Selection" (2013). https://evolutionnews.org/2013/11/darwin_in_the_d_2/
56 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man* (1964).
57 Lewis, Perelandra, 148.
58 ""THE COMING TRANSHUMAN FUTURE" - Live Talk with Author Paul Kingsnorth"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ns3ICVVVWVs
59 Jasun Horsley, *The Kubrickon: The Cult of Kubrick, Attention Capture, and the Inception of AI* (Aeon Books, 2022) 144-145.
60 Kingsnorth, "You Are Harvest"
61 Horsley, *16 Maps*, 61.
62 The horrifying artwork of the occult-inspired HR Giger is perhaps the best prediction we have of what such a fate would look like, in its sinister erotic depictions of human flesh blended with technology.
https://www.hrgiger.com/
63 Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Fr. Seraphim Rose: His Life and Works* (2003).