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#### EDUCATION:

A.B., Philosophy, University of California at Berkeley, 1964

B.D., University of Chicago, the Divinity School, 1967

M.A., University of Chicago, the Divinity School, 1968

Ph.D., University of Chicago, the Divinity School, 1972

[My Philosophical Profile follows this section]

#### Philosophy Courses Offered by Dennis Outwater (in parenthesis: topic or subtitle)

Phil 260: Philosophy of Religion (Demythologization)

Phil 311: Phil of Nature (“panology”)

Phil 350: Phil of Sex, Love, and Marriage (theory and phenomenon of the anima)

Phil 250: Social and Political Philosophy (transcending Right and Left)

Phil 514: Advanced Topics in Phil (office hour meetings and term paper)

Phil 421: Profiles in Philosophy: Nietzsche (life and thought; his gnosticism)

Phil 255: Science, Myth and Society (the cultural wheel; creation and evolution)

Phil 253: Phil of America (Jefferson, Lincoln, Emerson, Thoreau)

Phil 414: Profiles in Philosophy: Freud and Jung

Phil 414: Profiles in Philosophy: Thoreau

#### Schedule of Courses Offered [tentative]:

Fall 07: FS 157A: Social Ethics: Slamedd [Sex, Love, Addiction, Marriage,  
Education, Divorce, and Death] TuTh 11:30-12:45

Phil 421A: Profiles in Philosophy: Nietzsche TuTh 2:30-3:45

Phil 255A: Science, Myth and Society TuTh 4-5:15

[Office hours: TuTh 1-2:30: Hat time: TuTh 5:15 on; MWF by apt.]

Spring 08: on sabbatical [“Grand Canyon Panology”]

Fall 08: Phil 250: Social and Political Philosophy

Phil 311: Philosophy of Nature

Spring 09: Phil 260: Philosophy of Religion

Phil 350: Philosophy of Sex, Love, and Marriage

Phil 514: Advanced Topics in Philosophy

The Syllabus of each course will be posted on the Blackboard or available in my office a few weeks before the beginning of the coming semester. If I am not there, ask the Departmental Secretary to retrieve a syllabus from my desk in room P2 of the sixth floor of One Bowdoin. My phone is 617.573.8238 or 978.500.6850 (cell).

Syllabi of these courses are ever changing, as my ideas and experiences change. I have never been one to teach out of a once-and-for all syllabus, which can become a straightjacket, and, frankly, what we achieve in class depends on the students as much as it does on me. However, periodically I will post new course descriptions, if I have them, on the Phil Dept. bulletin board. I have permanently forsworn textbooks.

I use student journals as the major source of grading and evaluation of student thoughts, as well as “presentational papers” during the course. Learning is a continual dialogue, a classroom without walls, as it were, and not the prompting and gearing up for examinations. At least, that is how it should be in philosophy. The journals give the students the opportunity, in a low-judgmental context, to tell me their own thoughts about what they have heard from me and the other students and about what they are reading. I use within class a battery of personal stories and jokes, all with a philosophical point.

PHILOSOPHICAL PROFILE: [warning: R rated]

I started my undergraduate study in physics, specifically in a nuclear engineering program at Berkeley. After three years of differential calculus, advanced physics, and chemistry, one night I picked up a used book called “*Retreat to Reality*,” written by an obscure existential philosopher residing in the bowel of Manhattan, one Dudley Zuver. I read the book throughout the night and the next morning decided that I had to become a philosopher.

Apparently it occurred to me that there was more explosive power, albeit of a different sort, locked up in the human psyche than what resides in the nucleus of the atom. After all, the term “atom” was introduced to the Western world by Democritus, and it meant a unit of philosophical analysis, part of *logos*, and not a piece of *physis*, the material world. I learned then and there that humans tend to project psychic concerns onto the material world, and their unconsciousness about this projective tendency leads to much of their confusion throughout history. I began to learn that the psyche, originally a philosophical term, and the material world are incommensurables, necessitating what the philosophers would call an “ontological dualism.” This runs counter to our unconscious proclivity to seek a monism, instigated by Judaeo-Christian monotheism. Although we daily experience the mind “causing” the body to act according to our decisions, still we experience the two as incommensurables (the “I E experience”). Mind does not feel like body, or body like mind. And we seem to live both in mind and body, but not in a way such that we can mentally collapse one into the other. I arrived at this notion as early as high school, when I began reading Kant and thinking about “the Kantian dualism.”

At Chicago I petitioned for a multidisciplinary graduate-degree program, one featuring the history of religion, philosophy of religion, depth psychology and existential literature. Beyond courses in the Committee of Social Thought and my Divinity School courses, broken into six different fields, terminating in comprehensive examinations 12 hours in length, I was also able to arrange some “training analysis” in analytical psychology, under the Jungian analyst, June Singer, and work as a psychiatric nurse at

Illinois State Psychiatric Institute, part of a termination paper on schizophrenia. I also tried my hand with social work and basketball coaching, the latter under the rubric of Jessie Jackson's Operation Breadbasket, working with the gang called The Blackstone Rangers. Officially my degree in 1972 was in philosophy and psychology of religion, not your conventional field for an aspiring philosopher. I chose this path self-consciously because of my distaste for the positivism of conventional philosophy as taught at Berkeley, rather than from any residual religious convictions.

Intellectually, I was strongly influenced by Norman Perrin in Biblical hermeneutics, Peter Homans, Bruno Bettelheim, David Bakan, and James Hillman in psychology of religion, Paul Ricoeur and Paul Tillich in philosophy, and Mircea Eliade, under who I took my Ph.D. exams, in history of religion. I was introduced to the subject of ancient Gnosticism by Robert Grant. All this interdisciplinary study accounts for the delay in my writing, for my attempt to go beyond conventional philosophy requires a broad account of the philosophy of history and serious concern for the interplay of "the two cultures"—science and the humanities-- as C.P. Snow highlighted in his Rede lecture way back in 1959. My early attempt at a broad conceptual history was my dissertation, completed in 1972 and entitled "The Problem of Evil: A Comparison of Theological and Depth-Psychological Perspectives." Major conceptions underlying that attempt are now returning in my projected trilogy on gnosticism and demythologization, but in a much more critical way. In philosophy time has a way of mitigating all deficiencies.

Eric Voegelin introduced the notion that modernity substantially equates with "gnosticism," in the Winter Quarter, 1951 Walgreen lectures at the University of Chicago. I was unaware of this intellectual strain at Chicago [see the Voegelin/Leo Strauss letters and the latter's interest in Islamic gnosticism] and in my early years of teaching and studying; indeed, even Microsoft Word is programmed against the notion, always changing the "g" to "G" when one uses the term "gnosticism," as if it were only an ancient Christian heresy.

However, slowly through my teaching and under the influence of the changing nature of academia in America, I was pushed toward the experience of a gnostic culture, which now becomes the focus of my late-life efforts, at 65 years of age, to write of Voegelin's notion and give it a more comprehensive defense than, I believe, Voegelin was able to do. It is obvious to me now that most liberals have become secular gnostics.

There presently is much confusion of what constitutes gnosticism, how the term should be used, and against what should the term be contrasted. In my courses I use the term as a comprehensive notion ("the gnostic complex") to describe the main demonic dynamic of present world history. Gnostics consider good that which, from all other perspectives would be considered evil, and they consider evil that which would be called good, i.e., they are inveterate antinomians. They consider themselves to have broken through to an intimate understand of Self, the latter which, if they are secular, they identify with Ego, or, if religious, Self is identified with God. In either case they claim to have transcended the usual philosophical self-criticalness and any thorough-going epistemological considerations. They also convert sexuality to sadomasochistic experience reaching for the penetration of taboos, a perverted "will-to-power."

Given this form of "cultural megalomania," gnostics see the world as fundamentally evil, often identifying "world" with USA or global capitalism, and hence they are profoundly anti-American. They create a mythical world-view fulfilling their

own psychic needs, one oblivious to the facts of nature and history. It is as if they *have to be anti-American*, regardless of all the good things America does in the world. America carries for them a heavy symbolic baggage, that which is projected into America by their own psychic need to be alone in, and above, the world. Gnostics speak a re-mythicized language, not a realistic one; tragically, they are unaware of this fact.

I have deemed gnosticism to be a form of “re-mythicization,” and the latter (REMI) to be the overall cultural/historical trend of late modernity. Some have called this “the revival of the archaic,” and most of those who write about this think of “the archaic” and gnosticism as a good thing. I most definitely disagree. Also, Mircea Eliade disagreed.

It seems to me that the two world wars and their aftermath, the Cold War and the War on Terror (on Jhadists), were and are wars against versions of modern gnosticism. When this perspective is taken, the question arises to what extent has gnosticism grown in our own culture, and if the answer is “substantially,” then what are the consequences? My research and thinking orientate around these concerns. So do my courses.

#### TEACHING:

Two simultaneous changes in American culture have been underway since I started teaching (Fall, 1969), changes that started with the rise of an American counterculture in the 1960s. I first noticed the phenomenal reverence offered to JFK, before and after his Presidency. I began to notice a shift toward public opinion dominated by liberal universities and the careers of their graduates in the media. I now realized that America had, in JFK [that is, the media’s distorted view of him], its first gnostic or semi-gnostic president. Kennedy (and, indeed, the Kennedy family) provoked a media/university cult, one so strong that pro-Kennedy followers were unable to see that he brought upon himself his own assassination (I was unable to see that at the time and believed in a CIA setup). I was not part of the Kennedy hysteria, perhaps because I grew up in Los Angeles (which has its own stars and starlets from another area of our culture—which is the way one can understand the significance of Marilyn Monroe singing happy birthday to JFK. The “knowing power” of the charismatic—one of three forms of modern authority, according to Max Weber—has a natural affinity for crime, for the lives of the “wise guys.” Criminality, on all levels, is aligned with gnosticism.

I remember, however, that all of us at Berkeley believed in an “Establishment” which was the embodiment of “evil.” The 60s film, “The Graduate,” capsulated this counter-cultural feeling. None of us were prepared to become part of a new Establishment, what I now call “the gnostic Left of the tenured radicals.” The 60s counterculture conformed our education to ideology, without our consciousness of such. So it was not surprising that the evangelical charisma of our peanut-farmer president, Jimmy Carter, and the boyish charisma of our empathetic/sexually harassing/sax man president, Bill Clinton, were embraced by the liberal Democratic Party, which had succumbed to gnostic persuasion as they were fighting against Nixon and Reagan.

The country was experiencing the rise of a “junk culture of gnosticism,” especially in the area of politics and academia, one in which charismatic figures were creating a “re-mythicized” world view unbeknownst to their followers and uncritically embraced by their media/university colleagues. This was the beginning of the “star

system” of professors, usually called “university professors,” not encumbered by departmental concerns, and never specializing in traditional disciplines. Administrators discovered that it was good for the bottom line and good public relations to create and embrace such star professors, thereby justifying their accelerated salaries and reduced teaching loads (often to zero hours). The university lecture circuit rather than the classroom became their main vehicle of aggrandizement, often accompanied by the media talk show and correspondent interview.

I began to realize, through my teaching experience, that the students wanted some sort of magnetic, entertaining figure with who they could attach themselves, rather than a paradigm of analytical ability who they could emulate. Concurrently with this trend went the lowering (leveling, or as Allan Bloom would have it, “the Nietzscheanization of the Left”) of academic interest, of reading the classics, of high intellectual standards.

More and more students were looking for thoughts which directly would make themselves feel better or superior, rather than feeling the latter indirectly because they were learning truths about the world and developing competencies. As we all know, increasingly students who never considered college because they had no fire in the belly for learning were now matriculating at universities throughout the country for social and economic reasons, but also with a high intolerance for politically incorrect expressions. It was the mutual reinforcement of these two cultural trends—the junk cultural leveling and the political remythification of gnosticism—that became a challenging reality for me and my academic career.

To put it bluntly, the idea that America is still fundamentally racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, and imperialistic—the heart of the University curriculum—is one politicized super-myth, a bundling of a series of untruths used to maintain a certain political coalition of voting groups (sexist for young women, racist for blacks and Chicanos, homophobic for gays, etc.) And it is supported by administrators who know better, but who have concluded that such a super-myth pulls in more students than would otherwise find the University attractive. These privileged students (all except bright white kids) receive a discounted education, and the sham pleases everyone except the old-fashioned liberals turned neo-conservative. For anyone who senses this, take a look at the output of the National Association of Scholars, a group of very successful professor who now deplore what is going on in their institutions and come together to discuss it.

So, the civil rights movement [starting with SNCC at Berkeley in the early 60s] became transformed into affirmative action quotas and black-power ideologies coupled with terrorist tactics. The “underground” psychic needs are now bubbling up in the Democratic Party’s Far Left, producing a hysterical attack on the eminently sensible “Bush Doctrine.” Likewise, equity feminism took on gender-“feminist” ideologies about patriarchy, driven by these same gnostic needs. Extreme irrationalities became the norm.

The literary critic Leslie Fiedler noticed this trend and announced some time ago that professors had to learn that they were in the entertainment business, rather than that of scholars who teach. At first I deplored this statement, but I have had to admit that it had to be faced. Once awareness of this trend is achieved, effective classroom communication breaks apart into two approaches and goals: either we take advantage of the students’ need for a leader who tells them how to think, positioning ourselves as a charismatic leader to whom the emotionally thirsty student can identify—this is the course upon which one becomes a “star” professor. Or, we teach them to think for

themselves and to be critical of what they hear from their teachers, a course which will anger some and make things much more difficult for all students.

If the majority of professors in any school take the first approach, then those who choose the second approach inevitably will receive numerous student complaints of political incorrectness. These are induced by the process of identification insinuating itself into what should be the process of learning. This gnostic “will to power” from the Left may not be conscious to them, but the results witness to the hostility that inevitably underlies the complaints. That is the sole reason to characterize the “politically incorrect” as taking one or more “hateful views.” But bluntly, such charges are simple psychological projection onto “the other” of that which oneself is guilty.

The evocation of identification produces an “identity politics” of a highly intrusive nature. The student caught in this trap responds instinctively and emotionally to any criticism or major disagreement with her views; such response always reaches for total denunciation based on emotion: “that is *totally* ridiculous!” What is not clearly understood, by both sides, is how much such a phenomenon undercuts all education. All aspects of the university now engage in the resultant turmoil. Those opposed to such turmoil have no choice but to criticize the following notions: affirmative action, which is defamatory; the quest for racial “diversity,” based on intellectual conformity; that of consequent grade inflation, a cover for lowering of standards; and student evaluations, a device to con the students, which encouraging their anti-intellectual equation of the good professor with the one who gives them As. For the universities have renounced their historical task of cultural critic and embraced their role in making sure that the young participate in a political movement in the “known” desirable direction [leftward], as they increasingly act like demanding customers.

I can always be sure that at least one or two students in every class have taken the class in order “to get the politically incorrect professor,” as if they were, at 18 or 21 years of age on a higher intellectual level. Often I can spot them at once, and when I look over the courses they have taken, they predominantly have taken “identity politics courses.” They are not sent into my classroom, just pointed in my direction by their intrusive gnostic professors who cannot understand how anyone could be a full professor and a conservative of any sort.

This pandering of students for the sake of the Democratic Party has made me, who was raised a Democrat, now sympathetic toward the Republicans, in spite of the fact that the role that evangelicals play in the latter party harbors a form of religious gnosticism equally to be deplored. I cannot accept a religion based on myth, ritual, and revelation, and such religion always intends to alter a secular democracy toward eschatological expectations. So when I formulate arguments against gay marriage and Roe abortion rights, I deplore any reference to religious convictions, as well as deploring the stereotyping of views from the Right, as if they had to be based on religion. But that hardly pushes myself Leftward, where the same anti-intellectualism now flourishes.

I learned over the years that humans also project their political notions onto the outside world of culture, so that they are primarily unconscious of their politicization (there are, as with all generalizations, significant exceptions). I am the advisor of the Suffolk GOP students, and their venue is the only place where I hear overt political discussion, because some of them are more liberal and some less; elsewhere, the political

gradient and dominant philosophical presuppositions go without discussion, as if they constituted the very water within which they swim.

Considerable faculty are comfortable preaching to the choir or slighting their courses so that conservative students have an uphill battle. This is what my students tell me, over and over, even though I lean over backwards not to favor conservatives. Some of these elderly liberal professors are honest enough to admit that they are one-sided because liberals are much more intelligent than conservatives, hence are more dominant at the University. They mean by “intelligent” what Daniel Dennett calls “brights,” which is synonymous with what I call gnostic pseudo-intellectuals. Such brights seem bright only in contrast to evangelicals, against which they have focused their attention and animus.

However, even though liberals are indeed more intelligent than the straw-man conservative they have in mind, it is also true that secular conservatives are far brighter than almost all liberals. There are two main reasons for this: first, liberals generally are not critical of their secularism, as secular conservatives are of religion, by definition; and second, conservatives have been in the minority since the dawn of the Enlightenment [e.g., compare the popularity of Voltaire to that of Burke], and being in a minority produces considerable suffering, and it is suffering that induces intellect. We begin to think, to really deeply think, only when the environment becomes a problem to us, only when we experience considerable adversity. To survive under adversity requires knowledge, since the majority is always the stronger. Therefore, it behooves any neutral Administration to seek ways to minimize such imbalance and an institutional gradient that favors political correctness. The advance of Western civilization absolutely requires creative “lone wolves,” and the University should be cultivating them.

Our department seems to be an exception to this generalization about universities, at least in recent years. There is considerable effort spent to provide balance and intellectual diversity. However, there are so few conservatives in academia that I still run into stereotyping of me as a political or philosophical “reactionary.” Those who do so could not believe that I teach evolution rather than creation and that most of the Bible consists of elaborately created myths, that religion must give up myth and ritual if it wishes to be effective in the secular world, and that much of contemporary materialism is a good thing, transforming the lowly conditions of human life into something far better.

So conservatives dislike these views as much as do liberals/agnostics of the Left. No matter: philosophy should be about individuation, rather than about group-think, about free speech rather than pursuit of a “just society.” It is the surmounting of liberty in the name of equality and social justice that is the main fault of contemporary institutions of lower education.

Gnostic teachers have to entertain, for they have succeeded in redefining the university from that of delivering a liberal arts education in the context of a sophisticated and competitive society to that of, in the words of Victor Davis Hanson, “one increasingly devoted to inculcating students with the philosophy that past inequalities perpetually create legitimate grievances that in turn deserve ever-expanding compensatory measures.” Such measures are “the payoff,” and when education becomes the simple device to receive such payoffs, there is nothing left but to entertain, as a subtle form of indoctrination. The advertising and entertainment industries learned long ago that in a democracy indoctrination *must* be subtle and indirect. Nowadays, most

Hollywood movies have political goals, as do many TV sitcoms, most talk shows, and most crime stories. Hollywood votes Left because they now have gnostic messages to convey to the unwary public.

Political correctness results from this redefinition of what constitutes education, the latter itself following from the changing nature of our culture, what Bloom calls a “closing of the American mind.” “Correctness” is the dictatorial result of an identity politics of victimization. Ostensibly we all have been victimized by a military industrial complex which produces an imperialistic culture whose basis is the reign of old, white men. Few if any reflect upon what the world would be like if the British and American armies had not been victorious. Fewer still pay attention to what Niall Ferguson correctly calls “imperial denial” and “the imperialism of anti-imperialism” [*Colossus*, p.65].

I, for one, deplore what the modern American university, on the whole, has become. The American university and its “tail,” the mainstream media, are thoroughly anti- or pseudo-intellectual. Imagine majors in “peace and justice”! Or ethnic studies! Why must we make a “discipline” out of everything about which we can identify, rather than about which we can *study*? I respond to this insanity with a request to start a department of “war and injustice,” and those “for peace and justice” have “no clue,” as the students would say, no sense of the sarcastic irony. They simply do not sense the gnostic presumption in the declaration that one is for peace and justice; they simply project their shadow onto those who are politically on the other side, thus making themselves morally superior in their own eyes. They never consider the possibility that to have peace sometimes one must fight. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century they have yet to understand their elementary, deplorable, and embarrassing psychological behavior as projection and denial. The day is coming when a phrase such as “social justice” will take on the overtones of past phrases such as “holy Roman empire” or “third *Reich*” or “classless society.”

I tried telling the Suffolk GBLT about their “safe zone” stickers, and the same lack of elementary awareness takes over. If I don’t place a safe-zone sticker on my door I am deemed “not safe” for gays, the implication therein to their sticker campaign. This is insane. Even if I were to oppose gay marriage, on the basis that cross-genderness is inherent in the nature of “marriage,” such a view does not make me “unsafe” or “dangerous” to gays, and I resent the supposition that it does so. I respond the same way if I argue against affirmative action for African-Americans: that does not make me a racist. If it were to do so, the term “racist” is simply code for “conservative,” which is often the brutal truth. In this way “liberals” (=gnostics) are “in your face,” and all of their “logic” is circularity.

Will we get to the point that if we don’t wear a cancer bracelet or an “I support the troops” ribbon on our cars, then we are for cancer and against our troops?! This pre-emption of what constitutes “hate speech” or “sexual harassment” has no objectivity to it, analogous to a kangaroo court or Kafkaesque trial, and amounts to what Charles Fried calls “socialism of the mind.” It is often the case that when a conservative argues against such socialism of the mind, she is deemed to be creating a “hostile learning environment.” This is tantamount to a confession that “learning” has become shutting off debate and censoring conservatives. The roots of this close-mindedness are a profound anti-intellectualism, addressed by Allan Bloom in this about the University of Chicago:

From the moment I became a student there, it seemed plausible to spend all my time thinking about what I am, a theme that was interesting to me but had never appeared a proper or possible subject of study. In high school...the older boys and girls [understood] the university as part of growing up, but it was not looked forward to as a transforming experience—nor was it so in fact. No one believed that there were serious ends of which we had not heard, or that there was a way of studying our ends and determining their rank order. In short, philosophy was only a word, and literature a form of entertainment [*The Closing of the American Mind*, p. 244].

Today the American Universities are determined to be unserious, in their mix of one-sided politics and entertainment, even if they offer good technical or professional training. Education has been changed, to use Bloom's words, "from the experience of things beautiful to enlightened self-interest." Such conforming [*Gleichschaltung*] to an "enlightened" (gnostic) program has happened in American universities, as it did in Germany in the 1930s, and such could only be the result of a widespread cultural pathology. It is the University's job to be critical of such, not to perpetuate it, extend it (queer "studies," rap and pop music overestimation, gender feminism circularity, diversity work-shops, sex-toys workshops, etc.), and accelerate it. We are now approaching a democracy run by gnostics, "knowers" who no longer need to argue and debate because the nexus of the universities and the media (what I call "the mediaversity") are dominating our elections, governmental policy, and even our scientific research. They "know" their "truths" the way communists and fascists were and are similarly convinced of their superiority.

Fortunately, our Philosophy Department is a place where what use to be called "old fashion liberalism," with its emphasis on the "marketplace of ideas" is encouraged. Our faculty is diverse, intellectually diverse, and I see little attempt to hire on the basis of race, gender, sexual or political affiliations. Diversity should be conceived intellectually rather than racially or ethnically. So students here do get a variety of personalities and perspectives, if they wish to take advantage of such. If you, as a student, find this not to be the case in any way whatsoever, I am a "safe" place to go in order to complain (said facetiously and humorously, given the above). Maybe I also need a sticker for my door, singling me out as personally superior.

Nevertheless, on the whole such liberalism is under attack because of its pro-materialistic basis (hence the marketplace metaphor), whereas gnosticism thrusts away from materialism and toward a "saving" spiritualization. It is my firm conviction that this anti-materialistic bias in favor of spiritualization and the embracing of mythical perspectives on the world is caused by the gnosticism which Voegelin first identified. I do not think the university should be a place teaching such "closed" views, in which materialistic comfort is taken for granted and world affairs are subjected to such spiritualistic condemnation. That is the course embraced by Isalmo-gnostics. Their religion is highly political, and sometimes it is quite obvious that the politics of the Left is also religiously tinged (i.e., not based on reason but on irrational components).

But, embracing the marketplace metaphor, I cannot do more than let the students choose, even if their ability to choose is undercut by these unfortunate cultural trends. Having middle class students from families not part of the meritocracy, on the whole, Suffolk University has an opportunity to convince its students of how little "gnosis" they

and us have in our possession, and how dangerous is the illusion that human fulfillment can come from spiritualistic or political ideologies.

My response to all of this, once I learned the hard way that most students did not care about my fortunate educational influences and broad humanistic learning, and did not want highly structured, detailed lectures delivered from notes—as my own professors all had done—was to postpone my efforts to write and keep up on the minutia of the field, and to add to my experiences that of an entrepreneurial businessman. In 1982 I opened a one-man real estate and land development firm, Perchance Company, within which I devoted my summers and vacations. The results were threefold: I supplemented my meager teaching salary, supplemented my limited personal experience, and I began to move rightward, that is, away from the anti-intellectual, gnostic culture toward something else that, for lack of a word out there, I call “panology.”

I learned what it was like to make a payroll, to be an entrepreneur, to engage in creative financing, to sell one’s product, to learn the US tax code, and to get one’s hands dirty by hard, physical work. If philosophers are going to pronounce upon our country at large, perhaps they should participate more fully in it than university experience allows. To work entirely with students and those who teach students, for a lifetime, must inhibit a full development of the mind, just as to exclusively work with one’s mind and not one’s hands would be one-sided. I use this theme in my classes, calling it that of “the box and the bush conflict.” The bush is nature, the box the office, and gnostics and profoundly anti-nature and for conceiving within the box schemes for remaking human nature,

Panology is, in a sentence, a kind of philosophy of nature (not in the Schellingian sense) that tries to synthesize (not “sublate,” as in Hegel) science and religion into a third whole. This is not an easy synthesis or any synthesis at all: one cannot have religion and science both, unless science drops its positivistic reductionism and religion demythologizes itself, a far cry from what both presently manifest. Panology has nothing to do with paganism—human nature was once understood in a pagan way, then the Christian way, and, perhaps, now in a third way which builds on the other two but does not regress to a pre-scientific world-view. I imagine a coming synthesis of a demythologized religious impulse (what Nietzsche dreamed as a “religion of the earth”) and an anti-positivistic scientific world view, the whole of which needs a new name—hence, “panology,” the reasoning [logos] about a larger whole [pan].

In this panological perspective I draw equally from my academic background, my research, and my experiences in building “nature houses,” architecturally conceived and physically built by myself and by those independent contractors whom I hire. I now am bringing Perchance Company to a close, after 23 years; all that remains of those projects is a book on that experience in the distant future, and a new sense of the importance of nature.

## BOOKS IN PROGRESS

My first book is called *The Junk Culture of Gnosticism: Political Gnosis of the Left and Right*. I describe how and why what was once called “philosophical liberalism” has been transformed into leftist gnosticism. This book has been in progress for ten years, and has

grown into a task requiring a division of effort into three volumes, the first on political gnosticism, the second on intellectual gnosticism, and the third on the version found in psychology and literature. The research for the latter two volumes has been substantially completed, although the literature is voluminous and has to be approached very critically. The first volume is still under construction (as of Fall 08), as I have had to research the source of world-wide terrorism, which is Isalmo-gnosticism, these last two years.

Philosophy, I believe, is an old man's or woman's profession. Race, gender, and sexual orientation play a small role, if any. Age and experience plays the predominate role. Not having to publish or perish, I have been able to develop the themes I am currently discussing in my books within the classrooms. They have been "student tested," which means more to me than that of being vetted by a gnostic culture.

I also hope to do an "interim work," one not involved in history and culture but rather in my personal experiences of hiking the Grand Canyon. Under the influence of the Native American notion that certain places provoke "spirit," what I call "spiritual topography," I have done two things: hiked extensively in such places, divided into that of mountains, canyons, seashore, and plains, and I have tried to build houses, or design houses, fit for such places and for the inculcation of "spirit," redefined by me as "eros-orientated psyche." This book will be called *Grand Canyon Panology*.

Obviously this personal spirit and my intellectual interests merge, for as Nietzsche insists, "All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored..." (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Fourth Part, The Drunken Song, sect. 10). My Nietzsche seminar, naturally, involves the elaboration of the answer to the question: too what extent did Nietzsche succumb to modern gnosticism? To what extent did he move beyond it?

Hopefully, students-to-be of mine are reading this. So I ask them if one can be both a philosopher and a professor of philosophy. Can one both profess it, and do it? Can a student learn another's philosophy and also do it oneself? I insist in my classes that one try to do both. If I were a student, I would not want to take a course from a philosophy professor who was not also personally a philosopher. Most professors are content to talk about philosophers of the past. What about living philosophers? Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century no philosophers were professors. It is wrong to think of philosophy as an esoteric discipline; could it be that such an esoteric identity for the profession is something created by gnosticism, by a pseudo-knowledge from Plato's cave? Why is it that most philosophers write only for other philosophers? Why is the intellectual output of the American Philosophical Association totally ignored by the country at large? Why do American Presidents not have philosophical advisors?

Was Heraclitus right, in Fragment 45, when he said: "If you travel every path, you will not find the limits of the Psyche, so deep is its Logos"? If the first philosopher was right, then gnosticism is the enemy and panology, or something like it, is the antidote. Could it be that philosophers are ignored within our culture because they do not know convincingly who the country's constructive friends are and who are its destructive enemies? Could it be that their sense of superiority and clever word manipulation is off the mark from all that is serious in life? Has not, as Voegelin claimed, philosophy been "derailed"? Today's philosophers generally are professionals; their expertise is no longer a way of life, that of "the good life."

Today's relevancy of these philosophical concerns is apparent: Is the Bush administration offering anything more than oil imperialism coupled with rhetorical

democracy designed to convert Muslim's to a rampant materialism of obesity, pornography, and conspicuous consumption? It looks that way to jhadists, and many on the American Left and Right see it in such a way [America got blamed for 9/11 by both the far Right and Left], and it will look that way to us unless something else is elaborated philosophically. The particular genius of America, as distinct from its wealth and power, needs to be evoked, begs to be elaborated. We need something to fight for, something sustained by reason. It seems we need a "philosophy of America," rather than just more American philosophers.

The war on terror, so called, is primarily a cultural war, a sort of "clash of civilizations." The Left assumes that once America moves Left, the jhadists will negotiate with us; the Right assumes that the insertion of a Judaeo-Christian-tinged democracy in the Middle East will undercut the jhadists. I believe that both assumptions are incorrect, and are dangerous illusions. American democracy offers the maximum of freedom, of that there is no doubt. But personal freedom is for what end? Is freedom an end in itself? Is our freedom to be used for our own destruction? Our junk culture makes us vulnerable to our enemies; many no longer want to be like Americans, even if they enter our country illegally for solely economic reasons.

The gnostic vision is that of unlimited freedom, freedom from the confines of nature and of this planet. I teach my students that the entire world must tend to the cultural war between gnosticism and its antidote, because both of these dangerous assumptions come from gnosticism. To do so, to get on this level, both the old-time religions and the secular quasi-religion of leftist gnosticism, must be criticized and transformed. This is what I teach and what I am about.

Although my classes can be very entertaining, so I have been told, and I spend a lot of extra time with the students, there is nothing easy about my classes. Many students find that after they graduate, they are not at all done with my thoughts or with me as a person. Education is a life-time endeavor, and cannot be measured in grades, courses, and degrees. I mentor many graduates because my job is also my way of life.