

Alterity or Antimodernism: A Response to Versluis

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Arthur Versluis's "Antimodernism" is a thoughtful effort aimed at characterizing and classifying many antimodernist figures and movements. Although he concentrates mostly upon the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe and North America, Versluis also glances toward religious resistances in Africa and Asia to find additional supportive evidence in Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. His moves here are minor, but he does try to connect his claims to many non-Western and Western incidents of antimodernist resistance to modernity. In many ways, this essay is useful, and there are valuable insights to be taken away from this study. Still, Versluis's approach also has shortcomings, and this brief response seeks to add additional texture to his analysis of antimodernism.

Whether one recalls the work of Thomas More, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edmund Burke, John Ruskin, Karl Marx, William Morris, Martin Heidegger, Theodor Adorno, or Lewis Mumford, it is not difficult to find individuals and ideologies that affirm the main point advanced by Versluis at the outset of his analysis, namely, "antimodernism is fundamental to the creative impulse in modernity. Modern industrial society in its very nature calls forth antimodernism in the creative individual." As More suggests, and then Rousseau seconds long before Marx says it outright, modernity has much more to do with the advent of market rationality, commodified social relations, private property, and global capitalist interests.¹ The cre-

1. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1996); Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1989); Ben Agger, *Fast Capitalism* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989).

ative destruction of capitalism has all too often been displaced, mystified, or confused with vague terms like “modernity,” “progress,” or “technological-industrial development.”

Once such rarefied misspecification is accepted, too many critics address the specific practical paradoxes of power with vague philosophical arguments about humanity versus technology, progress versus tradition, or modernism versus antimodernism.² Versluis makes the same mistake, as he twists and turns through these same mazes, only to find that Ted Kaczynski (a.k.a. “The Unabomber”) is today’s great exemplar of radical antimodernism. The essential significance of antimodernism is how it contributes theories and practices of alterity to contemporary struggles. Overall, the Unabomber completely failed at that task, but many antimodernists do not. Consequently, one must consider a few implications of antimodernist thinking and action.

Before taking on antimodernism, however, what is “modernity”? This point is important to put Versluis’s assessment of modernity, antimodernity, postmodernity, and hypermodernity in perspective. The project of modernity, which conventionally has been regarded as that condition or state produced by the workings of modernization, has been connected critically to increasing the range of personal choice for individuals and groups in human affairs.³ Arrayed against “tradition,” which often imposed rules to constrict tightly those very personal choices by acts of religious and/or aristocratic authority, modernity is seen as that point, moment, or condition at which human beings gain more rational control over their lives by coming to manage their economy, society, and technology through allegedly autonomous choices.⁴ As one popular social scientific assessment of modernity in the 1960s asserted, modernization takes root “when

2. Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983).

3. See, for example: David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (London: Harvester Wheatsleaf, 1993); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978); C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959); Peter Taylor, *The Way the Modern World Works* (New York: Wiley, 1996).

4. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1980); Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984); and Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*.

a culture embodies an attitude of inquiry and questioning about how men make choices—moral (or normative), social (or structural), and personal (or behavioral). The problem of choice is central for modern man. . . . To be modern means to see life as alternatives, preferences, and choices.”⁵

Making such personal rational choices implies attaining greater levels of instrumental rationality, accepting disputation about alternatives, acquiring command over complex technologies, and administering stocks of natural resources.⁶ Economy, government, and society are reimagined in far more technical terms, which underscores the salience of multiple conflicting systems for making choices, and then seeing a myriad of conflicts among choices made between differing systems.⁷ Yet modernization also has been treated as an extended social transformation: it has required militant struggle against resistant traditions and all of their many embedded feudal, religious, or communal legacies of real choicelessness. Once the ambit of possible choice is expanded, and the confining constraints of aristocratic authority, enduring poverty, dynastic privilege, or repressive religiosity are lessened, modernity supposedly “wins” and tradition “loses.”⁸ Yet once modernity is left working by itself, the terrains of everyday life also allegedly shift significantly as they slide into the much less definite dimensions of “postmodernity.” While Versluis suggests this notion is an artifact of the twentieth century’s closing years, it actually has been floating around for much longer.⁹

Postmodernist doubts arose when the collective purposes of modernization—which historically pitted the promise of democracy, affluence, equality, and reason against the ragged realities of aristocracy, poverty, privilege, and religion—became far more diffuse as the bastions of tradition

5. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, p. 10.

6. See Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991); Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*; and Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto.”

7. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1992); Liah Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001).

8. Giovanni Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1978).

9. Ronald Diebert, *Parchment, Printing and Hypermedia: Communication in World Order Transformation* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997); Don Ihde, *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990).

were overcome.¹⁰ Evincing individual choice against collective predestination is a heroic struggle; yet it arguably was won in many places around the world by the end of the twentieth century.¹¹ Defining and determining which new choices should be made over and above other less constrained choices is then much more difficult. As early as 1959, C. Wright Mills already saw these indefinite ambiguities of existence beyond modernity as the quandaries of “the post-modern.”¹²

With the triumph of technology over nature, the secular over the sacred, and affluence over poverty, Mills admitted modernization had improved life for some privileged individuals and groups quite significantly. Still, science “it turns out, is not a technological Second Coming. That its techniques and its rationality are given a central place in a society does not mean men live reasonably and without myth, fraud, and superstition.”¹³ Indeed, as he surveyed “the *post-modern* climax” of modernity, Mills saw the historical forces of progressive change bogging down, or even collapsing. This unexpected event horizon in enlightenment, in turn, is what becomes most characteristic of contemporary life as the privileging of technoscience allows the liberty of decision-making, culture-creation, and choice-elaboration to become centralized in professional-technical elites. Postmodernity is “the collapse of the expectations of the Enlightenment, that reason and freedom would come to prevail in as paramount forces in human history.”¹⁴

Much like Mills, Lyotard two decades later during 1979 also suggests modernity’s grandest narratives of progressive change arose from the Enlightenment. They once clad most of Western capitalist society’s economic, political, and social practices in fables of reason and freedom, but they no longer convincingly prevail in postmodernity. Instead, a more crass ceaseless search for performance and profit is the essence of today’s postmodern condition. As Lyotard argues, the growth-driven capitalist agenda in modernizing change “continues to take place without leading to the realization of any of these dreams of emancipation.”¹⁵ With little trust in metanarrative legitimation or the once canonical narratives of truth, enlightenment, or progress anchoring modernity, the sciences and technol-

10. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

11. See Jameson, *Postmodernism*; Taylor, *The Way the Modern World Works*.

12. Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, pp. 178–94.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

15. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 39.

ogies behind big business slip into “another language game, in which the goal is no longer truth, but performativity—that is, the best possible input/output equation.”¹⁶ Jameson claims that these persistent advances toward greater performativity in postmodernity also spin forth “a new social system beyond classical capitalism,” proliferating through “the world space of multinational capital.”¹⁷ This system carries a new globalist ideology, which implodes, in turn, older national strategies of capital accumulation and state administration that were patched together in various industrial welfare states in the century stretching from the 1880s through the 1980s. Against this backdrop, Mills’s fears about “the post-modern” from 1959 and Lyotard’s vision of performativity from 1979 anchor “the New World Order” of the 2000s, as more spatial barriers, many natural constraints, and most time zones continue collapsing under the accelerated forms of life generated by transnational businesses’ sped-up routines of commodity production and consumption.¹⁸ Instrumental rationality is the core of technoscientific lifeworlds, but humanity does not, as Mills predicted, “live reasonably.”

Once unreasonable expectations, such as this constant quest for greater performativity, are accepted broadly, government and business “abandon the idealist and humanist narratives of legitimation in order to justify the new goal: in the discourse of today’s financial backers of research, the only credible goal is power. Scientists, technicians, and instruments are purchased not to find truth, but to augment power.”¹⁹ Building new commercial empires out of both material and immaterial reality, new transnational enterprises and geoeconomic superpowers fulfill Lyotard’s prophecies about “the postmodern condition” by gaining greater control over both Nature and Society. That is, “knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major—perhaps *the* major—stake in the worldwide competition for power.”²⁰ In fact, the struggles over digital codes, sign values, and physical assets, intranationally and transnationally, confirms how completely the many residents of nation-states now fight for “control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials

16. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

17. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp. 59, 54.

18. Timothy W. Luke, *Capitalism, Democracy, and Ecology: Departing from Marx* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1999).

19. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 46.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

and cheap labor.”²¹ The commercial nexus at the core of modernity never gets lost in postmodernity, even though myth, fraud, and superstition can become more rife. The commodity can become more local, more national, or more global, but it always “is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange.”²²

Modernity, therefore, represents all those changes flowing from the commercialization of society when the production and consumption of commodities in more and more markets becomes the dominant economic activity.²³ This project is constantly opposed by the forces of tradition, by the working classes, and by the peasantry where one still exists.²⁴ Their resistance expresses itself in a hostility to markets, new technologies, and commercial values. Nevertheless, up to some critical conjuncture, modern institutions and values continue to be created by modernization as new groups from modern capitalist classes typically experiment with more pluralistic, democratic, and individualized forms of life appropriate to these urban-industrial civil societies. What began as processes of urbanization, rationalization, secularization, industrialization, and commercialization culminate in structures that are urbanized, rationalized, secularized, industrialized, and commercialized, even though pluralism, democracy, and individuality might not be valued at all amidst postmodern or hypermodern doubts.²⁵

Hypermodernity becomes an issue when these allegedly uniform universals of modernization come under question for not favoring diversity, difference, and divergence.²⁶ Rather than being a “break,” or “crisis,” or “rupture” in modernity, postmodernization is basically another “turn” in

21. Ibid., p. 5.

22. Ibid., p. 4.

23. Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981).

24. Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: The New Press, 1998).

25. Richard Falk, *Predatory Globalization: A Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999); Mitchell M. Dean, *Government: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999); Michael Hardt and Tony Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000).

26. Much of this discussion draws from Timothy W. Luke, “Postmodern Geopolitics,” in *A Companion to Political Geography*, ed. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell, and Gerard Toal (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 219–35; and Luke, “Codes, Collectives, and Commodities: Rethinking Global Cities as Metalogistical Spaces,” in *Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in a Digital Age*, ed. Linda Krause and Patrice Petro (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2003), pp. 157–74.

the existing routines of modernized being. In accord with the consumption of commodities as a way of everyday life, postmodernity, like many markets, rejects closed structures, fixed meaning, and rigid order in favor of chaos, incompleteness, and uncertainty. Likewise, a politics that repudiates fixed territories, sacred spaces, and hard boundaries in favor of unstable flows, secularized practices, and permeable borders can also come into play. Even so, hypermodernity clearly is not a new social order, but rather it evolves as a systemic adaptation of capitalist exchange itself to the production and reproduction of an almost totally commercialized way of life on a transnational scale.²⁷

Endless choices between many different empowering, enriching, or edifying alternatives bring people into hypermodern conditions in which a “risk society,” resting upon the production and distribution of material satisfactions, emerges from shaky systems of objects.²⁸ Almost all of these choices now are defined and controlled by networks of professional-technical elites who work and live in a few sheltered comfortable places, even though the discomfiting effects of their efforts are felt more in many particular places by those who cannot easily affect how the choices are identified or made.²⁹ On hypermodern political terrains, ordinary processes of democratic legitimation fail, because modern industrial revolutions with all of their profitable products and toxic by-products are mystified in the highly technified economic actions of the risk society. Each always “remains shielded from the demands of democratic legitimation by its own character” inasmuch as “it is *neither politics nor non-politics*, but a third entity: economically guided action in pursuit of interests.”³⁰ Because of property rights and expert prerogatives, most of the occupants in this performative system of systems have yet to realize fully how “the structuring of the future takes place indirectly and unrecognizably in research laboratories and executive suites, not in parliament or in political parties. Everyone else—even the most responsible and best informed people in politics and science—more or less lives off the crumbs of information that fall from the tables of technological sub-politics.”³¹ Antimodern critics, as

27. David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006).

28. Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London: Verso, 1996); Ulrich Beck, *The Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992).

29. Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann, *The Global Trap: Globalization and the Assault on Democracy and Prosperity* (London: Zed Press, 1998).

30. Beck, *The Risk Society*, p. 222.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

a result, cannot neglect the technoscientific momentum of such systems, since their machinic imperatives now cause so much planned and unintended destruction around the world.

This new hypermodern condition appears to be one that persists, if it has not become permanent.³² If the modernization process is complete, and the Nature/Tradition/Status/Privilege of premodernity are gone for good, then coming to terms with what is then regarded as the Society/Reason/Contract/Equality of modernity without stable structures to capture and maintain advancement makes antimodernist politics in hypermodernity an ever-present challenge. After the Industrial Revolution, nowhere in the world holds out against machines: high technology is almost everywhere. After the two world wars, few places around the world hold on to traditional formulas of authority: liberal democracy is spreading nearly everywhere. After the Cold War, nowhere in the world seriously holds forth as a real alternative to the market: corporate capitalism is practically everywhere. Only a truly critical theory can unravel how these forces interact with antimodernists in what appears to be “hypermodernity.”

Plainly, antimodernism, as Versluis suggests, “is not going to disappear. It cannot, because, as we have seen, it is bound up intimately, indissolubly, with modernity itself.” Yet, it goes too far to say that all antimodernism, as Versluis continues, “is conservative in impulse” and that its “adherents seek cultural and religious stability, and gradual rather than sudden socio-economic change.” Some antimodernist voices, like T. S. Eliot, Lord Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Thomas Molnar, Henry David Thoreau, Orestes Brownson, or John Ruskin, espouse an antimodernism that it is not that of Noam Chomsky, Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio, or Herbert Marcuse. Ted Kaczynski’s “Unabomber Manifesto,” moreover, is both anti-leftist and anti-rightist with its own odd antemodernist flavor.³³ Yet, it seems mistaken to reduce all antimodernism to conservatism, and conservatism to Burkean beliefs about cultural propriety, religious stability, and gradual change.

Of course, it is crucial to keep in mind the distinctions between violent and non-violent antimodernism. Violence does tend to provoke a more repressive reactionary response, and nonviolence in antimodernist

32. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

33. Tim Luke, “Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto,” *Telos* 107 (Spring 1996): 87–110.

critiques may well “point us toward a higher vision, one that calls us to preserve what is best and most meaningful in human life.” Nonetheless, these terms and their manner of implementation are not themselves uncontroversial. What Thomas Molnar regards as humanity’s highest vision is not necessarily the same position pushed by Sayyid Qutb. Likewise, T. S. Eliot’s sense about what is best and most meaningful in human life is not the same as that espoused by Ted Kaczynski. Predicting that some antimodernists from all across the left-right ideological spectrum will ally together in an antimodern form, as Versluis does, commits a strategic fallacy. Antimodern enemies of the enemy of modernism do not necessarily become even allies, or more clearly, friends. Versluis’s predictions of modern antimodern violence are perhaps becoming true, but much of this violence remains small-scale, sporadic, and senseless rather than colossal, continuous, and comprehensible. The antics of the Earth Liberation Front are a good case in point. Torching an SUV here or a ski chalet there gets them on the news, but these tactics hardly threaten industrial civilization.

The emergence of autonomous, separatist communities from antimodernism goes back to the House Amish, hippie communards, green back-to-the-landers, New Age autonomists, urban anarchist punks, and traditionalist Catholicism. As Versluis notes, “Virtually all of these communities have at least some antimodernist elements within them, and new ones will continue to emerge that show antimodernist origins and impulses.” Still, the “parallel nation” of many American religious paleoconservatives, with all of their home schooling, survivalist militias, alternative media, and sometimes racialist radicalism, tends to rely on techno-fixes and industrial cornucopianism as much, if not more than, the secular humanist modernism they allegedly oppose.³⁴ Moreover, a religious antimodern renaissance arguably has been afoot since the eighteenth century in the many and varied counter-Enlightenment religious awakenings in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other revealed religions, both large and small. Yet here, too, it is not clear that the most significant streams in antimodernism are religious ones.

Antimodernism, instead, is a complex normative disposition, and its varieties, once one examines the complexities, are far more diverse than simply “hard” or “soft” antimodernism. Likewise, dissatisfaction with modernity, along with the styles of resistance to modernism, are more variegated than the reformism or escapism attributed to “soft antimodernism”

34. Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

by Versluis or the tactics of opposition from within or without, abandonment of rejection, and direct attack that he finds in “hard antimodernism.” Of course, the substantive basis of antimodernism can arise from aesthetic distaste, ecological outrage, economic anxiety, ethical doubt, political disempowerment, or social disruption, and all of these reactions can have sacred or secular origins. To be antimodernist is to stand against modernism and modernity, but how and why any individual or group resists modernism is arguably far more nuanced than simply being “against” modernity. As Versluis indicates, the modern is also what is taken to be contemporary, current, and commonplace during any given time. So how its currency is doubted, why its commonplaces are questioned, and who reimagines the contemporaneous does count.³⁵ Playing off of his examination of antimodernism, it is therefore instructive to consider how different, complex, and antagonistic resistances “against” modernism might be.

Antimodernism over the past two centuries is important “because it is . . . a fundamental theme implicit or explicit within the works of many major figures” during the modern era. Versluis here glimpses at Thoreau, Ruskin, Morris, Eliot, Rilke, and Yeats, but he then chooses strangely to focus on minor characters, like Ted Kaczynski, Patrick Buchanan, and Paul Weyrich, to carry much of this argument. Indeed, he begins by noting how expansively Herbert Marcuse’s vision of “one-dimensionality” captures contemporary antimodernism, but then he ratchets that insight down to a close reading of Kaczynski’s meandering antimodernist manifesto and the felonious misadventures of the Earth Liberation Front. One should sense here that Versluis’s appraisal of antimodernism actually requires far more effort. Plainly, Ted Kaczynski, John Zerzan, Lord Chesterton, John Ruskin, Herbert Marcuse, and Rainer Maria Rilke are antimodernists, but they are not all of the same stripe. His own examples provide some leeway for underscoring this point. Antimodern figures like John Ruskin, Orestes Brownson, T. S. Eliot or René Guénon clearly are proponents, in fact, of an “antemodern” form of life. For them, those places and times where and when the modern did not prevail all represent the crystallizations of a cultural being well-worth preserving, if they can be found, or revivifying, if they can be recovered. Being against the modern, then, requires us to move toward something like what is imagined to be what was commonplace before the modern, with all of its one-dimensional woes.

35. William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

Similarly, the antimodernism of individuals like John Zerzan, Ted Kaczynski, or even Edward Abbey is more of an “abmodernist” moment. That is, getting away from, doing away with, or being away and apart from modern ways of existence captures their aggressive stance against the modern. Whether one looks at Zerzan’s future primitivists, Kaczynski’s backwoods simplicities, or Abbey’s cowboy insurgents, antimodernism for them is basically abmodern in all of its aspirations. The criminal misadventures of antiabortion activist Eric Rudolph or anonymous Earth Liberation Front ecoraiders provide further support for understanding the agendas of such abmodernist direct action tactics as instances of how to move away from what is.

Such abmodern antimodernism stands in sharp contrast to the “anamodernism” of many anarchist, socialist, or Marxist oppositions to modernity. Their careful critique of capitalist commodification, private property, and class exploitation usually offers a purportedly fresh modernist politics with a spiritual newness, moving upward, against, and out of an older corrupt modernity mired in vestiges of superstition, tradition, and privilege. Anamodernist movements of renewal typically fizzle out in small-scale futility or tragically rehearse, on a large scale, the ravages of the modernization from which they meant to move upward in their pursuit of some grander liberatory outcome. Nonetheless, their stands against the modern usually embrace modernity in order to force it upward and outward toward new rational moments of personal fulfillment.

Likewise, antimodernism simply can be “amodern.” William Morris, J. R. R. Tolkien, or even Lewis Mumford stand against modern commercialism, industrialism, and urbanism by espousing the merits of being without modern qualities at all. Whether it is soft modernism, subworld escapism, or *engagé* aestheticism, amodernists imagine how other qualities of life pitched in other systems of substantive reason can be pitted against modernity’s universalizing quantitative productivism and instrumental rationality. Versluis dismisses such efforts as tenders for illusory escapism rather than programs for authentic change, but their material engagement with labor, property, and exchange often have had more quiddity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than he admits.

Obviously, the embeddedness of modernity makes antimodernism—cultural, economic, political, and religious—a constant feature in everyday modern life. Hence, antimodernism in many respects can never perhaps attain the full measure of its amodern, anamodern, abmodern, or antemodern dreams. Instead the antimodern is almost unavoidably an

“altermodernism,” or another complex domain of modernity continuously created and renewed across a broad spectrum of individual and group grievances. No one single altermodernist figure can claim total victory; yet all of their many altermodernizing projects produce visions of “anotherness.” And, the elsewhere promised by this anotherness spins up essential drivers for modernity’s incessant transformations of thought and action through the exchange of ideas, flow of goods, and movement of people.

To conclude, these reconsiderations of antimodernism’s nuances only underscore Versluis’s summary, namely, “the antimodernists do have important things to tell us.” Versluis also asserts that the “strongest and most enduring forms of antimodernism—both the most destructive and the most hopeful—are explicitly religious.” There is some evidence to back his claims, but there is just as much, or even far more, support for the obverse case in favor of secular antimodern resistances.

As Latour maintains, the disposition of divinity in modernity has been oddly misspecified for centuries as Society and Nature philosophically have crowded God offstage. As modernity “crossed out” God from Nature/Society equations, “his transcendence distanced him infinitely, so that he disturbed neither the free play of nature nor that of society, but the right was nevertheless reserved to appeal to that transcendence in case of conflict between the laws of Nature and those of Society.”³⁶ Versluis, in his essay, tends repeatedly to exercise those reserved rights for God. Indeed, his “Antimodernism” ultimately points out these powers of God to antimodernists working to defend Nature or Society in accordance with their critique of modernity. Even so, Versluis goes too far under the banners of this crossed-out God to say explicitly that secular antimodernism is not as strong and enduring as religious resistances. Instead the nuances of antimodernism, to which this response has sought to give greater weight, point toward the strong and enduring “altermodernism” of all antimodernism. Whether they tout antemodern, abmodern, anamodern, or amodern alternatives, antimodernists merit respect, because they continue the all-important critique of the modern society “in which we live in order to call us toward a better one.” Whether sacred or secular, antimodernists deserve to be heard, because modernity itself ironically often guarantees that antimodernism of one sort or another sometimes will be heeded.

36. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, p. 33.