After a decade and a half of leftist political control, 2018 saw a remarkable shift of power in Brazil. Out went the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Worker's Party; hereafter PT) and its candidate, Fernando Haddad, and in came Jair Bolsonaro. This change is impressive: just some years ago, who would have imagined that the country of Lula, one of the most influential leaders of the past decade, would swing so rapidly and sharply to the right? Indeed, no one could imagine—at least outside of Brazil—that Lula would soon be in prison. That Brazilians grew weary of the PT is understandable, as Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment in 2016 showed. Still, a hardline conservative in the presidency in such a short time is noteworthy.

Rightism is not the only thing that marks the new presidency. There is an important second factor. Not long after the confirmation of his election, Bolsonaro named Ernesto Araújo as his Minister of Foreign Affairs. Araújo’s name was recommended to Bolsonaro by Olavo de Carvalho (b. 1947), a philosopher and political thinker who resides in Virginia. Bolsonaro also accepted a second recommendation from Carvalho—Ricardo Vélez-Rodríguez, a Colombian-born Brazilian academic, to the job of Minister of Education. Even after Vélez’s downfall in early April, Bolsonaro accepted yet another name associated with Carvalho and Abraham Weintraub, a student of Carvalho, became the new Minister of Education.
Since Bolsonaro’s election, articles have been written on Olavo de Carvalho (or just Olavo, as Brazilians call him) on almost a daily basis, so much so that it is hard to keep pace with the volume of material on him. He claims, however, that these ministerial indications are meaningless to him. In early January, for instance, the Brazilian edition of Yahoo News published a list of Carvalho-influenced names in the new administration. The international media have also noted his influence on the new administration. America’s Quarterly, the publication of the Council of the Americas, an international organization founded by David Rockefeller, published an interview with Carvalho by Brian Winter. The Economist also noted Carvalho’s importance in Minister Araújo’s recommendation, who, in turn, in the pages of The New Criterion, ranked Carvalho as one of the reasons for the rise of a new right-wing movement in Brazil. However, it seems that as a whole, Carvalho’s appearances in foreign—and especially in American—media have been confined to marginal or obscure publications, especially of a conservative or right-wing bent.

If Carvalho sounds like a novelty in the Brazilian or international press, he is by no means a newcomer to the intellectual scene. His career as an intellectual began in the late 1970s as a journalist. In the late 1980s, he taught independent courses and published brochures of limited circulation on comparative religions, symbolism, and traditional metaphysics. In the following decades, he rose to national prominence publishing books on Aristotle (Aristóteles em Nova Perspectiva [Aristotle in new perspective]), cultural criticism (O Imbecil Coletico [The collective imbecile]), political science (O Jardim das Aflições [The garden of affections]), general topics of philosophy (A Filosofia e Seu Inverso [Philosophy and its contrary]), Machiavelli and Descartes (Maquiavel; ou, A Confusão Demoníaca [Machiavelli; or, The demonic confusion] and Visões de Descartes [Visions of Descartes]). Carvalho is also a best-selling author: his O Mínimo Que Você Precisa Saber para Não Ser um Idiota [The least you need to know not to be an idiot] (2013) has sold more than 500,000 copies—a remarkable sum, in Brazilian standards. O Imbecil Coletico recently had its
eighth edition released. During the 2000s, Carvalho was a syndicated columnist, writing for some of Brazil’s major newspapers and magazines, such as Época, O Globo, Jornal do Brasil, etc. He is by no means a new figure on the intellectual scene of Brazil.

Apart from a brief period during the early 2000s when he taught at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná in Southern Brazil, Carvalho has no formal links with the academic world, neither in formation nor in teaching. While in a broader sense this has not prevented him from receiving national and international praise (noted cosmologist Wolfgang Smith, Romania’s former Foreign Affairs Minister Andrei Pleșu, and professors Martin Pagnan and Jodi Bruhn are among those who have lauded his work), Carvalho’s independent status as a researcher arouses much criticism from the Brazilian academic establishment, where the tradition of the public intellectual has long since waned. Moreover, his theoretical framework, drawing influences from classical Greek philosophy and scholasticism, and research interests (political gnosticism, the influence of the “revolutionary mentality” in modern politics, etc.), is in sharp opposition to the Brazilian academic and ideological tradition: since the 1960s, European philosophy—especially of the French and/or Frankfurtian breed—has dominated Brazilian humanities. Additionally, the trauma of the military regime in Brazil (1964–1985) made most intellectuals uncomfortable with, if not prejudiced against, right-wing authors such as Carvalho.

As stated above, his writings range several subjects, from astrological symbolism to cultural criticism. Calling this essay an “introduction” to his thought would be self-aggrandizing. What I want to do here, in addition to making a general assessment of Carvalho’s thought, is to inquire into an important question about Carvalho’s position on the world’s political scene. Carvalho’s thought is heavily associated with the new Bolsonaro administration. In fact, political commentators, such as Brian Winter are prone to label Carvalho as “Bolsonaro’s guru” because of the number of ministers and aides who have association, to a greater or lesser degree, with Carvalho. President Bolsonaro has
acknowledged him as an influence: in fact, he had *O Mínimo* on his desk, beside a biography of Winston Churchill, as he gave his first speech as president-elect. There are, however, reasons to deny that Carvalho is Bolsonaro’s ideological guru, despite the number of students in the new administration and despite President Bolsonaro’s open gratitude to him (and, finally, despite Bolsonaro’s invitation to Carvalho to be one of his ministers). More importantly, it is easy to associate Carvalho’s popularity with the newfound Brazilian love for issues associated with rightism, such as moral conservatism, religiosity, and the free market; these issues are part of the policies of the Bolsonaro administration. So the question is: Can we consider Jair Bolsonaro’s presidency Olavo de Carvalho’s political philosophy in practice?

Before answering this, I need to illustrate what Carvalho thinks. This is important because, as I stated, there are misrepresentations of Carvalho’s activities and because an academically oriented introduction to Carvalho’s thought in English has not been done yet.

I have divided this essay into three parts. First, we see the philosophical principles of Carvalho’s thought, as well as his methodology. In the second part, we see these principles at play in his political thought. This second part is divided into three subsections: an introduction to Carvalho’s political philosophy, a description of his Greater Theory of the Empires, and a description of his Lesser Theory of the Empires. Finally, in the conclusion, I try to answer the question just laid out.

For brevity’s sake, written sources are given more weight here; therefore, I avoid quoting the prodigious—and ever-growing—amount of video material of his available on the Internet. My main sources are his books, his articles, and his 2011 debate with Aleksander Dugin. This restricts me because Carvalho asserts that the most important part of his thoughts was exposed only in his classes and in his still unpublished books. I have also limited the scope of this essay to the general tenants of his political philosophy, so I will not deal with his “idiosyncratic” reading of Aristotle from *Aristóteles em Nova Perspectiva* or with his polemics against
Brazilian culture from the *Imbecil Coletivo* books and *O Mínimo*. These deserve standalone studies.

**Mystical Philosopher**

The first aspect of Carvalho’s thought is its “mystical” nature. Carvalho is a mystical philosopher in the sense that Eric Voegelin was also one, that is, a contemplative who delves into the depths of his own soul against the confusion of the In-Between, the place where we, fallen humans, dwell. If “the polis is man writ large,” man is also his own polis, his cosmos, where he recreates, integrally, the anxieties of the In-Between. In the conclusion of his *A Nova Era e a Revolução Cultural* [The New Age and the cultural revolution], Carvalho states the importance of the independence of individual thought. As a disbeliever of the relativity of truth, he claims that, in order to be able to see reality, the individual consciousness must be “kept clean,” without ideological filters. This is not to say that the philosopher needs to hold a fantastic “neutrality.” What it means is that he must avoid using ideologies, especially of a revolutionary kind, as a crutch to read the world. The individual mind must be free in its quest for the illuminated ground. “I am profoundly convinced that, in reality,” Carvalho says, “only individual thought has any objective validity, for there is no truth but to the reflecting consciousness, and consciousness does not exist anywhere else but inside the individual.”

This is extremely difficult, since after the Fall man has ontological limitations in his interior. That is a “clouded intelligence,” as he says (Carvalho is prone to using analogies and metaphors). The quest for the illuminated ground is also a quest for transcendence. This means that man, through objective understanding, must try to heal himself. But what is this understanding? What is this knowledge? This might evoke tinges of Gnosticism because it seems to imply that Carvalho thinks that intellect alone is enough for man to reach his salvation.

How does Carvalho’s understanding of knowledge differ from that of the Gnostics? Carvalho understands philosophy as “the search for the unity of knowledge in the unity of consciousness,
and vice versa.” This is akin to Voegelin’s distinction of the human desire to know (and acknowledging this desire remits us to Aristotle) and the assumption that the obtaining of knowledge is something static (like the infusion of the Holy Spirit inside our souls is, for instance). Carvalho, as a mystic philosopher, uses the symbol of the “search,” as if philosophy were an adventure in which the philosopher can get into dead ends, dark woods, and the like. Voegelin, as Eugene Webb observes, also distinguishes episteme from gnosis. Webb defines the latter as a kind of knowledge that bypasses “the need for critical reflection.” Bypassing critical reflection is certainly not what Carvalho does; his is a theoretical activity in the original sense that the etymon of that word, theoria, implies. And theoria is “the reflective illumination of [the] experienced movement of transcendence.” What is more, a gnostic-oriented thought would imply a system—both of thought and of the world as a whole. However, Carvalho not only says he is yet to offer a systematization of his own work (in fact his ever-evolving philosophy has led to a repudiation of most of his Traditionalist output of the 1980s) but also eschews the idea of saying how the world should work. Rather, thanks to a deep historically oriented thought, he chooses to “solve” life problems through philosophy. “If you want to adopt philosophy as an intellectual discipline,” he says, “make sure you already have a good scientific and humanistic culture (especially literary and historic culture).” He opts for the adventure of trying to stay on the illuminated ground.

As the symbolism of the search in Carvalho’s quote implies, the life of the philosopher is not static, but dynamic. The search for the unity of knowledge in the unity of consciousness is also the struggle for light, for illumination. Just as a Catholic tries to keep himself in a state of grace despite sin lurking just around the corner, the philosopher must try to keep himself in the illumined area of existence while bearing in mind that there will be times in which he will not be able to keep with this (here one invariably will recall Plato’s Phaedrus, 256a–257a). There will be times of confusion, of misunderstanding. In addition, there will be times in which
he will understand through a pneumatic, intuitive insight, but language will fail him, and the truth of the philosopher will be trapped inside himself, in an inarticulate area of his consciousness—and consciousness, as we have just seen, “does not exist anywhere else but inside the individual.” But then the responsibility falls on the philosopher to articulate and fortify his ideas—not because they are his own, but because they, if they are mature, might be good, and true, and might point toward the illuminated ground of existence (and it is plain to see that Voegelin’s “illuminated ground” of existence is Carvalho’s striving for “unity of consciousness”). More importantly, it is the philosopher’s responsibility to turn his pneumatic insight into noetic insights. Only Gnostics and gnostics think that pneumatic insights are enough to acquire for oneself, and maintain his space in, the illuminated ground. On this, Carvalho writes, “Nowadays, people treat their opinions as if they were pets, substitutes for human affection. Mine, on the other hand, I treat with bread and water, Swedish gymnastics, and constant whipping. This leads many of my opinions to languish till death. … I keep those that survive.”

**Politics, Geopolitics, and Spirituality**

The mystical nature of Carvalho’s thought leads him into a transcendent, metamaterialistic view of the world, history, and politics. This kind of Weltanschauung is not uncommon to religiously influenced thinkers, such as the aforementioned Eric Voegelin or Christopher Dawson, who, in “Easter 1909, as he stood at the Ara Coeli in Rome … believed God gave him a vision of all times and places at once.” This means that the nature of history and of political agents is not confined to merely materialistic, historicist views and causes; in short, class struggle is not the engine of history. There is a deeper meaning to man’s actions, even if the historic or political agents themselves are not aware of it. For instance, Carvalho stresses that it is important that political philosophers study miracles and their importance in philosophy. He himself considers the Fatima apparitions as one of the pivotal moments in modern political thought.
Carvalho gives his political cosmology in *O Jardim das Aflições* and in his online debate with Aleksandr Dugin, but this cosmology stems from a previous idea: that human existence has a spiritual and divine unity. For Carvalho, man’s existence is based on a divine ground of primal experiences that are then symbolized. For instance, morality and ethics have their ground in this divine principle, and it is this that gives them their objective value. It is man’s quest to imitate the archetype of all creation (viz., God) that gives morality any meaning whatsoever. Carvalho notes that within Christianity, the divine character of morality and ethics has a special place, given that, traditionally, the Christian world is “a moral-friendly environment for self-examination, to inward austerity, to make the individual aware of knowing what is the right thing to do, even when no one is looking. For two thousand years, an environment like this was created and sustained by the Christian practice of ‘examination of conscience.’”

Because there is a divine character to which the individual models his actions, there is also a divine model or ground on which states and political activities are based. “The polis is man writ large,” says Plato, and if Christ is the True Man upon whom we must model our activities, then there is a True State to which all states intuitively try to model their activities and dimensions, even if they are not aware of that. Following this conclusion, Carvalho draws a picture of the crisis of the modern state as being initiated when man trades his archetype of the City of God for the City of Man—quite literally, because, to him, as we shall see below, the great struggle of Western politics is to recreate Rome. This quest, however, is doomed to fail, because what man needs for such a project, is the True Man, the Second Adam, in his heart.

Like Dawson and Voegelin, Carvalho gives broad importance to the religious and spiritual aspects of existence. But unlike Dawson, who studied the formative phases of the European political imaginary, Carvalho grounds himself in modern politics and culture—especially their disintegration and decadence, with special emphasis on what he calls “revolutionary mentality,” a phenomenon that emerges in late eighteenth-, early
nineteenth-century Europe like a time bomb that explodes concretely in the Communist movements of the twentieth century.

**Greater Theory of the Empires**

As far as his published writings go, Carvalho has given the basic tenets of his political thought, notwithstanding the vast number of newspaper articles on the issue he has published, in two works: *O Jardim das Aflições* (politics and geopolitics from a historic standpoint) and in his online debate with Dugin (current macropolitics and geopolitics). Also, in *Jardim*, Carvalho gives us what I call his Greater Theory of the Empires. “In all certainty,” says Carvalho, “Western political history might be easily summarized as the history of the struggles for the right of succeeding the Roman Empire. … The Roman Empire seems to float over the Western mind like the ghost of an illustrious departed who refuses to die; of someone who, acting over the spirit of the living with a subconscious obsession, possesses their lives as if they were tools for his own resurrection.”

This is an original thesis, and a rather unconventional one. But if the reader is paying attention, it is clear what Carvalho is aiming at. We have just seen that Carvalho is a kind of realist, so archetypes are of importance here. Rome is the archetype, and man intuitively follows this archetype.

The continuing influence of the imperial idea inaugurated with Rome will taint all of Caesar’s successors with a kind of *libido dominandi* that will be the trademark of the major politicians, monarchs, and dictators of all centuries after the fall of Rome. For Carvalho, this is a defining characteristic of the Western mind. But why Rome? What does Rome represent? The Roman Empire, “an almost fatal evolution of a Republic where a duality of powers—civil and military—aroused, for centuries, a forced unification [of the two of them],” acted, during its time, as a gravity center, a political power with a divine kernel, represented by the emperor, the Sol Invictus.

During its splendor, and even during its numerous crises, Rome was the unifying structure of the various kingdoms and
communities that it dominated. As Carvalho points out in the quotation above, the Roman Empire was the “almost fatal” union of its military and spiritual powers, and its imperial right to dominate and to have various satellites orbiting around it was an immanent one, derived from this spiritual capacity. And because the Roman emperor was the heir of Sol Invictus, this mysterious but intelligent god, there was nothing within its powers it could not assimilate—including other gods.

When Rome fell, the West became an orphan of this super imperial power. By then Roman Catholicism had become the dominant religion in the West and had developed distinct characteristics from its Oriental counterpart. God and His Church floated without their armed hand, and from this political gap, in Carvalho’s view, emerges the successive efforts to fill Rome’s shoes and achieve the central status that the great Empire once had. Carvalho gives the name *translatio imperii* to this phenomenon after the medieval symbol for the transference of powers.\(^{28}\)

Charlemagne makes the first *translantio imperii*. Then there was the Holy Roman Empire, which was “conceived to attend to two objectives: to be the armed wing of the Church and to unify under a single central government the Christian kingdoms, or at least the Western Christian kingdoms. It accomplished neither.”\(^{29}\) Even though, for Carvalho, the Holy Roman Empire’s mission was nothing beyond “a project, or, worse yet, a farce [*comédia]*,” it marked a second *translatio imperii*, from Franks to Germans.

Because this project bore no fruits, the Church spent a long time—“a thousand years”\(^{30}\)—trying to form its own empire, to revive the majesty and influence of the late imperial Rome with Western princes and monarchs. During this period a problem becomes clear: the new Western political situation lacks the military–spiritual unity and harmony that old Rome had. In this new scheme, sometimes Temporal Power rebels against Spiritual Authority (a distinction Carvalho gets from René Guénon),\(^{31}\) and the latter cannot control the former *in continuum*—even though the discipline of the Church insists that all temporal power derives from God (i.e., from Spiritual Authority). As time moves
on and there are new revolutions in thought, especially after the Middle Ages, the West goes headfirst into an increasingly immanentist worldview and furthers its rebellion against Spiritual Authority. In Carvalho’s analysis—directly influenced by the readings of Dawson’s *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (1950) and *The Making of Europe* (1932), this rebellion against the Spiritual Authority that the Church embodies has a false resolution with Henry VIII, Caesar’s first (but parodic) resurrection after Rome’s fall. He states this explicitly in this striking passage:

> With Sir Thomas [More’s] head rolling on the floor, the doors of time swung around the hinges, closing an era: the project of unifying Europe under a same Catholic Empire died with its last martyr. The founding of the first national church marks a radical metamorphosis of the idea of “empire” and signals the true start of the modern age. Stealing the keys of the Kingdom [of Heaven] from the Pope, the chief of state self-anoints himself as the direct representative of God. With Henry VIII, it is Caesar who comes back to the throne, draped around priestly prerogatives. The age-old dualism [of military and divinity] is solved through the absorption of the Church within the Empire.

In *O Jardim das Aflições*, Olavo de Carvalho states very clearly that Henry VIII is, politically speaking, the true father of the modern state—if not in its formality, but at least in a certain ontological sense. “Henry is the true founder of the idea of a self-sacralized state, an idea that will inspire, later, Hegel and Robespierre, Napoleon and Comte.” After Henry and the founding of the Anglican Church, we are, according to Carvalho, just a step away from the Civil Religion. After the end of the Age of Discoveries, during which the great European powers tried to extend—in the time span of an idyllic, tropical interlude—their imperial powers to the quasi-Edenic stage of the New World,
comes the French Revolution, drenched in the blood of nuns, priests, and common men. For Carvalho, it could not be any different: “When the monarchic powers of all nations follow the lead of a delusional murderer [i.e., Henry VIII] who stole Christ’s own crown, what else could we expect? The modern state was born from a demonic farce [farsa].”

After the Revolution and Napoleon, the world will see one more *translatio imperii*. Only this time the Empire will cross Mare Oceanum to dwell in the United States. This underlines a remarkable change in the form of the embodiment of the Empire. The crescent immanentization of human thought, the desacralization of time, space, and life, the compartmentalization of the Western mind and the growth of Civil Religion will give rise to what Carvalho calls the “Beadle State,” rampant with surveillance, with paranoia, with a distinct penchant for saying what is allowed and what is not, and with the imperialistic desire to mold the world to its image and likeness. The distinctive mark of this new skin of the Empire will be democracy. But how can the monarchic—or divine-monarchic—nature of the idea of the Empire coexist with the popular demands of democracy?

In this latter incarnation of the Empire, and of modern politics, “the progressive democratization of political institutions will go hand in hand with the incalculable growth of the influence of secret organizations, overall secret twentieth-century state organizations; this will neutralize democracy’s effects.” This is the Empire of the laic state, when the state is so immanentized—and, at the same time, so divinized—that it is bigger than religion itself and can pass judgment on it. Carvalho sees here an arguable influence of esotericism and esoteric circles, which, bypassing traditional, organized religion, can illuminate itself so mightily that it sees itself apt to reduce religion to a matter of individual taste that should not interfere with or dictate state affairs. The state now is a symbolic figure of the world, much as religion was, and, according to Carvalho, this new god is a jealous and ever-increasing god, with its own laws carved in stone (in the American case, the Constitution).
Lesser Theory of the Empires

Unfortunately, much of the development of the Greater Theory of the Empire is in *O Jardim das Aflições*. Despite its more recent re-publication in 2015, Carvalho made no substantial revisions to the main text of the book; the biggest addition to it is an interview with the author, appended as a postscript, made by Silvio Grimaldo.37 There Carvalho claims the vision of America he maintains in *Jardim* is mistaken. “At the time I wrote this book,” he says,

the US culture I knew was only that which is exported through American mainstream media and publishing market. That is to say, all I knew was the “official” culture. So the idea that came to me was that of the Politically Correct Empire, of an Empire created under Masonic inspiration, with the idea of neutralizing religious differences by means of the laic state—a non-partisan state that, because of its non-partisanship, is able to solve these differences. … However, when I moved to the US, I began to realize that there is an entire local culture that is not exported to the world and, notwithstanding its local vigor, has no voice in the world and thus is practically unknown abroad. Here I refer to the American conservative and Christian culture, which, to my great surprise, is much more vigorous than I could have foreseen.38

Carvalho’s reevaluation of his concept of America results in his description of his Lesser Theory of the Empires, which is disclosed in condensed but valuable fashion in his debate with Aleksander Dugin. It is to this theory that Carvalho has devoted most of his time in the past years, either in written articles or in his lectures, and this is the theory that has proven to be influential on the Brazilian political scene and that influences Minister Araújo and the Bolsonaro administration to a certain degree.

Above all, Carvalho grounds the Lesser Theory of the Empires in a different methodology from that of traditional geopolitics, which he finds archaic and wanting, because the “figures that the
practitioner of [old-fashioned] geopolitics projects on the map, with the names of nations, states, empires, power zones, etc., [give] the impression that these entities act and constitute the true characters of history,” while they are actually “only the crystallized result of the actions of much deeper and more durable historical forces.”39 And what forces are these? Who are the players, the real historical agents, that Carvalho believes control the imperial forces of today?

In Carvalho’s view, a historical agent must fulfill three requirements: (1) It must “nurture permanent or long-term objectives”; (2) “Be capable of continuing the pursuit of these objectives beyond the lifespan of its individual agents, beyond the duration of the present state of affairs, and beyond the duration of even the states, nations and empires involved”; and (3) “Be capable, therefore, of reproducing individual agents able to continue the action through the centuries and to adapt the original plans to the different situations that may emerge without losing view of the initial goals.”40 This narrows the spectrum down to five “entities,” as he refers to them. They are (1) the great universal religions, (2) initiatory and esoteric organizations, (3) royal and noble dynasties and similar entities, (4) ideologically revolutionary movements and parties, and (5) spiritual agents: God, angels, and demons.41 Because Carvalho maintains that nations and states cannot be, in themselves, true historical agents,42 then it follows that in his political philosophy and geopolitics the actions of political agents do not necessarily coincide with the political borders as marked in maps; today’s Empire might be trans- or supranational.

Carvalho identifies three projects of global dominance. There is no doubt, to him, that the idea of globalism, of world government, is not only true, but viable, and is now in progress.43 Unlike his interlocutor, who is Vladimir Putin’s court philosopher, we cannot identify in Carvalho any partisanship, which is not surprising because as we have seen above, individuality and the preservation of the individual are essential to the philosophic activity and to the objectivization of truth. Therefore, Carvalho, unlike Dugin, plays no part in any of the three projects he describes.44
The three projects are (1) the Eurasian, (2) the Islamic, and (3) the Western (“sometimes mistakenly called “Anglo-American”). Except for the first one, these projects do not coincide with the physical borders of the regions from which they come. I will describe them in order of complexity, from the simplest to the most complex. Therefore, I will present the Islamic project first, then the Eurasian, and, finally, the Western (or metacapitalist) project.

The Islamic Project

One of the major agents of the Islamic globalist project is the Muslim Brotherhood, which Carvalho refers as a “transnational organization: it governs some countries and in others it is the political opposition party, but its influence is omnipresent in the Islamic world.” Its declared project, according to Carvalho, is to spread the Universal Caliphate across the globe, after Sayyid Qutb’s reading of the concepts of dār al-Islām and dār al-ḥarb. Carvalho notes that while there are some states in which the Muslim Brotherhood might be in opposition to the state, in others it might be the very government, its “influence is omnipresent” in the Islamic world.

The Eurasian Project

This is the only project that is directly linked with traditional politics and a central government. Additionally, this is the project that, because of its announced aims, is the most “believable” of them, in the sense that is the easiest to translate into the language of mainstream, nonacademic media. What is more, it is also the most misused and misunderstood of the three.

Because of the theoretical framework of its creator, the aforementioned Aleksander Dugin, it is common to mistake the Eurasian globalist project for a totalitarian, right-wing project of government. This is due to a textbook-minded thought, the same kind of thought that makes the reading of the modern Marxist praxis difficult (see below), an error that pervades many of the unfortunately meager number of researchers who have bothered to inquire about Dugin’s thought. As Marlène Laurelle notes, Dugin
is eclectic, mixing esotericism—especially Guénon and Evola—with an “exacerbated religious sensibility” (in his debate with Carvalho, Dugin reasserts his fidelity to the Russian Orthodox Church time and again). Most researchers think this is enough to rank Dugin on the far right. However, Laurelle also remarks that Dugin rejects “communist ideology” but not “the Soviet experience.”

Dugin’s project is an imperial one, and to explain his thought is to explain, *grosso modo*, Putin’s aims. While Dugin rejects the Communist ideology, the imperial, grand Soviet experience that expanded Russia’s power during the twentieth century is positive in his eyes because the collectivist nature of the Soviet regime kept individualism (a disease from the West in his eyes) away from Russia, maintaining the rural, semifeudal nature of the Eurasian people. Therefore, behind Stalin moves Ivan the Terrible’s shadow.

Dugin proposes an axis transference from the West to the East to the Eurasian region. Why Eurasia? Why the East? Dugin gets his justification from René Guénon: the West is in a deep spiritual crisis; its dorsal spine is rotten, having forgotten its traditions and its sacred spiritual center. The Orient, however, kept it closer to its roots than is the Western world. In addition, according to Guénon and Dugin, the Western split between Sacred Authority and Temporal Power furthered its spiritual breakdown, as if the latter could live on its own. The Orient, and Eurasia, never did such a thing. This is why Dugin thinks that Russia belongs to this venerable, strong Eastern tradition and has a sacred right to dominate the world against the Western “exile”; the Orient, Eurasia, is a “full moon”; the Russian Tsar plays an important role in the “soteriological mystery” of the world dominance because he believes that the world will be saved through a “holy state.” This dominance was, according to Dugin, usurped by Charlemagne.

Dugin’s “eclecticism,” as Laurelle puts it, arises from his belief that the archetype of the tsar might arise in many different forms. For instance, to him, “Stalin was not a separate individual, but a
collective person, an Elder Brother, a manifestation of Eurasianism in its Communist variant. Therefore, any praxis that leads to the expansion of the Russian/Eurasian empire can and must be incorporated into his cosmovision.

So where does Dugin stand ideologically? In Carvalho’s view, Dugin’s line of thought is that of right-wing Bolshevism or leftist traditionalism. To Carvalho, both terms are equivalent because they stand in for the elements of these two ideologies (Bolshevism and rightism) that are present in Dugin’s thought. From the right, Dugin uses the religious sensibility, the urge to conserve ancient and time-honored traditions, and this “metaphysical” stress that runs through his writings. From the left comes the authoritarian, fascist, Soviet-minded idealization of the nation’s leader. What is more, according to Carvalho, Dugin and Putin also take advantage of the institutional remnants of the Soviet Union, namely the KGB (now the FSB). And Vladimir Putin himself is a former KGB agent—but according to the Russian premier himself and he himself says that, “There is no such thing as a former KGB man.”

This is, needless to say, why Carvalho stands against Dugin and the Eurasian project. A thinker like Eric Voegelin would see Dugin as nothing less than a gnosticist because he can see a blood-drenched event such as the October Revolution more as “an eschatological, messianic revolt than as a transition from a capitalist phase to a socialist one … which would [then] bring about its metamorphosis into a Leftist Eurasianism and bring about a future return to the Christian Faith, to monarchy and to a pre-modern type of agricultural economy.” Dugin also preaches for the “total destruction” of the geopolitical status quo—viz. the Roman Catholic/Protestant-, Western-, and American-centered geopolitical structure of the world.

LEAVING THE ESCHATOCAL Aspect of Dugin’s project aside, it is worth noting that he makes the same mistake that led Carvalho to think, temporarily, that when one refers to “America” he is referring to a single reality. To Dugin, “America” is a universal abstract in which both its Christian Conservative (Carvalho’s “real” America) as well as the laic, secularized half (the “virtual” America) are one
and the same, and not mortal antagonists, as we shall see in a moment. In the *Fronda* interview, Dugin states that the current corruption of the Roman Catholic/Protestant world of today is a natural development of the usurpation of the Eastern, Russian power, a natural inheritor of the Byzantine Empire. It could not be any different. Therefore, although Carvalho does not state this in his debate, Dugin is a case of what Voegelin calls “Second Reality”—that is, a separate cosmion of individual reality in which the structure of the real does not correspond to the particular construction that this individual makes for himself. Dugin cannot make out the deep cleavage that separates, for instance, the growing traditional Catholic movement in the United States that wants the Tridentine Mass back and rejects the modernization of the Catholic Church, or the fervent American Evangelical Protestant community, from the secular, progressive artistic and political establishment of that same country. To distinguish these two different and contradictory “factions” of the American people would be to admit that the current corruption of the Western world is not a consequence of the cleavage between East and West; it is, rather, a consequence of the abandonment of the traditions that kept the West in harmony.

**The Western, or Metacapitalist, Project**

The Western project neither is linked to any country nor represents any national project or government, although it might control some of them. Western globalism is usually associated with the United States, though Carvalho denies that. In fact, he is very clear about the telos of this project. The main representatives of this project are international organizations and powerful families and businessmen, which, after Nicholas Hagger’s book, he calls “the Syndicate.”

And what does it do? “The Syndicate,” Carvalho answers, “is an organization of big capitalists and international bankers committed to establishing a worldwide socialist dictatorship.”

Why Socialist? Traditional economic liberalism says that businessmen and capitalists are naturally opposed to Socialism because the textbook definitions of Socialism and Communism state that
they seek to end private property so that the means of production are controlled and socialized by the state. Carvalho answers that contention, usually referring to Ludwig von Mises’s *Socialism* (1922), saying that a state-controlled economy prevents price calculation, which makes a state economy, after all, impossible. “A Communist economy never existed,” he says, “nor will there be one: all it could establish was a perverted or disguised capitalist economy, good enough to maintain a gang of cute political parasites.”

This allowed some degree of foreign capital in the Soviet Union. But only large companies run by big capitalists could meet the demands of a country like the USSR, companies that had the right amount of economic freedom to invest or to be colligated to the Soviet regime, seeing in this opportunity a way to escape the unpredictability of a regular, truly free market. This created a “shadow capitalism” that benefited both the government as well as these businessmen: because the state needed these financiers to maintain the blood circulation of this dim “market,” these companies could enjoy and regulate prices and production as they pleased. On the other hand, because the companies needed Communism in power, they silently helped the ever-increasing centralizing project of the Soviet Union. This is what Carvalho calls “metacapitalism.”

Metacapitalism could reconcile the imperial desire that pervades Western imagination as well as the “egalitarian” dream of Communism. It is a late development of the last embodiment of the Roman Empire on American shores: Hobbes’s Leviathan has grown beyond the limits of the political system and controls culture and economy, so much so that now it is almost impossible to see where the government ends and private companies begin, effectively showing that Carvalho’s “beadle state” is very much real.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, this project, according to Carvalho, continued in a transnational manner. But how can a project of power continue to exist without a state or a government? In Carvalho’s view, it is because Marxism is not a mere ideology or a political movement; it is rather “a culture in the anthropological
sense of the word; it is a whole universe of beliefs, symbols, values, institutions, of formal and informal powers, norms of conduct, speech patterns, conscious and unconscious habits, etc.”63 One can inflict cultural habits and ideas on any society one pleases, regardless of borders and government; all that is needed here are cultural agents that can overturn the traditional culture of a given society through politico-cultural agents placed within that society. This is an idea that comes from Antonio Gramsci, to whom Carvalho dedicated an entire section of his 1994 book A Nova Era e a Revolução Cultural. Gramsci divides the cultural agents, whom he refers to as “intellectuals,” into two categories: organic and inorganic (or “traditional”) intellectuals. “Organic intellectuals,” says Carvalho,

are those that, with or without formal affiliation to political movements, are aware of their class positions. … Naturally, there are ‘bourgeois’ and ‘proletarian’ organic intellectuals. The later are the crème de la crème and the very brain of [Gramsci’s] New Prince. … In this elastic sense, the intellectuals are the true army of Gramsci’s revolution. They have the task of accomplishing the first detail of his strategy: the conquest of cultural hegemony through a long, complex, and subtle series of gradual and crescent psychological mutations.64

The Gramsci-inspired Western globalist project, according to Carvalho, has this very task: To change the people’s traditional mode of thought (or, as Gramsci says, senso commune, “common sense”) into a revolutionary one, even if they do not know what is happening. Gramscism, according to Carvalho, “[i]s a conjunct of mental attitudes that might be installed even in the heads of those who never heard of Antonio Gramsci.”65 One of the pillars of the senso commune that must be destroyed is religion. Carvalho sees the revolutionary mentality in action, for example, in the world campaign against AIDS: “It is more than obvious that sexual liberalization makes the transmission of this disease easier. However, journalists and cultural activists from everywhere make people
believe that it is moral conservatism, especially of Catholic kind, that is to blame for the dissemination of AIDS, since it opposes the free distribution of condoms.66

For Carvalho, this is the current strategy of the Western project. The current use of organic intellectuals—either in the arts or in politics or in lawmaking—is to undermine the *senso commune* and to install the revolutionary mentality. And the revolutionary mentality is not, necessarily, a leftist mindset: it is a mindset that, installed in the Second Reality, sets out to completely transform man’s *Weltanschauung*, making a 180-degree spin of the screen of the world, a thorough redefinition of the sense of proportions and of the nature of the things. Carvalho remarks that Gramsci recycled Auguste Comte’s idea of a secular calendar of the saints: Comte’s was with the heroes of the French Revolution; Gramsci’s updated the idea with socialist heroes.67 Actually, Antonio Gramsci himself professed that “Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Leibknecht are greater than the greatest of Christian saints.”68 It lives in a Second Reality of its own creation, and where it runs with its own design. Noticing that the It-Reality is not his own, imaginary reality, he who is possessed by the revolutionary mentality sets out to remake reality in the likeness of his revolutionary dreams.69 This is the reason, as I described earlier, Carvalho sees “two Americas”: the real, traditional one against the “artificial,” or virtual, one. But it is not only this “real” America that is endangered—not only by the Western globalist project but also by the two others. In fact, Carvalho names two other “endangered species.” They are the “Christian, Catholic or Protestant, communities from all countries” (“particularly those in Africa and Asia, which today flow to Europe and North America, in a heroic effort to re-Christianize those who one day had Christianized them”), and “the Jewish nation” (i.e., Israel and traditional Jews).70

**Conclusion**

I tried in this article to introduce to the English-speaker some of the major subjects of Olavo de Carvalho’s political philosophy. At the same time, I tried to give a general view of his philosophy. This
is a hard task—made harder because of the limited nature of an academic essay—since, as I stated above, Carvalho is yet to publish the “core” of his philosophy (or of his metaphysics). But what he has published is enough to provide us with material for an introductory walk through his thought.

And having made this walk, I return now to my original question: Can we consider Jair Bolsonaro’s presidency Carvalho’s political philosophy in practice? At first glance, it seems that the answer is Yes, for there is no doubt that Bolsonaro getting elected was a direct result of the work of Carvalho. And there is no doubt that the emergence of a right-wing “movement,” or, rather, an anxiety for a political right wing in Brazil, is also a fruit of Carvalho’s writings. For Carvalho was the first author to really break the undeclared barrier against antileftist writers in Brazil. Granted, there were and are semi-right-wing or right-of-center magazines such as *Veja* and authors in Brazilian media, such as Paulo Francis (1930–1997), Roberto Campos (1917–2001), Miguel Reale, Sr. (1910–2006), Reinaldo Azevedo (b. 1961), and Augusto Nunes (b. 1949). But, as a magazine, *Veja* was de facto the house organ of the Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (Brazilian Social Democracy Party; hereafter PSDB), on account of Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s “neoliberal” policy of privatizations from the late 1990s, thus ignoring the common roots of the PT and the PSDB.71 Regarding the writers, each of them were limited to occasional criticism of the left or were mainly concerned with specific criticism of the then reigning leftist culture: Francis was a cultural critic, Campos was an economist, Reale was a jurist who wrote for the academia, and Azevedo and Nunes are political journalists who comment on “the trivialities du jour” that Carvalho criticizes so much. Carvalho was effectively the first one who not only criticized the left as a whole, but also its workings, its mentality (the “revolutionary mentality”), and an entirely new cultural world, well beyond the one the “French ultramarine department” allowed.

This leads us back to Bolsonaro. In my opinion, it is hard to square Carvalho’s ideas with all of Bolsonaro’s policies. The fact is that Bolsonaro appears to be the symbolic pole where many
conservative aspirations converge. From the libertarians of Mises Brasil, who looked with fond eyes to his first days as president,\textsuperscript{72} to the Brazilian monarchist cause,\textsuperscript{73} Bolsonaro became a symbol of a non-leftist possibility in Brazilian politics after its prolonged dormancy. Understandably, this new politics has been called, rather unimaginatively, “the new politics.” If we compare this “new politics” with the somewhat regular balance of power between left and right, or between Democrats and Republicans, in America, we will see that what happened in Brazil is very impressive: it took almost fifteen years to remove a party from the presidency—and even after Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment, the new president, Michel Temer, was an historic ally of the old party. It means that when the PT fell, its agents were still running the machine—both politically and culturally. Since Bolsonaro ascended to the president’s chair with this very hostile atmosphere in the highest echelons of Brazil’s politico-cultural machine it became very easy to paint him as an enemy of democracy, for they were running the “democracy.” From a political standpoint, an attack on the institutions, which was the true meaning of Bolsonaro as a political figure, meant an attack on themselves, on the political structure the PT left behind.\textsuperscript{74} From a cultural standpoint, the removal of the PT and the emergence of a conservative government ousting the PT is the reorganization of Second Reality-transformed Reality back into the normalcy of the It-Reality. Because Bolsonaro is a direct result of Carvalho being a pioneer in the rediscovery of anticommunism as a valid intellectual outlook in Brazil, it is only natural that political agents would label Bolsonaro as a subject of Carvalho’s dreams of power.

In conclusion, I would say that for the reasons above it is rather obvious that Bolsonaro is a byproduct of Carvalho’s activities and influence on the crowd, but to say that Carvalho is the intellectual driving force of the Bolsonaro administration is an exaggeration. In my view, his influence is limited to an anticomunist bent found in some of the actions of the government. It is worth remembering that because Bolsonaro is a symbol rather than a political agent as Carvalho conceives it,\textsuperscript{75} his very cabinet shows some of the syncretism that is natural for a president that
has an ideal but not a goal. For instance, if Carvalho were truly Bolsonaro’s guru, dealings with Saudi Arabia, a part of the Islamic imperial project, would never even enter the president’s imagination, in my view. But they have.76

Olavo de Carvalho is one of the most important names in political science and philosophy today. His opinions might seem idiosyncratic, but they reveal a breadth and scope that few scholars would dare to have. In my opinion, Carvalho’s emphasis on culture and on the individual solves a few problems in the philosophy of his much beloved Eric Voegelin. As Lee Trepanier notes, “the absence of a conception of culture in Voegelin’s methodology made his claims about being a political scientist a difficult one, as he could not account for societal cohesion and change other than by reverting to individual experience.”77 Therefore, because Carvalho’s work offers a corrective along these lines, and because of the tremendous importance his thought has on the current political situation in Brazil, he is a thinker that must be studied with the attention and seriousness he deserves.

Notes

1. For the ends and purposes of this article, I consider a student of Olavo de Carvalho to be anyone who has read his theoretical work, attends or has attended his classes (online or in person), and has directly interacted with him. This would include, for instance, journalist Felipe Moura Brasil, who today denies he was student of Carvalho but edited a massive volume of Carvalho’s writings (O Mínimo Que Você Precisa Saber para Não Ser um Idiota) and even composed a sonnet in praise of the philosopher (“Soneto do Estudante Sério” [The true student’s sonnet], after the title of one of Carvalho’s articles).

2. “I have my thought, my ideas; my philosophy is recorded in books. … Nobody in the mainstream media cares. Then, all of the sudden, I recommend two ministers of state and that’s it. This is a joke. The media only cares about the trivialities du jour; you don’t care about the intellectual contributions [I] make.” Carvalho, interview with Beatriz Bulla, “Já esgotei meu estoque de ministros, não tenho mais’, diz Olavo de Carvalho,” Estadão.com, November 28, 2018, https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,todos-países-tem-governos-de-direita-no-brasil-nao-pode-diz-olavo-de-carvalho,70002619454.


8. He also taught courses and wrote books on astrology during this time, which is why some publications mockingly call him an “former astrologer” (e.g., Jon Lee Anderson, “Jair Bolsonaro’s Southern Strategy,” The New Yorker, March 25, 2019, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/04/01/jair-bolsonaro-southern-strategy). Carvalho did work as an astrologer for a brief period of time, but overall, judging by his published output of the time, his true interest was traditional metaphysics and symbolism. Some of his writings from this era were collected in A Dialética Simbólica. More recently, another Anderson—Perry Anderson—used this trope again: “Mediated through [Jair Bolsonaro’s] sons, principally Eduardo, a stream of vituperations from the expatriate astrologer Olavo de Carvalho—Brazilian version of a seer of the Black Hundreds—has exerted
a significant long-distance influence on this aspect of the regime" (Brazil Apart, 1964–2019 [London: Verso, 2019]).


15. Ibid., Visões de Descartes (Campinas, Brazil: VIDE Editorial, 2013), 10.


17. Webb, Eric Voegelin, 44.

18. Ibid., 108.


20. There is no doubt that pneumatic insights play important roles in the individual growth of the philosopher. However, due to their immediate nature (a pneumatic illumination immediately “solves” questions that otherwise would require long meditations and inner pain), they might deform the individual consciousness because the noetic side of existence would be diminished. A classic example is that of Frithjof Schuon, who believed that he was born a pneumatic man. See Jean-Baptiste Aymard and Patrick Laude, Frithjof Schuon: Life and Teachings (Albany: SUNY
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In political theology, Carvalho considers Karl Marx the classic example. To Marx he devotes some of the best passages of *O Jardim das Aflições* (§§16–18). This is one of the reasons that leads Carvalho to assume a strong anti-Communist stance and is the basis of his thesis of the “revolutionary mentality.” Due to the weariness of left-leaning parties, his anti-Communism resonated well with the people. This, in turn, led the people to look for an anti-Communist leader, and he happened to be Jair Bolsonaro.


24. By now, those familiar Integral Traditionalism and Perennialism will recall Frithjof Schuon’s doctrine of the Transcendent Unity of Religions (TUR). Schuon and Guénon were strong influences on Carvalho in his formative years (in fact, Carvalho met Schuon and other Perennialist representatives in the United States during the 1980s); therefore, the basilar idea of the TUR plays, from a philosophical standpoint, an important role in his thought to this day: “That materially different traditions converge toward the same set of metaphysical principles is something you cannot seriously call into question. The Transcendent Unity of Religion thesis is victorious in all aspects.” But then he asks: “What is, properly speaking, metaphysics?” (Carvalho, “As garras da Esfinge,” pt. 1, *Verbum*, vol. 1 [2016], 41). To Perennialists and Integral Traditionalists, metaphysics is the same as religion. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Response to Thomas Dean’s Review of *Knowledge and the Sacred*,” *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 35 (1985), 88: “There is only one metaphysic but many traditional languages through which it is expressed and many religions with irreducible differences which nevertheless contain in their heart that supreme science of the Real.” However, despite all scholarly rigor that is typical of Perennialists, in order that this leveling be true, we must do violence either to the word “metaphysics” or to the word “religion.”

In fact, one should say that there is a remarkable similarity between the TUR thesis and Eric Voegelin’s “symbolic equivalences” (see Voegelin, “Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History,” in *Published Essays, 1966–1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz, *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 12 [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990], 115–33). Under Voegelin’s light we solve the confusion that Perennialists
create between metaphysics and religion. Religions are symbolizations of a certain intuitive order of the world. Rites, dogmas, and liturgies are developed to symbolically express this metaphysical intuition and to give the cosmos a coherent, logical structure. Only in this paratheological sense, metaphysics and religion are one and the same, and it is in this sense that Carvalho uses the TUR thesis in the present state of his thought. An essay on the influence of René Guénon in Carvalho’s thought is in the works right now.


27. Jardim, 270.

28. “The term translatio imperii is normally used to describe the transference of the center of the [Roman] Empire from Rome to Byzantium. Here I use it in a larger sense, to describe all changes of the center of power in the West” (Jardim, 271n146). Granted, this “larger” sense Carvalho speaks of was already in use during the Middle Ages, so Carvalho is actually recycling an old theory about the recurring westward movement of power in the Western world. Jacques Le Goff, Medieval Civilization, 400–1500, transl. Julia Barrow (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1988), 171–72: “[The] movement of history shifted the centre of gravity of the world ever westwards from the east.”

29. Jardim, 274.


31. See René Guénon, Autorité spirituelle et pourvoir temporelle (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, 1984). Sections 24 and 25 of Jardim describe more thoroughly the moment of rupture between these two powers.

32. See Jardim, 248n134.

33. Jardim, 256.

34. Jardim, 287.

35. Jardim, 295.

36. Jardim, 315.

37. VIDE Editorial published a new, hardcover edition of Jardim in July 2019. But except for a new cover design, the contents of the new edition are the same of the 2015 re-publication.

38. Jardim, 414.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. One finds many recurrences in which Carvalho criticizes the metonymic use of country or group names as if these entities were the embodiment of these abstractions. In this very debate, he says, “Who can be an agent of a historical action? States? Nations? Empires? Of course not. These entities result from the combination of heterogeneous forces which struggle to dominate them from within. … A state, nation or empire is an apparent agent, manipulated by other, more durable, more stable agents, capable of dominating it and using it for their objectives, which frequently transcend even the duration of the national, state and imperial formations which they utilized. An expression such as ‘History of Brazil’ or ‘History of Russia’ is only a metonymy, which denominates as the subject of an action the mere geographical area where the action took place” (ibid.). There is a strong similarity between this criticism and that which Northrop Frye makes on what he calls the “royal metaphor.” In The Great Code: The Bible and Literature (San Diego: Harvest, 1982), 87–88, he says: “When we … identify the individual with his class, we get an extremely powerful and subtle form of metaphor, which I sometimes call the royal metaphor, because it underlies one of the most symbolically pervasive of instructions, that of kingship. The function of the king is primarily to represent, for his subjects, the unity of their society in an individual form. … But the same figure was used in my younger days, to my own great annoyance, to boost the prestige of dictators: ‘Hitler is building roads across Germany,’ ‘Mussolini is draining marshes in Italy,’ and the like. Those who employed this figure were often democratic people who simply could not stop themselves from using the royal metaphor.”

Frye, especially in his Great Code and Anatomy of Criticism, is an author who appears constantly in Carvalho’s writing. See Aristóteles em Nova Perspectiva, 2nd ed. (Campinas, Brazil: VIDE Editorial 2013) and A Dialética Simbólica: Estudos Reunidos [Collected works on symbolic dialectics], 2nd ed. (Campinas, Brazil: VIDE Editorial, 2015).

43. The ideas of globalism as a political event—and not as a consequence of free-market economy—and world government, commonly met with bafflement, as if they could exist only in the minds of villains of a James Bond film. For a learned discussion of the subject, see W. Julian

44. It might seem contradictory to point that Carvalho “plays no part” in the political game of these world projects when we just saw that many of his students are now a part of a government that, apparently, is part of the administration of a rising world power. I will try to explain this apparent contradiction in the conclusion of this essay.


47. Sayyid Qutb, Milestones (Birmingham, UK: Maktabah 2006), 131–32: “There is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam), and it is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shari’ah is the authority and Allah’s limits are observed, and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation. The rest of the world is the home of hostility (Dar-ul-Harb). A Muslim can have only two possible relations with Dar-ul-Harb: peace with a contractual agreement, or war.” For precedents to this idea, see Osman Turan, “The Ideal of World Domination among the Medieval Turks,” Studia Islamica, vol. 4 (1955), 77–90. It is certain that there are internal disputes within what Carvalho considers the Islamic project, but he notes that “[d]ivergences arising from clashes of national interests (as for example between Iran and Saudi Arabia) have not proved sufficient to open incurable wounds in the unity of the long-term Islamic project” (Carvalho, “Olavo–Introduction”).


the quality of the research produced on Dugin is venerable; Shekhovtsov and Umland in particular are among the best researchers on him, devoting an entire paper on his links to Integral Traditionalism and Perennialism (“Is Aleksandr Dugin a Traditionalist? ‘Neo-Eurasianism’ and Perennial Philosophy,” The Russian Review, vol. 68 [2009], 662–78).


Interestingly, in her essay “Alexander Dugin and Eurasianism,” in Mark Sedgwick, ed., Key Thinkers of the Radical Right (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 165–6, Laurelle notes the exchange between Dugin and Carvalho, saying that “In 2011, [Dugin] established contacts with Brazil, including an online debate with the journalist and Traditionalist thinker Olavo de Carvalho, a disciple of René Guénon and Frithjof Schuon, who is close to some Islamist movement [sic], and currently is in exile in the United States.” Beyond misrepresenting Carvalho as a Traditionalist and an Islamist, Laurelle ignores the content of the debate, which, as described here, presents a sharp contradiction between Dugin’s and Carvalho’s views. It is safe to say that Laurelle did not read the debate.


53. Dugin, “Czekam na Iwana Groźnego.”


57. Ibid., 155.

59. Carvalho, “[R2] Olavo (Eng.),” https://debateolavodugin.blogspot.com/2011/04/r2-olavo-de-carvalho.html (Carvalho’s emphasis). One should not confuse the Syndicate with conspiracies such as “the Jewish Conspiracy,” or that Jews control the financial market, propagated by hateful anti-Semites. Carvalho makes it very clear that he believes that the Syndicate is formed by billionaires from all around the globe that have reasons to, among other things, destroy religions, borders, and local traditions, instead of reinforcing their own (which is the characteristic of the Islamic project. In addition, Carvalho is a supporter of the state of Israel, which aroused many critics among Brazilian leftists, who have been historically allied with the Palestine cause. Examples of members of the Syndicate are the infamous George Soros, with his Open Society Foundation, but others include the Council on Foreign Relations, the Club of Rome, the Trilateral Commission, and the businessmen and intellectuals who provide brain and monetary support to these organizations.


64. *Nova*, 59.

65. *Nova*, 78.

66. *Nova*, 64n16. It is needless to say that Carvalho lends credit to the controversial idea of “cultural Marxism” (see his article “Do marxismo cultural,” *O Globo*, June 8, 2002, http://old.olavodecarvalho.org/semana/06082002globo.htm); at the same time, he says says that this is a methodologically imprecise definition (“Obviedades estratégicas,” *Diário do Comércio*, February 6, 2012, http://old.olavodecarvalho.org/semana/120206dc.html). But nevertheless, there is no doubt that
this idea guides much of his thought on the current state of Marxism, Communism, and Socialism.


70. Carvalho, “[R2] Olavo (Eng.),” http://debateolavodugin.blogspot.com/2011/04/r2-olavo-de-carvalho.html. Carvalho notes that the emergence of a “secular” form of Judaism was particularly threatening to its very existence and that it is a Christian duty to preserve the Jewish religion. “[A]s a Catholic,” he says, “I believe the Jews will have a providential mission to fulfill at the end of times and that therefore it is the duty of Christians to protect them or, at least, to save them from extinction when they are threatened” (Carvalho, “[R4] Olavo (Eng.),” https://debateolavodugin.blogspot.com/2011/05/r4-olavo-eng.html).

71. And also ignoring Cardoso’s work as USP-formed sociologist (thus belonging to USP’s left-wing tradition, as I mentioned in the beginning; besides, Cardoso was a pupil of USP sociologist Florestan Fernandes). Another thing that is usually ignored are Cardoso’s own self-identification as a leftist (“I am leftist, but nobody believes it,” he said in 2014: Bernardo Mello Franco, “‘Sou de esquerda, mas ninguém acredita,’ diz FHC,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 9, 2014, https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2014/04/1438019-sou-de-esquerda-mas-ninguem-acredita-diz-flc.shtml). For a long time, the political dispute in Brazil gravitated around PT and PSDB in its apparent opposition; right-wing candidates, such as Enéas Carneiro and Levy Fidelix, were seen as queer, elliptical creatures, with no chance of winning, belonging to “dwarf parties” (*partidos nanicos*), though this label is not limited to right-wing parties.


75. An essay dealing with Bolsonaro as a symbolic figure rather as a political agent should naturally follow the present one.
