

TheAtlantic.com uses cookies to enhance your experience when visiting the website and to serve you with advertisements that might interest you. By continuing to use this site, you agree to our use of cookies. Find out more here.

Accept cookies

SUBSCRIBE



## A 'One-Stop Shop' for the Alt-Right

The white nationalist leader Richard Spencer is setting up a headquarters in the Washington area.



Rosie Gray / The Atlantic

ROSIE GRAY

JAN 12, 2017 | POLITICS

f Share

🐦 Tweet

TEXT SIZE



Subscribe to *The Atlantic's* [Politics & Policy Daily](#), a roundup of ideas and events in American politics.

SIGN UP

---

Richard Spencer, one of the best-known leaders of the white nationalist movement that has adopted the name “alt-right,” has—by his standards—been laying relatively low lately. Spencer’s never shied away from the media, but an outbreak of Nazi salutes [caught on video](#) by *The Atlantic* at his organization’s

---

Home

Share

Tweet

target within his own movement and threatening his carefully cultivated image as the alt-right’s approachable face.

Add to that a planned neo-Nazi march against Jews in Spencer’s town of Whitefish, Montana, stemming from his feud with a local woman whom he accused of harassing his mother, a diletantish congressional-run trial balloon, and getting banned from Twitter for a while, and it hasn’t been the best couple of months for Spencer. Meanwhile, the movement he takes credit for naming has been riven by internal feuds over “Hailgate.”

This month, Spencer’s rebooting again: He is renting a “hub” for the alt-right movement in a townhouse in Alexandria, Virginia. Spencer and Jason Jorjani, the editor-in-chief of Arktos, a publishing arm associated with the alt-right, have bought the domain name [altright.com](#). Spencer and Jorjani met at the conference for the National Policy Institute, Spencer’s innocuously named think tank, where attendees gave Nazi salutes as Spencer shouted “Hail Trump” from the stage. They quickly formed a bond, and are now joining forces to brand themselves as the intellectual leaders of the alt-right.

Spencer’s new headquarters reflects his increasing effort to mainstream the alt-right as its preferred candidate prepares to enter the White House, and to cement himself as its leading voice.

Jorjani was down from New York this week visiting with Spencer, who will be living on the top level of the spacious loft he and Jorjani will be using in Alexandria. The loft has no furniture yet; the only decor in the living room was a bottle of whiskey Spencer was working his way through around 3 p.m. on Wednesday. Upstairs, his belongings were strewn about in suitcases.

The pair imagine the space as a kind of office-salon hybrid for the alt-right, a private space where people in the movement can make videos, throw parties (there's an outdoor patio) and work on the nascent website, which Spencer said would launch on Monday. The loft "is symbolic in that it is a headquarters of sorts," Spencer said.

The fact that Spencer and Jorjani are attempting to take ownership of the term

---

[Home](#)

[Share](#)

[Tweet](#)

[battling](#) over the Deploraball, a party planned for the night before Donald Trump's inauguration. Spencer was uninvited from the Deploraball, which is being organized by a group called Maga3X. That group is associated with Mike Cernovich, who now prefers the label "new right." He cast out one of the party's co-organizers, known as "Baked Alaska," after he wouldn't stop tweeting about Jews. Baked Alaska then accused Cernovich of being a "cuck" in a [Periscope video](#).

Spencer expects his registration of [altright.com](#) may prove similarly contentious. "I'm sure this is going to be controversial because if there's one thing you can count on it's petty infighting and things like that," he said.

"What I want for this is to be a one-stop shop," Spencer said. "So basically if you're already in the alt-right, this will be a great place to just learn about what's happening. If you just heard about the alt-right, just because of the URL, hopefully this will be the top hit on Google."

Quotidian SEO concerns aside, Jorjani and Spencer have more exalted goals for their collaboration. Jorjani, an Iranian American academic, runs Arktos, which bills itself as the main publisher in English of works from the European "New Right." Arktos has translated works by Alexander Dugin, the right-wing Russian philosopher whose ultra-nationalist views have been influential on the alt-right, and has published Spencer's former intellectual mentor Paul Gottfried. Jorjani describes Arktos as "the leading press of the alt-right."

"One important element of the work Richard and I are doing together is a consolidation of these kinds of rubrics," Jorjani said. "So that we will see

hopefully in the next few years, maybe sooner than that, a total integration of the European New Right and the North American alt-right.”

They plan to use the site to publish work from Spencer’s *Radix Journal*, as well as Arktos and its associated journal *Right On*. They also plan to hire a “news hound” to aggregate stories of interest to the alt-right; from those about and by them to stories about figures like Dugin.

---

[Home](#)[Share](#)[Tweet](#)

reject what Spencer calls the “alt-light”—his term for figures like Cernovich or Infowars editor-at-large Paul Joseph Watson, who he sees as insufficiently ideological to be truly alt-right, and more concerned with trolling people and developing a following online. (Cernovich took aim at Spencer after “Hailgate,” [accusing](#) Spencer of being “controlled opposition” and being “owned by the media.” Watson has called Spencer a “white supremacist mainstream media darling.”)

Spencer said he welcomes “the kind of red-hat Trump boosting new people who are entering the movement now who weren’t maybe even involved in politics until now. And there are a lot of these guys, the kind of Trump-bro type people. I’m willing to criticize them and maybe even jab at them a little bit but I would rather they be the establishment rather than the total douche-ocracy of the conservative movement.”

Trump himself, though, has so far been a disappointment to Spencer. Despite encouraging signs throughout the campaign—a slowness to disavow white nationalists, the hardline immigration policies, the hiring of former Breitbart News chairman Stephen K. Bannon—Trump isn’t living up to the alt-right’s standards. Spencer dislikes several of the appointments Trump has made—particularly some with connections to Goldman Sachs—and feels the president-elect hasn’t focused enough on immigration.

“I would not say Hail Trump anymore,” Spencer said. “I don’t regret saying it because it was a moment of utter exuberance and craziness, but I would not say that right now.” “I’m much more skeptical now,” he added.

Still, Spencer's gold MacBook betrays a certain taste for the president-elect's style.

"We live in the age of Trump," he explained.

 Share  Tweet  Comments

Home

Share

Tweet



**ROSIE GRAY** is a staff writer at *The Atlantic*.

 Twitter

### From The Web

Ads by Revcontent

**Morning People in the UK Are Obsessed with This Mattress**

eve mattress

**From Riches To Rags: 22 Celebrities Who Are Broke**

MoneyFeedsMe

**Illegal Photos of Life in North Korea That Will Blow Your Mind**

Detonate.com

**Wall Street Furious Over New Trading Algorithm**

Startup365





- [Home \(/\)](#)
- [Blog \(/blog.html\)](#)
- [Books \(/books.html\)](#)
- [Articles \(/articles.html\)](#)
- [The Library \(/the-library.html\)](#)
- [About Jason \(/about-jason.html\)](#)
- [Search \(/search.html\)](#)

## [Jason Reza Jorjani and Richard Spencer Got an Apartment Together in Virginia to Turn into a Salon and Party Pad for the So-Called "Alt-Right"](http://www.jasoncolavito.com/blog/jason-reza-jorjani-and-richard-spencer-got-an-apartment-together-in-virginia-to-turn-into-a-salon-and-party-pad-for-the-so-called-alt-right) <http://www.jasoncolavito.com/blog/jason-reza-jorjani-and-richard-spencer-got-an-apartment-together-in-virginia-to-turn-into-a-salon-and-party-pad-for-the-so-called-alt-right>

1/14/2017

[33 Comments \(http://www.jasoncolavito.com/blog/jason-reza-jorjani-and-richard-spencer-got-an-apartment-together-in-virginia-to-turn-into-a-salon-and-party-pad-for-the-so-called-alt-right#comments\)](http://www.jasoncolavito.com/blog/jason-reza-jorjani-and-richard-spencer-got-an-apartment-together-in-virginia-to-turn-into-a-salon-and-party-pad-for-the-so-called-alt-right#comments)

It wasn't my intention to revisit the saga of Jason Reza Jorjani again until I had finished reading his book *Prometheus and Atlas*, but events have overtaken me, and I think it's worth talking about him some more. Regular readers will recall that Jorjani became the subject of controversy late last year after his alma mater raised questions in a private faculty meeting about his affiliation with the so-called "alt-right," prompting him to angrily and publicly deny that he is a white nationalist when the school accidentally emailed him the meeting minutes. Jorjani, who embraces the deceptive "alt-right" moniker, which the Associated Press advises is a euphemism for white nationalism, fancies himself an intellectual force reshaping radical rightwing ideology in favor of his particular version of the Aryan race, which he defines as including most white Europeans and also the people of his family's ancestral homeland, Iran.

A few weeks ago, I reviewed (<http://www.jasoncolavito.com/blog/alt-right-supporter-uses-atlantis-and-esp-to-defend-aryan-heritage-blames-muslims-for-white-genocide>) the introduction to Jorjani's *Prometheus and Atlas*, a book based on his doctoral dissertation, which I was shocked and dismayed to discover was founded on a fundamental misunderstanding of Greek mythology, an acceptance of ghosts and psychic phenomena, and arguments based on the alleged validity of UFO and ancient astronaut evidence presented by the slipshod scholar Jacques Vallée in his faulty treatise *Passport to Magonia* nearly fifty years ago.

An academic journal asked me to write a review of Jorjani's book, and I have been trying not to comment on his actions until I had completed that task.

However, Jorjani is back in the news because he is teaming up with avowed white nationalist leader Richard Spencer to run an intellectual salon for the so-called "alt-right" out of the apartment that the two men leased together in Alexandria, Virginia. They also went halves on the domain name "altright.com," which they plan to use to publish white nationalist writings and writings from the xenophobic European "new right." According to [an article in the Atlantic \(https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/a-one-stop-shop-for-the-alt-right/512921/\)](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/a-one-stop-shop-for-the-alt-right/512921/), Jorjani met Spencer when Jorjani spoke at Spencer's "Hail Trump!" rally in Washington after the November election, the same event that sparked his alma mater to discuss his actions, and the two quickly struck up a bromance based on their shared hatred of multiculturalism.

The *Atlantic* described Spencer's bachelor pad, which will also be an office for Jorjani, in a way that recalled the foreclosed McMansions in California that were converted into "cam house" makeshift porn studios during the housing crash. Only this time, the pornographic product is white nationalism:

The loft has no furniture yet; the only decor in the living room was a bottle of whiskey Spencer was working his way through around 3 p.m. on Wednesday. Upstairs, his belongings were strewn about in suitcases. The pair imagine the space as a kind of office-salon hybrid for the alt-right, a private space where people in the movement can make videos, throw parties (there's an outdoor patio) and work on the nascent website, which Spencer said would launch on Monday.

All that's missing are the cameras mounted to the ceilings to capture every move.

Monday, of course, is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. I doubt it is a coincidence that a new website celebrating the white race will launch on a day commemorating the Civil Rights Movement.

But let me be clear: Jorjani's words and actions belie his claim to have no connection to white nationalism. Spencer, his business partner and co-lessee, describes himself as "dedicated to the heritage, identity and future of people of European descent." There isn't a way around that. In an interview with a Montana newspaper this week, Spencer [cited history \(http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/richard-spencer-gains-notoriety-for-white-nationalism-aims-to-grow/article\\_9418c8d9-8630-5ecf-ab7f-1e250c3b8987.html\)](http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/richard-spencer-gains-notoriety-for-white-nationalism-aims-to-grow/article_9418c8d9-8630-5ecf-ab7f-1e250c3b8987.html) as a justification for identifying the United States with white people: "Our bones are in the ground. Ultimately, we do have a claim to it just in the sense of our people dominated this continent. That might seem brutal, but history is sometimes brutal." This is the exact same argument that nineteenth century Americans used to justify atrocities against Native Americans, arguing that Native peoples were interlopers who squatted amidst the mounds and graves of forgotten ancient whites. Spencer told the *Billings Gazette's* reporter that while Native Americans have a "place" in America, white Americans hold pride of place because "we won." He added that Black Americans cannot be true patriots, and he hoped to replace Hispanic farm workers with "robots."

Jorjani, for his part, took photos of himself at Trump Tower following the November election and shared on his social media feed a Photoshopped image of Donald Trump dressed in a general's uniform giving what resembled a fascist salute while announcing a battle to defeat European Muslims. Jorjani captioned the picture with Trump's famous phrase about making America "great again."

I also want to take issue with Jorjani's claim to be both an intellectual and an academic. I cannot blame the *Atlantic* for assuming that a man with a Ph.D. is both, but now that I am halfway through *Prometheus and Atlas*, his magnum opus, I know that he is only a pretender. (Spencer, for his part, says that education should be restricted only to the 5% identified as the




### Author


I'm an author and editor who has published on a range of topics, including archaeology, science, and horror fiction. There's more about me in the [About Jason \(/about-jason.html\)](#) tab.

<http://www.jasoncolavito.com>



### Tweets by @JasonColavito

 **Jason Colavito** @JasonColavito  
If @realDonaldTrump is being "guided" by Jesus, does that mean that I can be exempt from the 10 Commandments and 7 Deadly Sins too?

 **Jason Colavito** @JasonColavito  
I saw Donald Trump fan art featuring Jesus guiding Trump's pen. How blinkered can you be to think Trump an exemplar of Christianity?

 **Jason Colavito** @JasonColavito  
Cowards. Jacobovici and Freun refuse interviews with me over @NatGeoChannel Atlantis doc, network refused to send me a screenshot

[Embed](#) [View on Tw](#)



### Newsletter

Enter your email below to subscribe to my newsletter, [The Skeptical Xenoarchaeologist \(/skeptical-xenoarchaeologist-newsletter.html\)](#), for updates on my latest

"cognitive elite." I will try not to guess how he will determine these elite.) Jorjani's book is intellectually sloppy, betraying either an extremely limited ability to see beyond his preconceived notions, or else was an intentional piece of propaganda that apes scholarship in order to undermine it.

Let me give you an example beyond the errors of Greek mythology and ufology studies that I indicated in my first comments on his book.

In the subsequent chapters of *Prometheus and Atlas*, Jorjani adopts the views of Claude Lévi-Strauss as the latest and most accepted ideas in anthropology, even though Lévi-Strauss wrote almost half a century ago, and his school, structuralism, has faced important challenges from post-structuralist and postmodernist theories that arose in its wake. Using Lévi-Strauss, Jorjani adopts his contention that culture is mediated through an intellectual framework composed of opposites: hot/cold, up/down, man/woman, human/animal, etc. In each case, the existence of the opposite is what gives meaning to a word; it is, ultimately, a theory rooted in language and how we define what we experience. What he does not articulate is the underlying reason for doing so: Lévi-Strauss drew on German philosophical traditions, and his structuralism is predicated on the dialectic that passes under the name of Hegel, who just happens to be a key influence on Nietzsche and the Nazis, like Jorjani's most important philosophical influence, Heidegger, who was literally a Nazi.

The theory of binary opposition has many critics, but it is not worth going into here. Jorjani, though, cites an opposite that isn't one: heaven/earth. Nearly all traditional cultures recognize at least three levels, not two: heaven, earth, and the underworld. Heaven and Hell are often paired as binary opposites, yet even here we see that the theory is imposed on a more complex framework. But beyond this, Jorjani, speaking of the supernatural under his preferred term of *spectral*, claims that societies around the world deny the supernatural because it would destroy their ability to use binary opposites:

The *spectral* has a de-structuring force that undoes these binary oppositions from a place between and beyond them. [...] It is because the spectral most extremely and enduringly transgresses these binary oppositions that it provokes a terrifying feeling in many that, if the "reality" of spectral phenomena is to be admitted, there is nothing solid and secure left in the whole world for them to hang on to at all.

He speaks either polemically, or ignorantly, or parochially. Even a novice will recognize that if "heaven/earth" is a binary opposite that a culture can handle, so too is the binary of "natural/supernatural," or in Jorjani's parlance, "material/spectral." It goes without saying that most cultures throughout history have embraced the supernatural, including our own, and few have collapsed from it. Traditional cultures often recognized no distinction between the material and the spectral, as all matter was alive with spiritual essence and power. Others did recognize a binary of spiritual/material, but had no problem with it. Even Christians, who debated the issue at length in trying to specify how Christ could be fully both, did not go mad as a result. American culture has been ripe with the embrace of the supernatural and spectral in its many forms, from the colonial period (see Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*) through the age of Spiritualism and down to the New Age. Europe was historically plagued with specters and witches and Fallen Angels and what-have-you. So who then are the "many" who experience this horror?

Jorjani only just barely recognizes this problem, writing that "academics" ascribe to the "primitive" (whether person, culture, or mental state, he does not specify) a "holy dread of the numinous," which only makes sense, he says, if society were attempting to suppress the chaotic spectral forces that threaten reason itself. This is wrong on many levels. Unacknowledged by Jorjani, the exact wording "holy dread of the numinous" comes directly from Carl Jung, the psychologist, in "A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity," where he was speaking of followers of Abrahamic religion. Jung, in turn, borrowed the words "holy dread" from Rudolph Otto, a Lutheran theologian. Jung's exact words, in standard translation, were: "Nowadays most people are afraid of surrendering to such experiences, and their fear proves the existence of a 'holy dread' of the numinous." The "nowadays" clues us in that Jorjani's implications of universality are false. The "academics" are really one: Jung. Most other citations of the phrase are merely discussions or critiques of Jung. Jung was not an anthropologist, and he was in many cases wrong. To describe his views as those of the majority of social scientists is deceptive. But he does share something with Jorjani: He investigated ancient astronaut theories, a topic Jorjani returns to in his book and cites as further evidence for his embrace of the Romantic irrational.

Jorjani uses this misrepresented claim to argue that one of two things must be true: Either the "primitive" (again: person, culture, or mental state is not specified) is "pitifully vague" because the spectral is a delusion, or scientific rationalism is a psychological defense mechanism creating a Freudian "totemic taboo" to suppress the reality of the supernatural. I trust that you can see that this false dichotomy is a logical fallacy. A belief can be sincere and wrong, for example, without detracting from its power. Is Nazism, for example, less terrifying because Aryan race theory is a lie? Science could, in theory, include "spectral" claims by discovering natural mechanisms (say, another dimension in which matter and energy operate, for example) that govern what we perceive as spectral. There are more than two options, one of which just happens to help Jorjani destroy the Western multicultural world order he despises. But ultimately his claim is a circular argument dependent on the *assumption* of a spectral force beyond the investigation of science, which his philosophy then uses to argue that science is at fault for not investigating that which has yet to be proved actually exists. The proof, of course, is the problem: By discrediting science as an investigative tool (at one point he accepts the claim that the presence of a skeptic scares away the spectral), he eliminates the potential to demonstrate the reality of the spectral in natural terms, so its reality therefore must be accepted through assumption and assertion by those, like Jorjani, who offer an alternative to science through appeal to the irrational.

This was all on page 2 of Jorjani's 400+ page book.

Like 11 Tweet

33 Comments (<http://www.jasoncolavito.com/blog/jason-reza-jorjani-and-richard-spencer-got-an-apartment-together-in-virginia-to-turn-into-a-salon-and-party-pad-for-the-so-called-alt-right#comments>)

Only Me

1/14/2017 11:42:13 am

Jorjani's not only a poseur, he's a coward. If you could glean that much of the foundation of his ideology on just page two, you might want to be careful forging ahead.

"Jorjani's book is intellectually sloppy, betraying either an extremely limited ability to see beyond his preconceived notions, or else was an intentional piece of propaganda that apes scholarship in order to undermine it."

I don't think it's an either-or conclusion. It's probably both.

projects, blog posts, and activities.

Enter your email address

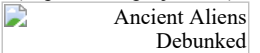
Subscribe

powered by [TinyLetter](https://tinyletter.com)  
(<https://tinyletter.com>)

## Blog Roll

 A Hot Cup of Joe

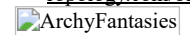
(<http://ahotcupofjoe.net/>)

 Ancient Aliens Debunked

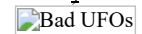
(<http://ancientaliensdebunked.com/blog/>)

 Picture

(<http://www.andywhiteanthropology.com/blog/>)

 Archy Fantasies

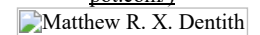
(<https://archyfantasies.com/>)

 Bad UFOs

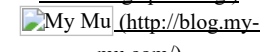
(<http://badufos.blogspot.com/>)

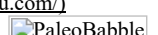


(<http://mammothtales.blogspot.com/>)

 Matthew R. X. Dentith

(<http://all-embracing.episto.org/>)

 My Mu (<http://blog.mymu.com/>)

 PaleoBabble

(<http://drmrsh.com/paleobabble/>)

## Categories

[All \(/blog/category/all\)](#)

[Alternative Archaeology \(/blog/category/alternative-archaeology\)](#)

[Alternative Archaeology \(/blog/category/alternative-archaeology\)](#)

[Alternative History \(/blog/category/alternative-history\)](#)

[Alternative History \(/blog/category/alternative-history\)](#)

[America Unearthed \(/blog/category/america-unearthed\)](#)

[Ancient Aliens \(/blog/category/ancient-aliens\)](#)

[Ancient Astronauts \(/blog/category/ancient-astronauts\)](#)

[Ancient History \(/blog/category/ancient-history\)](#)

[Ancient Texts \(/blog/category/ancient-texts\)](#)

[Ancient Texts \(/blog/category/ancient-texts\)](#)

Spencer's definition of citizenship: If your people were here before the colonial period, you "have a place." If your people came after...sucks to be you. What a piece of shit.

Reply

V

1/14/2017 04:00:19 pm

Unless you're white. If you're white, you get the BEST place. Don't forget that part.

Which of course only shows sickening levels of ignorance as well as nauseating levels of racism, since the Spaniards were the FIRST conquerors of the European colonialism period. Hispanics should, by that logic, have a greater place than "whites."

Reply

Only Me

1/14/2017 08:22:53 pm

To be fair, V, I have \*never\* heard of anyone being described as an intelligent racist, so, it is what it is.

John Hoopes

1/16/2017 02:08:54 pm

I read some more of Jorjani's book yesterday. Not only does he perpetuate 19th century mythology about Atlantis without citing Ignatius Donnelly, Helena Blavatsky, or William Scott-Elliott (though he does write about Rudolf Steiner), but he also writes about episodes in the Bible that he asserts were ancient encounters with UFOs and extraterrestrials without citing Erich von Däniken's "Chariots of the Gods?" (1968). In particular, he describes Ezekiel's vision of an object shaped like wheels—something for which von Däniken is well known but which was elaborated upon further in Joseph Blumrich's "Spaceships of Ezekiel" (1973), which also goes uncited. Needless to say, there has been a great deal of relevant debunking literature in all of this, but it seems to have gone completely ignored by Jorjani. It is baffling how this kind of sloppy scholarship bordering on plagiarism made it through a successful doctoral defense at SUNY-Stony Brook.

Reply

Tom

1/14/2017 12:19:45 pm

I think that you may be giving Mr Jorjani more attention than he deserves. His arguments appear to be a stale rehash of previous mediocre books which I hope he cites in the footnotes. I imagine that Messrs Jorjani and Spencer hope the new President will create an America in their image, more likely he has never heard of them.

Reply

Kal

1/14/2017 12:24:55 pm

Guy that sounds like the dude who founded Levi's jeans, 1980s mansions used to later make porn, alt right guys living in an apartment to spew hate filled anti everyone but them rhetoric? With Freud and Jung tossed in? Freud was doing drugs to come up with his theories. Jung was more than often wrong. Maybe Mazlowe's hierarchy was too much for this guy. It sounds like a bad reality TV premise. Owning the brand alt right is one thing, but being baffling is another. This story is not going to sell, even to Trumppers, as they're not going to understand it even less. They would be excluded from his 5 percent solution. He would be also. Making something wordy doesn't mean intelligence. Measuring someone's skull for smarts was deemed inaccurate in the 19th century. So he basically is all right, if that means anything. Sounds like he was a former Dixie crat back in the 1970s who got born again into the GOP fueled Trump rhetoric. You can bet that the Donald believes in PT Bamum, 'there's a sucker born every minute', and in other alt books.

Reply

Clete

1/14/2017 12:26:32 pm

You know, if they have trouble making the rent maybe they could have Scott Wolter and J. Hutton Pulitzer move in with them. The only problem would be property values in their area would rapidly decline.

Reply

Shane Sullivan

1/14/2017 05:09:16 pm

Does the book actually cite Claude Levi Strauss by name?

I wonder if Jorjani and Spencer realize that he was Jewish.

Reply

[Jason Colavito \(http://www.JasonColavito.com\)](http://www.JasonColavito.com)

1/14/2017 05:13:45 pm

It does cite him by name, though he knows his work only through George P. Hansen's book "The Trickster and the Paranormal" (2001).

- [texts\)](#)
- [Archaeology](#)
- [\(/blog/category/archaeolog](#)
- [y\)](#)
- [Atlantis](#)
- [\(/blog/category/atlantis\)](#)
- [Conspiracies](#)
- [\(/blog/category/conspiracie](#)
- [s\)](#)
- [Giants](#)
- [\(/blog/category/giants\)](#)
- [Horror](#)
- [\(/blog/category/horror\)](#)
- [King Arthur](#)
- [\(/blog/category/king-arthur\)](#)
- [Knights Templar](#)
- [\(/blog/category/knights-](#)
- [templar\)](#)
- [Lovecraft](#)
- [\(/blog/category/lovecraft\)](#)
- [Mythology](#)
- [\(/blog/category/mythology\)](#)
- [Occult](#)
- [\(/blog/category/occult\)](#)
- [Popular Culture](#)
- [\(/blog/category/popular-](#)
- [culture\)](#)
- [Popular Culture](#)
- [\(/blog/category/popular](#)
- [culture\)](#)
- [Projects](#)
- [\(/blog/category/projects\)](#)
- [Racism](#)
- [\(/blog/category/racism\)](#)
- [Science](#)
- [\(/blog/category/science\)](#)
- [Skepticism](#)
- [\(/blog/category/skepticism\)](#)
- [Ufos \(/blog/category/ufos\)](#)
- [Weird Old Art](#)
- [\(/blog/category/weird old](#)
- [art\)](#)
- [Weird Things](#)
- [\(/blog/category/weird](#)
- [things\)](#)
- [White Nationalism](#)
- [\(/blog/category/white-](#)
- [nationalism\)](#)

## Terms & Conditions

Please read all applicable [terms and conditions \(/terms-and-conditions.html\)](#) before posting a comment on this blog. Posting a comment constitutes your agreement to abide by the terms and conditions linked herein.

## Archives

- [January 2017](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/01-2017\)](#)
- [December 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/12-2016\)](#)
- [November 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/11-2016\)](#)
- [October 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/10-2016\)](#)
- [September 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/09-2016\)](#)
- [August 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/08-2016\)](#)
- [July 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/07-2016\)](#)
- [June 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/06-2016\)](#)
- [May 2016](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/05-2016\)](#)



		Replv	<a href="#">April 2016</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/04-2016)</a> <a href="#">March 2016</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/03-2016)</a> <a href="#">February 2016</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/02-2016)</a> <a href="#">January 2016</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/01-2016)</a>
<b>Shane Sullivan</b>	1/14/2017 10:07:05 pm		
But of course the racist pseudo-intellectual is unfamiliar with primary sources.			
<b>Graham</b>	1/14/2017 07:55:54 pm		<a href="#">December 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/12-2015)</a> <a href="#">November 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/11-2015)</a> <a href="#">October 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/10-2015)</a> <a href="#">September 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/09-2015)</a> <a href="#">August 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/08-2015)</a> <a href="#">July 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/07-2015)</a> <a href="#">June 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/06-2015)</a> <a href="#">May 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/05-2015)</a> <a href="#">April 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/04-2015)</a> <a href="#">March 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/03-2015)</a> <a href="#">February 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/02-2015)</a> <a href="#">January 2015</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/01-2015)</a> <a href="#">December 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/12-2014)</a> <a href="#">November 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/11-2014)</a> <a href="#">October 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/10-2014)</a> <a href="#">September 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/09-2014)</a> <a href="#">August 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/08-2014)</a> <a href="#">July 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/07-2014)</a> <a href="#">June 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/06-2014)</a> <a href="#">May 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/05-2014)</a> <a href="#">April 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/04-2014)</a> <a href="#">March 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/03-2014)</a> <a href="#">February 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/02-2014)</a> <a href="#">January 2014</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/01-2014)</a> <a href="#">December 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/12-2013)</a> <a href="#">November 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/11-2013)</a> <a href="#">October 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/10-2013)</a> <a href="#">September 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/09-2013)</a> <a href="#">August 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/08-2013)</a> <a href="#">July 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/07-2013)</a> <a href="#">June 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/06-2013)</a> <a href="#">May 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/05-2013)</a> <a href="#">April 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/04-2013)</a> <a href="#">March 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/03-2013)</a> <a href="#">February 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/02-2013)</a> <a href="#">January 2013</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/01-2013)</a> <a href="#">December 2012</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/12-2012)</a> <a href="#">November 2012</a> <a href="#">(/blog/archives/11-2012)</a>
At what you are saying about Jorjani's doctoral thesis containing fundamental errors is correct, the people judging it must have not been paying attention when they read it.		Reply	
As for the 'Alt-Right' I've been following a few of the people who used that term on Youtube (You need to see what the other side is saying.), some of them are distancing themselves from it because they don't want to be associated with out and out right-wing lunacy.			
<b>Jason Colavito (<a href="http://www.JasonColavito.com">http://www.JasonColavito.com</a>)</b>	1/14/2017 08:07:54 pm		
The book is based on his dissertation, but it may not be identical to it. He removed the dissertation from academic databases, so I have no way to compare.		Reply	
<b>Graham</b>	1/14/2017 11:19:15 pm		
Which is really frustrating, but not too surprising.			
Have you heard anything recently on Afrocentrism (The extreme kind that holds that Native Americans got everything from West Africans), I keep hearing rumors to the effect that students are demanding it be taught in universities because L'Anse aux Meadows is 'obviously' a racist fraud.			
<b>Kal</b>	1/14/2017 10:41:14 pm		
Sour grapes? Why would he remove his dissertation? That's like trying to delete your academic place in history. You'd think if he wanted credibility he would keep his stuff online, unless possibly it wasn't really there to begin with. Many early works cited were done before the Internet and not entered into a database. Or did he just dislike his schooling so much he wanted to disown it? That makes no sense. Oh well.		Reply	
<b>John Hoopes</b>	1/15/2017 11:47:46 am		
Jorjani's dissertation is not available through ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, the principal academic database for these works. One can access the abstract, but not the dissertation itself. I suspect it was embargoed in order to help sales of his book, which is apparently based on the dissertation.		Reply	
<b>Christine Erikson (<a href="http://fightthenewage.blogspot.com">http://fightthenewage.blogspot.com</a>)</b>	1/15/2017 02:32:41 pm		
Stanford university maintains a hard copy library of all doctoral dissertations, maybe of masters theses also, not sure, ever written.		Reply	
<b>Americanegro</b>	1/14/2017 11:32:51 pm		
"Nearly all traditional cultures recognize at least three levels, not two: heaven, earth, and the underworld."			
That sounds a bit slapdash and Hellenocentric, borderline Tsoukalish. China, to take an easy example, has Heaven and Earth, Yang and Yin respectively, and a tripartite Heaven, Earth, Man model.		Reply	
<b>Shane Sullivan</b>	1/14/2017 11:56:05 pm		
It does sound like Tsoukalos, and I would half expect him to use it as proof of ancient extraterrestrial contact, but there really is some science behind it. Three-level cosmology is very widely found in so-called "shamanistic" cultures, and David Lewis-Williams suggests that it's actually hard-wired into human neurology for us to experience altered states of conscious in that way. Thus we have almost-universal accounts of soul flight into heaven, "falling" into the underworld, etc., even in disparate cultures.			

**John Hoopes**

1/15/2017 11:56:34 am

The identification of a three-level cosmology in "shamanistic" cultures is largely the result of the scholarship of Mircea Eliade, who was a chief ideologue for the fiercely antisemitic, fascist Iron Guard of Romania in the 1930s. Eliade was also a lifelong (though crypto-) Perennialist who believed, as does Jorjani, in an ancient wisdom tradition preserved through time immemorial by a spiritual elite. Everything Eliade wrote about "shamanism" must be considered with this in mind.

**John Hoopes**

1/15/2017 12:09:07 pm

Note also that the phrase "altered state of consciousness" was coined by parapsychologist Charles Tart, whose questionable research on ESP and paranormal phenomena is cited by Jorjani. Tart's pseudoscientific work on marijuana, psychedelics, and psi must also be taken into consideration when making assertions about the association of these with "shamanism". David Lewis-Williams' work--part of the inspiration for Graham Hancock's book "Supernatural"--is highly speculative and heavily colored by confirmation bias and wishful thinking.

**Shane Sullivan**

1/15/2017 01:35:05 pm

I don't want to overplay my hand here, as this isn't really my wheelhouse, and frankly you probably know more about this subject than I do, but, a couple of things.

Yes, Eliade's indefensible politics must be taken into account when treating with his scholarship.

Charles Tart did not coin the term "altered state of consciousness", although he did popularize it. It actually dates back to the nineteenth century, although most relevantly it was used in the 1960s by Arnold M. Ludwig: <http://jamnetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/489135>

And yes, Lewis-Williams writings are speculative--I only said he suggested a plausible hypothesis--but I don't think it's relevant that it inspired Supernatural. Hancock butchered his work by claiming that it related to some genuine magical realm of fairies and spirits rather than a subjective interpretation of neurological processes.

**John Hoopes**

1/15/2017 01:45:17 pm

Thanks for the clarification and the reference to Ludwig. I clearly overstated Tart's coining of the term, though as you note he played a significant role in popularizing it.

The main point I wanted to make is that terms such as "shamanism" and "altered states of consciousness" have acquired a patina of scholarship that often results in their being used uncritically. For me, they are both tainted by association with typically undisclosed emic (believers' or insiders') ideologies that beg deconstruction whenever these concepts are invoked.

**Shane Sullivan**

1/15/2017 02:36:35 pm

Fair enough.

**Epimethee**

1/16/2017 11:25:32 am

I think it's fair to point out the ideological background of Eliade, political and mystical. There is nevertheless two nuances to add. The first is clearly that, for at least 30 years, the vast majority of scholarship in science of religions was aware of this background. This lead to the second point: Eliade cannot be totally dismissed even with those caveat. Clearly he must be contextualised but a lot of his writings are still useful.

I am a huge fan of the work of some modern scholars on shamanism, like Bertrand Hell or Roberte Hamayon. As anthropologist, they are critical of the background but also of the literary scholarship of Eliade. They still use some of his notions. I will also add that their works, or the works of Roger Bastide and Alfred Métraux (i enjoyed also Jeanne Favret-Saada on modern witchcraft in Normandy in 1970) have clearly moved the science of "altered consciousness" far beyond Eliade. For example, the work of Faavret Saada can be read as a reflexion about the emic and etic of witchcraft. The anthropologist was "taken" (prise in french) by the world she tried to understand and her books are some of the most interesting document on such a dive, balancing a belief that she never wanted but who start to affect her life and well-being and the critical thinking of a serious scientist who worked in the Algerian war on violence in the military tribunals.

Hell has worked on the context of shamanistic rituals in the muslim society of Morocco. We are really far from the Tradition "à la Guénon" and Hell has really achieved a great book about the practical aspect of shamanistic rituals as the mastery of chaos in a belief system, here an islamic society, that pretend to govern every aspect of spiritual life. Hamayon worked on yakoute ceremony and use the difference between game and play to describe the ritual and the participation of the peoples.

All those books have moved far beyond Eliade, and also far beyond the emic and etic division, but still draw on some part of his work.

I think today the works of Eliade could be more interesstingly deconstructed in the context of "pop-religion" and all those "neo" movement that used some distorted part of his scholarship. This could lead to one of my pet project, the diffusion of the Eliadean view in the fantasy scene and particularly in the role-playing game pantheons.

- [October 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/10-2012\)](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/09-2012\)](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/08-2012\)](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/07-2012\)](#)
- [June 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/06-2012\)](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/05-2012\)](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/04-2012\)](#)
- [March 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/03-2012\)](#)
- [February 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/02-2012\)](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/01-2012\)](#)
- [December 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/12-2011\)](#)
- [November 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/11-2011\)](#)
- [October 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/10-2011\)](#)
- [September 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/09-2011\)](#)
- [August 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/08-2011\)](#)
- [July 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/07-2011\)](#)
- [June 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/06-2011\)](#)
- [May 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/05-2011\)](#)
- [April 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/04-2011\)](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/03-2011\)](#)
- [February 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/02-2011\)](#)
- [January 2011](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/01-2011\)](#)
- [December 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/12-2010\)](#)
- [November 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/11-2010\)](#)
- [October 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/10-2010\)](#)
- [September 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/09-2010\)](#)
- [August 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/08-2010\)](#)
- [July 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/07-2010\)](#)
- [June 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/06-2010\)](#)
- [May 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/05-2010\)](#)
- [April 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/04-2010\)](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/03-2010\)](#)
- [February 2010](#)
- [\(/blog/archives/02-2010\)](#)

 [RSS Feed \(1/feed\)](#)

As much as i agree with your comment, i think it is today a starting point in reading Eliade. The scholarship on shamanism and altered consciousness has moved since.

**John Hoopes**

1/16/2017 11:52:27 am

I agree that there has been plenty of time for scholars to recognize the issues with Eliade's scholarship. They were sharply critiqued early on by anthropologists such as Sir Edmund Leach. However, from what I see, they have continued to be used uncritically by many others, especially those outside the fields of anthropology and religious studies. His assertions in "Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy" (Fr. 1951, Eng. 1964) are still taken for granted by many, especially in the crossover realms of pop scholarship and pop culture. Some of this has been abetted by academic writers who should know better. Some worthwhile critiques of Eliade can be found in these sources:

The Soul of Shamanism, by Daniel Noel

<https://www.amazon.com/Soul-Shamanism-Fantasies-Imaginal-Realities/dp/0826409326>

Manufacturing Religion, by Russell McCutcheon

<https://www.amazon.com/Manufacturing-Religion-Discourse-Politics-Nostalgia/dp/0195166639>

Against the Modern World, by Mark Sedgwick

<https://www.amazon.com/Against-Modern-World-Traditionalism-Intellectual/dp/0195396014>

For a popular, and emic (yet critical) perspective, this book chapter is helpful:

Archangels of Our Darker Natures, by Gary Lachman

[http://realitysandwich.com/9856/archangels\\_our\\_darker\\_natures/](http://realitysandwich.com/9856/archangels_our_darker_natures/)

From his nonacademic book:

Politics and the Occult: The Left, the Right, and the Radically Unseen

<https://www.amazon.com/Politics-Occult-Right-Radically-Unseen/dp/0835608573>

I also highly recommend this:

Genealogies of Shamanism, by Jeroen Boekhoven

<https://www.amazon.com/Genealogies-Shamanism-Struggles-Charisma-Authority/dp/907792292X>

**Epiméthée**

1/16/2017 12:50:40 pm

And lo! We agree almost totally. I was astonished by his uncritical use in literary studies, for example in some course about the african oral narrations. As you said, they should know better.

Thanks also for the books, some known to me and some i never read. My main sources here are in french, i was'nt sure they could be usefull to you directly, and thus i haven't taken the time to post the detailed notice. If you wish, i can correct that. It is sad but they are for the most part untranslated. Bertrand Hell in particular had really renewed a lot of the scholarship on shamanism and should be available for the english academics.

**A Buddhist**

1/15/2017 08:44:58 am

And Mozi talked about Heaven, the Realm of Ghosts, and the Human World in a way that suggested that humans were at the bottom, with ghosts between Heaven and Men.

**Reply**

**Americanegro**

1/15/2017 11:53:41 pm

Okay, I give up. What did you get wrong THIS time?

**An Over-Educated Grunt**

1/15/2017 09:20:45 am

Sounds like we have our Alfred Roenberg.

**Reply**

**PostModernPrimate**

1/15/2017 02:47:00 pm

If only my thesis committee had been as incompetent as Jorjani's. I would have been able to write my dissertation in a week!

**Reply**

**Kal**

1/15/2017 08:14:10 pm

I understand that a lot of altered state of consciousness in the 1960s came from doing certain ritual substances, such as drugs or alcohol, and cooking the brain, but since I was not there, I can only get it from stories, tv, or films.

I would not profess to understand why they did it, but I can probably say it was not aliens or dimensional beings, but all in their heads, within a reasonable doubt.

Reply

Reid

1/18/2017 07:25:56 pm

The good news is that Alexandria, where I live, has risen up in an attempt to have them removed. Several lawyers are looking into it, and people are already protesting. We do not want this vermin in our town.

Reply

Reid

1/19/2017 12:38:54 pm

Here's a link from the Washington Post:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/for-one-alexandria-neighborhood-the-alt-right-is-all-wrong/2017/01/17/d4f893b6-dce6-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c\_story.html?hpid=hp\_regional-hp-cards\_rhp-card-columnists%3Ahomepage%2Fcard&utm\_term=.d7a583886541

Reply

## Leave a Reply.

Name (required)

Email (not published)

Website

Comments

Notify me of new comments to this post by email

Submit



[Home \(/\)](#) | [Blog \(/blog.html\)](#) | [Books \(/books.html\)](#) | [Contact \(/contact-jason.html\)](#) | [About Jason \(/about-jason.html\)](#) | [Terms & Conditions \(/terms-and-conditions.html\)](#)

© 2010-2017 Jason Colavito. All rights reserved.

- [Home \(/\)](#)
- [Blog \(/blog.html\)](#)
- [Books \(/books.html\)](#)
- [Articles \(/articles.html\)](#)
- [The Library \(/the-library.html\)](#)
- [About Jason \(/about-jason.html\)](#)
- [Search \(/search.html\)](#)