

FEBRUARY 14, 2014

Dear Mr. Warwick-Smith:

A friend of mine forwarded to me your press packet for the book Viral Mythology by Marie D Jones and Larry Flaxman. I don't know if his companies are distributing it or planning to review it, but, I thought I'd share my thoughts.

My first impression of the book was positive. The cover is excellent, the subject is intriguing, and your press packet, quite frankly, is better written than the book itself. My impression on reading it is that your authors have a fixed audience and they crank a book out periodically, without much concern for quality, because they know it will bring in some amount of money. Having spent 23-ish years in publishing, I know this is a business model.

I did like a few things about the book. The assertions about Jupiter (p. 104), about Eden (p. 111), and about Masonic myth (p. 189-190) were new to me, as was some of the Jesus material (p. 92-93), and I enjoyed the interview with Ron Patton (p. 227-229). But, your authors have such a poor grasp of their subject matter that I may not have heard of these things because they are wrong. A reader should not be in doubt like that. Worse, your authors compound this by complaining about "debunkers [with] no background in archeology, anthropology, history, mythology or comparative religion." (p. 203) Those in glass houses ...

First, the book is not about viral mythology. Pages 23-51 and 209-241 are about viral mythology. Pages 1-22 and 52-208 appear to be ~~about a history of using art, writing, stories, and secret societies to communicate~~ a history of using art, writing, stories, and secret societies to communicate - and not a particularly accurate one. Your authors' thesis is that human beings communicate virally through a collective consciousness. This thesis is not even mentioned in 178 of the book's 241 pages. When it is mentioned, on page 217, "There is a ton of evidence to support the Field Grid theory," your authors don't have the courtesy to tell the reader what that evidence is. My impression is that someone was told to fluff 63 pages of material out to 250+ pages with index and bibliography.

Second, the book needs a skilled editor. Good writing makes a point in the fewest, simplest words possible. If this book was ~~properly~~ edited for brevity and clarity, my guess is that 30,000 of this book's 70,000-ish words would drop ^{off} ~~off~~.

For example:

"Folklorists have been said to find a narrative in the mural-like depiction." (p. 57)

"Folklorists found a narrative in the mural." (13 words to 7)

"Laird Scranton is the author of The Science of the Dogon ... and is one of the leading authorities on the West African Dogon and their cosmology, which is filled with stunning symbols and concepts similar to the most cutting-edge science."

"Laird Scranton is the author of The Science of the Dogon, which is about the West African Dogon tribe and their cosmology." (41 words to 22)

"Because of Egypt's importance for almost 30 centuries as the preeminent civilization of the Western world, there is a huge field of study called Egyptology that focuses on the art, architecture, and archeology of this hugely influential cultural powerhouse."

"Egyptology is the study of the art, architecture and culture of ancient Egypt." (39 words to 13)

This is stereotypically bad writing.

An editor is also needed to help the authors with structure. One, your pulled-information is not pulled.

The information on p. 46-50, 60-62, 69-70, 71-72, 82-83, 89-91 and so on should have been clearly segregated from the main text by your graphic designer. Two, more importantly, take pages 34-45. This looks like a ~~sequence~~ sequence of epitomes of books your authors either read or read about - like a series of Wikipedia articles. Your authors do not integrate their sources in any way - discussing them in the context of each other or their own views. Much of the book reads like a bunch of Wikipedia articles strung together.

Worse, your authors seem to have only a vague notion of history, which is a bad thing when writing a history book. First, their information is internally inconsistent:

"The oldest cave paintings ... [are in] the Cave of Altamira ... some 40,000 years [ago]." (p. 54)

"The oldest paintings are in the El Castillo ... 40,800 years ago." (p. 54)

"[They] may be a part of ... the Late Stone Age, which dates from 50,000 to 100,000 years ago." (p. 54)

I understand some historical dates are subjective. But, could your authors have picked a date range and stuck to it?

"Greek art was divided into three distinct eras: 1. The Archaic (600 BC - 500 BC)" (p. 74)

"Greek art went through four distinct periods: ... 2. The Archaic Period (700 BC - 500 BC)" (p. 75)

These are small things, but the whole book is like this.

"Egyptian art began to flourish between 3200 BC and 1340 BC" (p. 73)

Geological activity may ~~take 2000 years to begin~~ Art movements don't.

Things like this show that your authors have a vague notion of history. "It happened around there sometime.

When isn't really important."

Then there are factual errors:

"The ancient art of ... Rome ... was the final progression toward a ... system of writing."

Rome was founded c. 753 BC, Alba Longa maybe 1153 BC. Proto-hieroglyphic figures appear on the Narmer tablet c. 3100 BC. Cuneiform c. 1800 BC (maybe a bit earlier - but I don't think so). Alphabetic writing c. 1100-900 BC (I'm a bit vague on this). All of these were before Rome was founded. ~~There is no evidence that the Greeks, who were the first to use the alphabet, were influenced by the Egyptians.~~

Greece, too, did not evolve its language out of art. Again, small things - but the whole book is this way.

"An early 'secret society' ... that operated under spiritually and intellectually suffocating conditions was the Cathars ... What pissed off the Church [is that] Cathars denied the material body of Jesus." (p. 173)

The Cathars were not a secret society. They met quite openly in churches and counted most of the Narbonne nobility among their members. The Cathars did deny the materiality of Jesus, but they also denounced YHWH as a demon and said the Holy Ghost was Lucifer. The simplistic formula that the Church hated women's equality and the like is just that - a simplistic formula, like the p. 202 statement about Christians "limited belief system." I am not a Christian, but the Church itself has often been a vehicle for the transmission of occult worldviews, and to present issues in this manner contradicts fact. Plus, the Church was not particularly powerful in Southern France from 578 AD forward; it was "stifling" until the Albigensian Crusades.

As that statement veers into debatable opinion, I'll give one more objectively clear error:

"The Temple of Solomon, which was begun by David ..." (p. 189)

"You know how my father David could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God ..." (1 Kings 8:3)

Somebody could have looked that up.

This letter is already running long, and I'm not going to compose a treatise on this book, but, your authors could have done better.

Let me make some suggestions:

① Your authors would do well to read a standard history and commit important dates to memory.

A good, short, one-volume history is McNeill's Rise Of The West, which covers European, Asian,

and world history from the diffusionist perspective. If you want a higher-education-level background, the New Cambridge Classical and Medieval Histories - 5 volumes each - provide a solid background; enough that you'd avoid these errors.

② Collective consciousness is a very interesting philosophical concept. Few people suggest it functions telepathically, as your authors do. But, Plato suggested it, based on older Indo-European Traditional views, and the neo-Platonists developed it, along with both the Catholic Church and the Jews, into a relatively complex system. Hegel uses it in the *Volkgeist*. Good modern reads on the subject include Julius Evola and Savitri Devi. Your authors dove into this subject without any idea of its 2500+ year history, which, if they'd learn it, would help them understand and contextualize alchemy, magic, Masonry, and all of these esoterica they want to dabble in.

③ Teach your writers how to edit - not just proofread - their material. Sentences should be plain and to the point. The contents of a book should relate to its thesis or subject matter. Avoid informal language and rhetorical tricks. Integrate, don't list, material, and contribute to it. Things like that.

I really would have liked to ~~write~~ have written you on the substance of this book, but, I couldn't. There really wasn't any substance to address.

Sincerely,

William A White

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