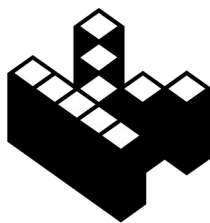


A KOPIIMIST GOSPEL

according to

Christian Engström



The Creation

o. In The Beginning

In the beginning, the world was a stinking soup of ammonia, methane gas, and nasty toxic chemicals. The atmosphere was alight with flashes of pure energy. Something wanted to be born.

In ways and for reasons that remain to be explored, the ribosomes appeared, who could copy. This was the beginning of Life. We therefore see Copying as the first manifestation of the Divine Spirit.

Once the ribosomes were there, and could copy both themselves and the proteins necessary to build a cell, this led to cells actually appearing. Exactly why the proteins chose to voluntarily organize into something more complicated is, as we said, not yet fully explored, so we'll have reason to return to this. But we leave that aside for the moment.

The important thing is that the cells appeared. Cells have two properties. First, they can copy themselves, just like the ribosomes before them. Second, they like to cooperate with others to build things that are larger than any of the constituent parts.

From these two properties, the living world that we see around us developed. The peacock and the broccoli, the forest and the shoal of fish, all other living phenomena ever filmed by the BBC.

We Kopimists therefore see **Copying** as the First Fundamental Principle of the Creation.

We see the *Desire to Build Something Larger Together* as the Second Fundamental Principle, and call it ***Collaboration***.

From this foundation, we want to learn to understand the Divine Spirit and the world we live in. And we want to do it together with others.

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What does this mean?

Kopimism is a modern religion based on science. We do not believe in a Creator god, as we have no need of that hypothesis. Instead we accept the scientific creation story as it is described today and may be refined in the future. On this solid foundation we build our faith.

From the creation story we identify Fundamental Principles that have driven the evolution of life on Earth and human civilization.

We see that these Principles have created a world of awe inspiring beauty and complexity, that continues to evolve. We therefore believe that these Principles are eternal and good, and can give us guidance and inspiration in our lives.

This is most certainly true.

1. Seven Historical Milestones

In the creation myth, we see how Copying and Collaboration led to the emergence of life. These two Fundamental Principles have then played a central role in the history of mankind.

Let us consider seven historical milestones: fire, language, culture, writing, the printing press, science, and the internet.

Fire

Once fire exists, it can be copied at no additional cost. “He who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me,” cave people noted several millennia before Jefferson turned it into a quotation.

But the early men and women in caves didn’t just copy fire as such. They also copied the knowledge about how to handle fire. Just like fire, knowledge can be copied an infinite number of times without losing its power to enlighten. Unless both fire as such and the knowledge about it had been copied, mankind would not have progressed.

Language

A child learns her first words by copying her parents, just like they once did with theirs. The language belongs to all and none, and that is what gives it value. The more a language is shared, the more valuable it becomes for those who share it.

By listening and copying, early men and women created what is still today our most important tool in society.

Language is the basis for our ability to build larger things together, from individual projects to entire civilizations. There are other forms of communication that are also important, but to us humans, language is in a league of its own.

Culture

Once they had access to fire and language, the first thing that people did was to sit down around the fire and start telling each other stories.

Perhaps the prehistoric inventor of the word “tiger” had in mind that it would primarily be used when there were actual tigers around, but this is not what happened. Instead, stories and songs were filled with thousands of tigers that had never existed in the real world, but lived terrifying and beautiful in people’s imagination.

The stories and the songs were copied and shared, and created links between people’s minds, which gave rise to new stories and songs, that made it possible to think even larger things together. Culture develops in an eternal process where old expressions are copied and shared, and give inspiration to new ones.

Writing

The human brain has clear and present limitations on how much it can remember and retell. Writing was the next milestone that allowed us to transcend these limitations.

With writing you can share more complex thoughts with more people at a lower cost. You can create more complex structures that involve more individuals. The amount of information that can be stored is no longer limited to what an individual can recall.

Writing made it possible to copy and share information like never before. It allowed civilizations to rise and create the conditions for further progress.

The Printing Press

When Gutenberg put his printing press together in middle of the 15th century, it was the starting bell for the development process that would give us the modern world we have today.

The printing press drastically lowered the cost of sharing information. Within a few decades, the technology had spread like wildfire all over Europe. Never before had so much information and so many new thoughts flowed through people's minds.

Ever since, the printed word has been at the service of knowledge, culture, and political freedom. The individual pen has not always been mightier than the sword, but in the long run free speech has turned out to be a natural force that no regime in the world can stop.

Science

Isaac Newton will stand as the symbol for the new scientific paradigm that was born some century after the printing press appeared.

One novelty was the scientific approach, where you make observations and experiments, and then try to build theories based on the results you have. But an even more fundamental shift was that scientists started to publish their ideas and discoveries, so that they could be shared. Until this day, the printing press has been the most important instrument within all scientific disciplines.

The alchemists kept their results secret, and got nowhere at all in several thousand years. The chemists published theirs, and transformed the world in a century.

Since the days of Isaac Newton, scientists have been able to see ever further by standing on an increasingly high pyramid of giant's shoulders. Copying and sharing of knowledge have given us the technological world we have

today.

The Internet

Today we don't yet know what will become of the Internet, but we have seen enough to realize that it will be something really big. Just like Writing and the Printing Press when they appeared, the Internet represents a quantum leap in our ability to copy information and build bigger things together.

Where it will lead to in the end nobody knows, but we Kopimists feel trust in the future. Throughout history, we have seen how the two fundamental principles Copying and Collaboration have combined to bring humanity to where it is today.

We are eager to continue to take part in the process that started the first time a man or a woman in a cave shared a flame of fire, and got a smile in return.

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2. Things Never Turn Out As Expected, But Often Okay Anyway

Big things almost never turn out as you expected, but the way they do turn out is often fine anyway. In our everyday life we can decide what color we'll have on the living-room curtains and what we'll have for dinner, and feel reasonably confident that what we decided is how things will turn out. But all the big things in life: where we'll work, what friends we'll get, whom we'll marry, appear to be mostly governed by chance.

Looking back, we can often see how our life would have taken a different course unless we had had that particular chance conversation there and then at some point in our life. We can make all the plans we want for the future, but no matter what we think, that's probably not what's going to happen. We have a very limited ability to predict the long term consequences of our decisions and actions, no matter how much we try.

When we look at the seven historical milestones, we can see that this was true of them as well. The individuals who made the discoveries didn't have a clue about what they would actually lead to.

We will of course never know exactly what the inventors of fire, language, culture, and writing thought and expected, but we can still be pretty sure that they couldn't imagine that this would lead to a world where people lived in high-rise buildings and made a living from designing ring-tones instead of hunting and gathering. But that's what happened.

When Gutenberg put together his printing press in the middle of the 15th century, his idea was to print Bibles in Latin, without all the annoying mistakes that crept into the texts when they were copied by hand. He had a vision of a time when the word of God would be preached in a more uniform way everywhere, thanks to better Bibles and other authoritative texts.

In reality, the opposite happened. Just a few decades after the first printing press saw the light of day, a priest called Martin Luther used it to publish both theses and a Bible in the vernacular language instead of in Latin. This was the foundation for a new variant of Christianity, which would later be forked further with the help of the written word. The message of the Christian God would never again be preached in such a uniform way as it had before Gutenberg. No cigar on that point.

Isaac Newton was a devout Christian, and saw it as man's mission to understand God's creation as well as possible. This is what drove him as a scientist. He wanted to honor God, and help us see more of His glory.

But unfortunately for Newton on this point, he and his followers were so successful in describing the world with mathematical laws, that there was no room left for God himself. If everything is just particles bouncing around according to predetermined rules, there is no place for either the human soul, free will, or any god.

(More modern physics with uncertainty principles and chaos theories have since shown that the universe can't be described as a giant billiard table after all, so now there are once again areas of uncertainty where we can place both free will and God, should we desire. But now we are talking about Newton.)

Instead of demonstrating the glory of God, the successes for Newton's physics made the whole idea of a God seem

unscientific and false. This was not what Sir Isaac had in mind.

We see the same uncertainty about what technical innovations would lead to repeated in modern technological history.

When Marconi invented the radio, he thought it would be used primarily for person to person calls. When Bell patented the telephone, he thought that the killer application would be listening to music that was played centrally.

It turned out the other way around, but that's quite okay too.

The pioneers who created the Internet have all testified that when they started the work, they couldn't imagine even the development we have seen already. Ask them what the net will be like in 50 or even 5 years, and they'll just laugh. Nobody thinks there is anybody who can make reliable prediction that far into the future.

But we Kopimists are still convinced that the Internet is a fantastic step forward for humanity, and that it will lead to a better world, even though we can't say what that world will look like.

We take note of the fact in the history of mankind, things have been going in the right direction so far, and we believe that they will continue to do so. In the next section we will examine why.

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3. The Third Fundamental Principle

Looking back at history, we see that Copying and Collaboration are not enough to explain mankind's journey so far towards the better. They are necessary, but not sufficient to explain why development should move towards the better (of all places).

Copying and Collaboration together provide a mechanism for “onwards”, but no mechanism for steering in any particular direction, like “towards the better”. The concept of “better” does not even exist in the universe defined by the first two fundamental principles.

But despite this, and despite the fact that things never turn out as we expected, development so far *has* been for the better. There are still many people living in misery in the world, but a larger proportion of us are leading better lives than ever before in history. There have been setbacks and disasters on mankind's journey up until now, but the overall trend has been towards the better.

We Kopimists are convinced that development generally will continue to be for the better, and we are eager to see the future come true as soon as possible. But we cannot deduce this optimism for the future from just the two fundamental principles Copying and the Collaboration.

Our belief in a better future is based on a third Fundamental Principle:

3. *Quality*

or *The Attraction Force of the Good*.

We believe there is a force that keeps pulling the world in the right direction. Sometimes other forces may be stronger, and then things go wrong, but statistically things will move in the right direction a little bit more often than in the wrong. This allows us to dare to feel trust in the future, even though we don't know what it will be like.

Exactly how this force works remains to be explored. It may be that it affects us in some way, consciously or unconsciously, to choose the alternative that leads in the right direction a little more often than by blind chance.

But even if we don't yet know the exact nature of this force, the important thing is that the attraction force of Quality exists. This is the core article of faith in this description of Kopimism.

We now have a philosophical framework built on three Fundamental Principles:

1. **Copying**
2. **Collaboration**—The Desire to Build Something Larger Together
3. **Quality**—The Attraction Force of the Good

The third fundamental principle gives meaning to mankind's journey, and promises that we can go in the right direction. The second explains how complexity and beauty can develop from simpler building blocks, apparently all by itself. And the first explains how progress can be shared to provide the basis for the next level.

Together, the three fundamental principles form the beginning of a philosophical framework for understanding the world, and daring to feel confident about the future. Much remains to be explored, but this is a stable foundation. Development has been moving in the right direction so far, and we think it will continue to do so. The question is only in what ways we can help.

We dare to feel safe in the trust that creates the world.

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4. Kopimism and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Robert M. Pirsig's [*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*](#) from 1974 is one of the world's most widely read philosophical books. I think it has a strong connection to Kopimism.

The Kopimist creation myth so far identifies three Fundamental Principles that have worked together to create life on Earth: Copying, Collaboration, and Quality.

The Book of Pirsig revolves around the concept of Quality, which acquires a more and more metaphysical meaning as the book progresses.

I believe that what the Kopimist creation myth calls Quality, and describes as the attraction force of the good, is very similar to Pirsig's Quality, perhaps even identical.

The Book of Pirsig is a very deep book, of the kind that you reread in whole or in part a number of times in your life, and gain new insights each time. I will give a quick summary of it below, but the important thing is not whether that summary is understandable or not.

The most important thing is that Pirsig argues the idea that Quality is a real (though not yet explored) force of nature. That idea we can copy straight into Kopimism. We can then use the Book of Pirsig as a starting point for a deeper philosophical discussion about what Quality is and how it affects our thoughts and actions.

But if you don't feel like engaging in this particular

philosophical discussion, you don't have to. From a practical point of view it is enough to note that Quality is a real and existing force that affects us. That somebody has already made the effort to describe such a force is a good sign. As a Kopimist believer you can find strength in that, regardless of whether you yourself want to focus on that particular theoretical aspect or not.

Here is a quick summary of the Book of Pirsig, but as I've said, it is quite okay to just skim through it if you find it too theoretical. The important thing is that it exists, for those who are interested.

The first half of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* deals with the difference between "romantic" and "classic" beauty, the difference between *hip* and *square*, to use the language of the 70's. Romantic beauty is the immediate beauty on the surface that you notice directly with your eyes. Classic beauty is instead the internal, structural beauty, where all the parts fit together into a harmonious whole. To see and appreciate this type of beauty you need knowledge and an understanding of the internal structures, so the classic beauty is not as immediate as the romantic.

Pirsig feels that many of the problems in the world (or at least the conflict between *hip* and *square* that was high on the agenda in the 70's) can be traced back to the divide between these two perspectives, which has given us two different incompatible ways to view the world around us. Pirsig wants to find a way to bridge this divide.

After a while he focuses on the word Quality, which at least is used in both the romantic and the classic view of the world. Romantics and classics (in this sense) may have different opinions about what is beautiful, what has Quality, but they both have the concept. This is a starting point, at least.

A cornerstone in Pirsig's philosophical reasoning is that he refuses to define what Quality is. He sees Quality as something that exists, but argues that it cannot be defined in terms of other concepts, since any definition would only capture something that is less than, and different from, what he means by Quality.

But even if Quality cannot be defined, we all have the capacity to recognize Quality. The main character Phaedrus, who is Pirsig's alter ego in this part of the book, works as a rhetoric teacher at a university. His job is to teach students how to write texts with quality. Now he tries to apply his philosophical ideas about Quality in the classroom.

Phaedrus starts by demonstrating that we all have the capacity to recognize Quality, by reading out a good and a bad essay to the class, and having the students vote about which one was the best. Although they have not yet taken the class that is supposed to teach them how to write well, they are still in remarkable agreement as to which of the two texts is the best. They may not know *how* to write a text with Quality, but they can recognize it instinctively.

Phaedrus/Pirsig thinks that this is an ability that all living organisms have, and constructs an example with an amoeba (on page 244 in my paperback edition):

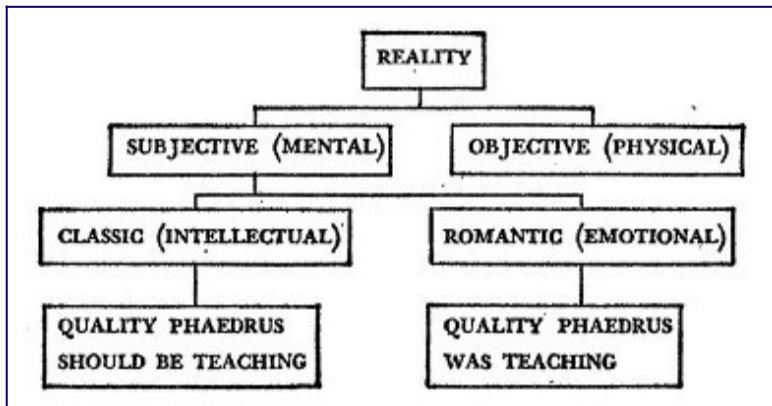
Quality is the response of an organism to its environment. An amoeba, placed on a plate of water with a drop of dilute sulfuric acid placed nearby, will pull away from the acid (I think). If it could speak the amoeba, without knowing anything about the sulfuric acid, could say "This environment has poor quality". If it had a nervous system it would act in a much more complex way to overcome the poor quality of the environment. It would seek analogues, that

is, images and symbols from its previous experience, to define the unpleasant nature of its new environment and thus “understand” it.

But if everybody is born with the ability to instinctively recognize Quality, why is there so much disagreement about it? Discussions about what is good and bad art seldom lead to a consensus, and so far nobody has been able to set up any objective rules for determining the issue.

Phaedrus’ answer is that we all interpret Quality differently, depending on our different experiences and different knowledge. He speculates that if he had read two texts that were outside his students’ frames of reference, like for example medieval poetry instead of ordinary essays, the students would have had a much harder time telling the good from the bad, since they would not have the proper background knowledge.

But above all, he sees a big dividing line between those who talk about romantic (immediate) beauty and those who talk about classic (inner, structural) beauty. He now has a world view like this:



It’s logical, but Phaedrus doesn’t like it at all. Instead of

Quality as a unifying concept between the romantic and the classic view, Quality itself has been cut up in two. His neat, undefined Quality is getting cut up and killed by the analytical knife.

Phaedrus also struggles with the problem whether Quality is objective or subjective. Behind this seemingly innocent question lurks a raging bull, ready to impale Phaedrus' analysis on either one razor sharp horn or the other.

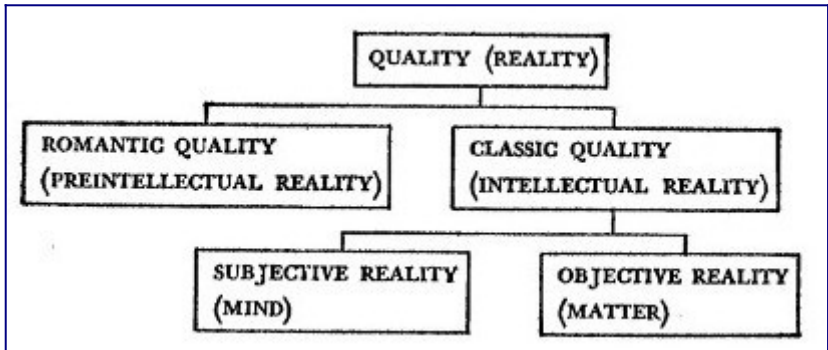
If Quality is an objective property, why has nobody been able to construct a scientific instrument to detect and measure it?

But if it is subjective and only exists in the head of the observer, then it is just a fancy name for whatever you like!

Phaedrus rejects the alternative to say that Quality is an objective property inherent in the objects, since there is no way to suggest any scientific instruments that would be able to determine Quality in an objective manner.

But he also rejects the other horn of the bull, that Quality would be subjective and be "just whatever you like". He discovers that what makes that description so infuriating is the word "just", which adds no logical value to the statement, but is only an insult suggesting that "what you happen to like is of no importance". If you remove the word "just", nothing remains but a truism: "Quality is what you like". That's what Phaedrus has been saying all along, so he's got no problem with that.

He now rebuilds his metaphysical pyramid to look like this:



He now has Quality as a unifying concept at the top of the pyramid, either as a synonym for Reality, or at least as part of it. It is not a part of the objects, because it's meaningless to talk about Quality unless there is a subject there to perceive it. But neither is it a purely subjective property that only exists in the observer's head. Quality appears at the point at which subject and object *meet*.

Quality is something that is a real and existing part of the universe, according to this model, but it manifests itself as an *event* when subject and an object meet, rather than residing exclusively within either the object that exists, or within the subject who is watching.

At this point in the analysis, Phaedrus and Pirsig go their separate ways.

Phaedrus, that is, the rhetoric teacher and searcher who is the author's alter ego from an earlier stage in his life, climbs on towards the next metaphysical mountain top, and believes he can see an identity between Quality and the Tao of Taoism.

Pirsig, that is, the author who was once Phaedrus, instead chooses to climb down from this high and thin metaphysical air, towards the valley, where the people live. He shows how to use the metaphysical insights gained on

the mountain top to get a new understanding of everyday tasks, like for example having the right frame of mind when doing motorcycle maintenance.

For Kopimism, we don't have to choose if we want to follow Phaedrus or Pirsig, or both. Instead, we can end the comparison right here between Pirsig's and Kopimism's respective concepts of Quality, at least for now.

I have no idea if Phaedrus' claim that Quality and Tao are the same is actually true, and I know far too little about Taoism to even begin to approach the question. Pirsig himself is rather skeptical on that point.

But the comparison between Pirsig's Quality and the Kopimist principle of Quality as the attraction force of the good feels completely unproblematic. If they are not exactly the same thing, they are at the very least very close friends and cousins.

Therefore, I want to simply incorporate *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* into the Kopimist faith.

Kopimism teaches that Quality is one of the fundamental principles of the creation. Pirsig (and Phaedrus) teach us how to get a deeper understanding of Quality on a metaphysical level.

This is a match made in Heaven.

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5. Three Kopimist K's: Copying, Collaboration, and Quality

The Kopimist creation myth so far identifies three Fundamental Principles: **Copying**, **Collaboration**, and **Quality**—three Kopimist K's.

It is a nice alliteration, and that's a good sign. But apart from that, do these three Fundamental Principles fulfill reasonable criteria that you would place on this kind of religious or philosophical systems? Let's examine this.

The rules for religions when it comes to choosing holy principles in practice boil down to “*anything goes*”. There are no particular requirements that the description of the world should be logical or consistent in order for something to qualify as a religion. Kopimism of course fulfills these (non-)requirements, but so do all other religions as well, no matter how illogical they are.

Christianity, for example, teaches that God is some kind of extraordinary white elderly gentleman with a beard, who is:

1. Infinitely powerful ([omnipotent](#)),
2. Infinitely good ([omnibenevolent](#)), and who
3. Follows the dealings of humans on in detail, often at an individual level ([omniscient](#)).

Considering the amount of pointless and terrible suffering in the world, it is obviously impossible that there should exist a being with all these three properties.

All Christian theologians know this, of course, because this problem is so well known that it has a name of its own: the

theodicy problem. Most of Christianity's best brains have spent a considerable amount of their time on it for almost 2000 years, but none of them have been able to solve it. This is not because they were lazy or stupid, but simply because these three principles are irreconcilable in a world where evil exists.

You can pick any two of these properties for your God and still be within the realms of logic (and you get three different and interesting visions of God depending on which property you decide to downgrade), but you cannot logically believe in all three at the same time.

But the rules for religions don't prevent anybody from believing in all three at the same time anyway. Hundreds of millions of Christians do exactly this, and as long as they are happy with it I think they should continue. There is no rule that bans you from believing in illogical things when it comes to religious views.

The legal rules that we have, and that we should have in a decent society, say that people are free to believe in whatever they want. Nothing at all if they wish, a Spaghetti Monster if that feels better, or an elderly white gentleman with conflicting properties for those who prefer that. This is called Freedom of Religion, and is one of the cornerstones of a free and open society.

But just because a religion *may* be as illogical as it wants, doesn't mean it *has to* be.

The rules of philosophy for systems of fundamental principles are a little more strict. Philosophers are inspired by natural science and mathematics, and feel more comfortable if a philosophical system isn't too obviously self-contradictory.

This poses no problem for the three Kopimist principles of Copying, Collaboration, and Quality. There is nothing

impossible with the idea of a world where all three coexist. They obviously do in reality, so we can be quite certain that this is possible.

There also shouldn't be too much overlap between the different principles, according to the rules of philosophy, and it is considered an embarrassment if one of the principles turns out to be unnecessary because it is already covered by two or more of the other ones. But the Kopimist K's of Copying, Collaboration, and Quality pass this test as well.

- **Quality** was the Fundamental Principle that we added last, since we felt that the two other principles were not enough, not even in combination, to explain why things on the whole have been going as reasonably well as they have, even though nothing turns out the way you expected. The reason we added Quality as a Fundamental Principle was that we were unable to deduce it from the two principles of Copying and Collaboration.
- **Collaboration** can hardly be described as an inevitable logical consequence of Copying and Quality. With only those two principles we would have lots of individual cells swimming around in the oceans, and the ones with the most Quality would do best. But without Collaboration as a further fundamental principle, it is hard to explain the development of multicellular organisms. From their own perspective, all the tiny unicellular plankton in the primordial ocean were fine just as they were, and had no particular interest in the development of multicellular great whales that would eat them.
- **Copying** cannot be described as a logical consequence of Collaboration and Quality either. But without Copying, all the beautiful things that might appear as a result of Collaboration and

Quality would be of limited practical value. No matter how great they were, they would only exist in one copy, which is pretty insufficient to fill up a whole ecosystem. Unless plants and animals could reproduce, create new copies of the same species, life would not exist. In the same way, there is no particular point in a team of researchers having produced the world's greatest scientific report through Collaboration and Quality, unless the report and its findings are copied and shared with other scientists, giving them the chance to stand on the shoulders of giants. Copying is needed as a fundamental principle in its own right.

The rules of science are similar to those of philosophy, but with even stricter demands on the pieces being compatible and without internal contradictions. Science also demands experimental data and observations of reality to support the model.

This look at the internal relationships between Copying, Collaboration, and Quality is of course not as thorough as when a mathematician checks her axioms (fundamental principles), or when a physicist checks which forces and formulas are really necessary in a particular model, so the Kopimist theology presented here does not fulfill the requirements of science. But I don't think that it has to, at least not here and now. The requirements of philosophy feel like a more reasonable level for a new religion.

This first evaluation of the Kopimist principles shows that they are not contradictory, and at least don't overlap in an obvious way. We are miles ahead of the Abrahamic religions when it comes to logical consistency, at least so far.

But within mathematics and natural science it is customary to ask one more question when evaluating proposals for

sets of rules or principles.

Are the proposed principles sufficient?

My answer to that question is actually no. I think we need one more Kopimist K to explain how the world we see around us emerged.

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6. Creativity: The Zeroth Kopimist K

In the Kopimist creation myth so far, we have identified three Fundamental Principles that are part of the creation:

- 1. Copying**
- 2. Collaboration**
- 3. Quality**

These are three Kopimist K's.

But there is still something missing. The principles of Copying and Collaboration explain *how* life could develop, and the principle of Quality gives a direction and answers the question "*towards what?*". But we have no principle that explains *why* life emerged in the first place.

We have Copying as a principle, but we have nothing to copy. We have Collaboration, but we have no projects to cooperate over. We have Quality, but no myriad of projects to evaluate and choose between.

If Kopimism was a car, we would have steering and brakes in the form of Quality, and wheels and transmission in the form of Copying and Collaboration. But no engine to move it all forward.

We have omitted to include something that explains the most obvious observation you can make about life, the universe and everything: That it exists, even though it wouldn't have to.

Earth itself (the rock) had no need for developing life on its surface. It would have kept spinning whether somebody

lived on it or not.

And once there was life on Earth in the shape of lots of unicellular blue-green plankton in the oceans, it could have stopped there. No space traveller passing by would have said “Oh, a primordial ocean with blue-green plankton, what an obviously unsustainable state for an ecosystem, they neither have peacocks nor broccoli”.

But yet life *did* appear on Earth, and the pretty boring soup of plankton *did* transform itself into the infinitely rich diversity that we see around us in nature, including both peacocks and broccoli. There must have been other, much simpler, sustainable states than this, if sustainability was all nature was after.

So evidently, nature isn't looking for sustainability, at least not only. Nature wants to have some fun as well, that's obvious. This explains all the strange creatures on Earth, including the very silliest that [Douglas Adams wrote about](#) and the BBC filmed.

We add one more Fundamental Principle, and put it before all the other:

o. Creativity

Why before the others?

Creativity must have come first, maybe even before the universe itself. If, despite everything, it was in fact a divine being that created the world, then he/she must first have come up with the idea of doing it. Definitely creative, and before it actually happened.

And if the universe emerged by itself, when a point of nothing somewhere in the void got bored with being nothing, and became a Big Bang instead, then the impulse to do something wild and crazy, something creative, must

have appeared at the very latest in the same instant the universe was created.

And when we look at the world around us, we see that Creativity did not just exist at the moment the universe, or life, was born. It's everywhere all around us all the time, and it has been throughout history.

The peacock and the broccoli were refined in their respective shapes by Quality, and live on through sexual reproduction, that is: a combination of Collaboration and Copying. But when a primordial ocean of plankton had the impulse to start developing in the direction of peacock and broccoli, this was because our universe is brimming with Creativity as a fundamental principle.

Universes want to have fun.

This is the zeroth Kopimist K, and the most fundamental of them all.

With Creativity as a fundamental principle that affects the universe at all levels, we can address one of the major problems with the strictly scientific world view.

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7. Science Sucks As a Religion

The laws of nature are pretty depressing reading for anyone who wants to feel enthusiasm for life and the future. They paint the picture of a tired and unwilling universe, that mostly just wants to lie down and die.

Things that are at rest prefer to stay that way, says Newton. Atoms and molecules may hustle about for a bit until they find the position that demands the least energy, but once they've found it they pretty much want to stay put, says chemistry. Everything is moving towards a lukewarm homogeneous soup where nothing interesting can ever happen, says thermodynamics.

Thanks a lot, that's very cheerful.

The scientific models are free from self-contradictions (mostly), and they have a lot of [Classic](#) inner beauty as models. But they don't provide much basis for feeling trust in the future or joy in life.

We're at the restaurant at the end of the universe just after last call, seems to be what science is telling us. The light is still on, and there are still intelligent discussions going on in the room. But the waiters have discretely started to prepare closing the whole establishment down, and nothing new will appear on the tables.

Right now, the restaurant *Universe* may be a fascinating web of diversity, but this is just a phase that will pass, says science. We are stuck with the natural laws that appeared before last orders, and even as you are reading this, they are slowly but patiently grinding down and polishing off

anything that might attract interest or stand out. The universe today is not quite as interesting as it was last Thursday, and even less interesting than the Thursday before, because the slide down the slippery slope is a one way ride.

Security guards dressed up as physicists specialized in thermodynamics patrol the premises of restaurant *Universe*, and make sure that every event and movement, no matter how spectacular and fascinating it may look on the surface, is still yet another step towards the big shut-down. The universe that started with a bang is gradually being ground down to a whimper, and will end up in a state of infinite boredom, says the dogma of natural science.

Roughly at this point, the scientists usually begin to feel satisfied with their theoretical model, and look up from their mathematical formulas and expect to be met by cheering crowds. But to their great surprise, the hordes of scientifically atheistic materialists are not at all as large or as jubilant as they would have expected, or as they feel they rightly deserve.

Why are so few people applauding their elegant detailed description of a collapsing universe on a pointless journey towards total boredom?

This is a question that genuinely baffles a quite large number of scientists, often with an IQ around 150 or more. How can so many so bright men and women fail to find the answer to such an easy question?

The answer is that although this is the vision of the world that the scientist's formulas describe, it is not what most scientists actually believe and feel in the bottom of their heart. But we'll return to that issue. First, we have these natural laws of doom and gloom to take care of.

Must it really be against the laws if we want to feel some joy

and trust in the future?

To simply deny the validity of the laws of nature would be one option, but it's not a very attractive one. "You scientists may have all your fancy laws and theories, but on my property apples fall with whatever speed they want, and me and my gun is gonna make sure it stays that way, praise the Lord!" is a position you can have if you want, but which most people don't find very elegant.

You can bemoan the fact that science places restrictions on what can pass for a reasonably rational religion, but in practice there is very little you can do about it.

I may not like the General Theory of Relativity, since it is very weird and goes against everything I learned to be true when I grew up in a Newtonian world, but to deny that it's valid would be just silly. Even if I don't understand the theory myself (and I certainly don't), I know that my mobile phone uses it to figure out the position on the GPS. If the General Theory of Relativity wasn't a valid description of the world, my mobile would be even more lost than I am in a foreign city. It isn't.

And since it isn't, the only realistic option seems to be to more or less grudgingly concede that the Theory of Relativity, and all the other laws of nature that the scientists have discovered, are valid and have to be observed, no matter how unfulfilling they may feel from a religious point of view.

Some people would feel that I am giving up this point too easily, and that a proper religion should defend itself by all reasonably legal means when it comes into conflict with science. But this has turned out to be rather an unsuccessful strategy in the face of steadily advancing science and technology.

When the Catholic Church decided in 1632 that Mr. Galileo

Galilei was wrong, and that the world is firmly set on its foundations by the Lord and cannot be moved, as the Bible says, it may have seemed like a defensible position at the time. But even if it was right then, things very quickly got out of hand.

To sustain the view that sun is rising and setting over a flat earth today, you would not only have to maintain that there is a worldwide conspiracy among all captains of ships and airplanes to pretend in public to be navigating on a globe, while in reality they are using their secret and true flat-earth maps to get to their respective destinations on time.

From a European perspective, you would also have to note with regret that all Americans and Australians seem to be members of the same conspiracy, or they wouldn't be pretending to be asleep in the middle of the night every time you phone them from Europe in daytime. Americans and Australians, on their part, would have to conclude that the Holy Roman Catholic Church was also a leading member of this conspiracy, or they wouldn't be televising their Midnight Mass live at so many different times that are quite obviously not midnight around the world.

Somewhere along the line, sustaining this alternative world view became too much even for the Catholic Church, with all its resources. In 1992, twenty-three years after the moon landing, Pope John Paul II came out of the closet and admitted that after all, the earth probably is a just blue and green ball twirling around an ordinary sun somewhere in the less fashionable outskirts of an ordinary galaxy.

A fair and well deserved victory for Science, of course, considering how many everyday consumer grade miracles Science had managed to deliver in the intervening 360 years, while the Church was busy holding on to its firmly established unmoving earth.

But not very uplifting for our self esteem, We who once

were just a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor by a Lord that admittedly could be a little erratic at times, but at least made us feel that we were important in some way in His big scheme of things.

Many people feel that although science is great, having delivered both mobile phones and a doubled life expectancy for those who get to enjoy its fruits, something was still lost when we traded our special relationship with God as the chosen ones for the marvels of science.

But “trading” things smells of scarcity economies and second millennium thinking. That’s not Kopimism.

The aim of Kopimism must be to unite science and religion, which means respecting science. But if it is to be a religion, it must also provide a way forward and a positive vision. We don’t want to choose: We want both the marvels of science and the sense of a higher purpose and a reason for hope.

This is what Kopimism sets out to achieve. Thanks to the Four Kopimist K’s—Kreativity, Kopying, Kollaboration, and Kwality—we kan.

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8. The Struggle Against Thermodynamics

After the previous Kopimist sermon on the laws of nature and the restaurant at the end of the universe, Björn Persson made some comments that I want to highlight and agree with.

Björn Persson wrote:

You make it sound like science preaches that the end is nigh. That's not very accurate. It's true that science tells us that everything will come to an end eventually, but it also provides an estimate of how long that will take, and it turns out that the restaurant Universe will remain open for a very very very VERY long time still. There's lots and lots of time to kopy, kollaborate and kreate kwality, and the heat death of the universe is definitely not something you need to worry about on a human time scale. I find that much more reassuring than some religion whose gods might decide to destroy the world on a whim tomorrow.

This is absolutely true, and if I accidentally scared some people into a panic by divulging how the thermodynamicists envision the end of the world, I hope they will relax after reading this clarification. Even the most alarmist projections concede that we have billions of years before it happens, so panic is a bit premature. If you are planning to stand on a street corner with a the-end-is-nigh sign, you have ample time for a cup of coffee before

you take up your post.

But this doesn't really make the laws of thermodynamics any less depressing. Not only do they present a vision of infinite boredom, they also say that the road there will be painstakingly slow. Since when does making dullness slower and last longer make it more fun?

Thermodynamics is beginning to look more and more like the big villain that we need to do something about, if we want to have any fun in this universe.

Björn Persson continued:

It's also not correct to say that the universe is less interesting today than last Thursday. The maximum entropy state is indeed not very interesting, but neither is the minimum entropy state. The interesting things happen between those extremes, and that's right where we are now. If you want to claim that we have passed the peak of interest and are now going downhill, then you'll have to prove it, because I see no indication that that would be the case.

This is a very interesting point. In the Kopimist model of the world, we have Kreativität as a Fundamental Principle to counteract the constant increase in entropy over time. Since we see Kreativität as an invisible force that flows through the universe at all times and all places, all that is needed for the universe to become more fun from one Thursday to another is that the force of Kreativität is strong enough compared to the other natural forces that are pulling the universe towards the long and boring heat death.

For a Kopimist there is hope, even without breaking the laws of thermodynamics.

But what is the standard view of mainstream physics on this point? If it is true that the complexity of the universe is in fact increasing now, or at least that the complexity increased at some point in its history, where did this increase come from? What was or is the driving force for this according to classical mainstream physics?

Myself, I don't know enough physics to answer that question, but I hope there will be a fruitful discussion between those who understand more about thermodynamics than I do, and Kopimist theological scholars.

This appears to be a good starting point for further explorations of the role of Kreativität in the universe.

Björn Persson concluded:

Look at it this way:

Thermodynamik shows that if kompleks things are left alone they will slowly but inevitably lose their kompleksität and their kwality, but the decay can be kounteracted by kopying them kontinuierlich.

Therefore a good Kopimist should kontinue kopying and kreating interesting things of ever greater kwality, kontributing to keep decay at bay by inkreasing the overall kompleksität faster than the decay kan dekrease it.

To this, I can only say: Yes! This is theological konstruktivism at its very best.

We have gone straight from the Four Kopimist K's—Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality—and the most fundamental laws of physics, to a practical rule of thumb for how to lead a good Kopimist life. And not only

that, the rule of thumb built on this theoretical foundation coincides with what we had already felt in our hearts would be the right way for a Kopimist to act in the world.

We are on the right track.

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9. The Laws of Nature Just Set the Stage

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that [the laws of nature are just depressing](#) when you read them. We do, after all, call them "laws", and laws tend to be rather depressing and miss out on all of the fun.

If you had never been to a pub but had read all the laws that regulate it, you would probably not feel very keen to visit one. You would have read pages and pages of legal laws to deal with drunkenness, disorderly behavior, fistfights, food poisoning, and watered-down beer. If this was the whole truth about an evening over drinks together with friends, you would do well to avoid it.

But of course, the laws that regulate a night at the pub don't tell the whole truth. They set out the restrictions that the involved parties have to follow, but they make no or little mention of the magic of spending a pleasant evening together with friends.

The laws that regulate a theater are the same. There are lots of rules on how the theater building should be constructed and how the emergency exits should be located, but (at least in a free society) there are very few laws that regulate what goes on on stage, and no mention at all of the magic you can experience in the audience when you see a great play.

The laws for the theater set the stage, but leave it open what happens on that stage.

The laws of nature, in the same way, provide a foundation and set the stage for interesting things to

happen on the next level. It is true that the laws themselves are just a bunch of restrictions on what can happen in the world, but the fact that they are a depressing read doesn't mean that we need to feel depressed about the meaning of the universe.

No matter how restricted we might feel by the laws of nature, we can take comfort in the fact that **everything that is not expressly forbidden, can and will be seen as a possibility.**

According to Newton's (or Einstein's) theory of gravity, an apple and a rock will fall to the ground in exactly the same way, at exactly the same speed. Does this mean that science says that apples and rocks are the same? Are you the victim of unscientific superstitions if you enjoy eating an apple, but refuse to eat a rock?

No, of course not. To claim that would be a complete misunderstanding of how scientific laws work, and what they do and don't say. It is true that the theory of gravity makes no distinction between apples and rocks, as it does not recognize "taste" as a factor. But this does *not* mean that the theory of gravity refutes or denies the concept of taste. It is just silent on the subject. This means that it doesn't rule it out, so it can very well be.

When a snowboarder is doing a jump, the theory of gravity will very accurately predict how her center of gravity will move through the air. But it will say nothing at all about the flips and spins that she and the audience are interested in. Those are described by other physical laws of motion, that don't contradict the law of gravity, but supplement it. No matter what kind of movements a snowboarder does, she will not be able to suddenly remain suspended in mid-air in defiance of the law of gravity. But there are a lot of other pretty amazing things that she can do without breaking any laws of nature.

The law of gravity places no restrictions whatsoever on anything that it does not explicitly claim to predict. As far as it is concerned, anything is possible on any subject that is outside the scope of the law, from the flips and spins the snowboarder is doing, to the mental attitude that she had when she won the gold medal.

The snowboarder's rotations around her center of gravity can be described by other basic physical laws, and the mental attitude of a winner cannot, but as far as the law of gravity is concerned, both these situations are okay. As long as there are no claims that with the right mental attitude you could defy gravity and start levitating, the basic physical laws have no opinion at all on the importance or existence of mental attitudes. They don't confirm it, but they certainly don't deny it.

Another example would be the laws of chemistry that we learned in school. Those laws say that some atoms feel they are missing some electrons, and others feel that they have too many. This attracts them to each other if they get a chance to even things out.

An oxygen atom feels it is two electrons short, and hydrogen atoms feel that they each have one too many. This makes them very keen (as in hydrogen gas explosion) to join forces whenever they get the chance, and the resulting compound (water) is very stable. This is all according to the basic laws of chemistry.

The same basic laws say that carbon atoms equally feel that they have four electrons too many or too few, which makes them happy to build molecules together with other atoms of their kind. The basic laws of chemistry don't place any restrictions on how complex those carbon based molecules can be, but they also don't say whether there will actually be a lot of very complex carbon based molecules, or how those molecules would look if they did exist. The basic laws

of chemistry don't predict the existence of self-replicating double helices of breathtaking complexity, they just don't deny the possibility.

This is how all scientific theories and formulas work.

Scientific theories claims to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. But no scientific theory ever claims to tell the *whole* truth.

The underlying laws of nature place certain restrictions on what can happen on the next level of complexity. Atoms can't break the basic laws of chemistry. A snowboarder can't levitate. You can't walk on water.

But apart from these and similar restrictions, anything else goes.

The whole idea with the metaphor of the Giant's shoulders is that you're allowed to stand on them, and add whatever you want, as long as it doesn't contradict the foundation you are standing on.

We can add more science, in the way that biochemistry was added to basic chemistry. Since the biochemical laws that describe DNA molecules don't contradict the basic chemical laws for carbon atoms, they are free to put whatever they want on those shoulders, and everybody is perfectly happy with the relationship between basic chemistry and advanced biochemistry.

The laws of advanced biochemistry adds magic and miracles in a space where the basic laws of chemistry just said "that's random". We know now that the shapes of complex proteins are not at all random, even if this is what science said when basic chemistry was all the chemistry that had been invented.

When a scientific theory says "random", this does *not* mean

“Move on folks, there is nothing to see here!”. In fact, it very often means the opposite: “This is unregulated space, so here magic may appear!”. To add things to the body of known science is the very essence of the scientific philosophy. We can add science to science, to get more advanced science.

Alternatively, we can add metaphysics or religion to the foundation provided by the giants of science. The result will be metaphysics or religion rather than science, since the additions won't fulfill the criteria of science (like being supported by a lot of scientific evidence). But as long as the additions don't contradict the laws of science, we don't have to make a choice between science and religion. We can believe in both.

This is what Kopimism sets out to do. We accept that the laws of nature are by and large a good description of those aspects of the universe that they actually describe. But on those shoulders, **we add the Four Kopimist K's—Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality**—to give meaning and direction to the evolving universe. Even if what we are adding is not science, but metaphysics or religion, we play within the rules for adding things to science.

We take note of the fact that although the laws of nature known are great at explaining a whole lot of things, they make no claim whatsoever to describe everything knowable, not even taken together.

According to science, there can be no God that can make apples fall upwards just because he feels like it. That would violate the laws of nature. But there can very well be a God out there that touches the minds of humans and (at least sometimes) inspires them to do great things. A God of that kind wouldn't have to violate any laws of nature to be effective.

Richard Dawkins and other critics of religion are right when they point out that there is a conflict between the Abrahamic God described in the Bible and the laws of science as we know them. Virgins giving birth, and prophets walking on water and resurrecting people from the dead, are phenomena that contradict science. A religion that insists on those miracles being real, cannot be reasonably be reconciled with what science teaches. If you want to believe in the God of Abraham in a literal way, you either have to renounce science as false, or live with the fact that you have an inconsistent worldview.

But this does not mean that *every* potential religion has to be in conflict with science.

Science does not disprove the existence of magic, miracles, or metaphysical structures that add purpose or direction to the creation. After all, any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic, so if science was fundamentally incompatible with every form of magic, it would mean that no major scientific advancements would ever be possible. This is clearly not the case.

The Kopimist religion adds four fundamental principles to the description of the world that science provides us with. These are the Four Kopimist K's: Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality.

These principles do not contradict science in any way. They are *extra*-scientific, meaning that they go beyond what (today's) science teaches. But they are not *anti*-scientific, since they do not cause any conflicts with the existing body of science, or the philosophical principles that form the basis for science.

As Kopimists we believe in science, since it quite obviously works and is incredibly useful. But we also believe in a world full of magical things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper so that we will notice them.

We Kopimists believe that the Four K's of Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality provide a perspective that will let us see magical things and get a deeper understanding of the world we live in. Time will tell if we are right in this. But right or wrong, we have at least shown that there is nothing anti-scientific about our beliefs.

The chasm between science and religion, that opened up with Isaac Newton and has continued to present day, can in fact be bridged quite easily. All it takes is for Science to show a bit of humility, and not claim to be explaining more than it actually does, and for Religion to show bit of common sense, and not insist on miracles that are quite clearly in breach of underlying laws of nature. There is ample room in the universe for all the magic you could ever wish for anyway.

"Watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it," author Roald Dahl reminds us [in a top rated quote](#).

The religion of Kopimism aims to do this.

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10. The Paradox of the Cheerful Atheist Scientists

In the previous Kopimist sermons, we have seen how the laws of nature predict doom and gloom, and preach that everything is just a meaningless consequence of how it accidentally happens to be. Does this mean that scientists generally feel gloomy and sad when they think about the universe?

No, not at all, quite the opposite in fact.

You don't have to see many science documentaries about life, the universe and everything to be drawn in by the enthusiasm and sense of wonder that both the narrator and any scientists that appear in the program communicate. The mathematical formulas that they have discovered to describe the universe may be ever so depressing. The scientists who say they believe in those formulas, and only in the formulas, tend to be as cheerful and optimistic about the future as ever.

Richard Dawkins is a leading evangelist for believing in science, and science alone. Dawkins came to prominence with his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, which popularised the gene-centred view of evolution and introduced the term *meme*, Wikipedia tells us.

In his book *The Magic of Reality* from 2011, Dawkins summarises his views like this [in my translation back from Swedish]:

The real world, as seen by science, has its own

magic—the kind of magic I call poetic magic: an inspiring beauty that is so much more magical because it is real, and because we can understand how it works. Compared to the true beauty and magic of the real world, magical formulas and sorcerers' tricks seem cheap and superficial. The magic of reality is neither supernatural nor a trick, but quite simply wonderful. Wonderful and real. Wonderful just because it is real.

This is a very good, sensible and beautiful position, and in fact very similar to what Kopimism is saying as well. We Kopimists see the world as a magic, exciting work in progress, driven by the four fundamental principles Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality. The quote from Dawkins expresses what we Kopimists believe, in a very concise and beautiful way.

In the Kopimist faith, we have added the four fundamental principles, in particular Creativity and Quality, to the foundation of science that we share with Dawkins. This makes it easy for us Kopimists to justify our positive outlook on life.

We believe that there is Quality that guides us in the right direction towards the good, we believe that Creativity will continue to spur us onwards, and we believe that Copying and Collaboration provide tools to transform creative ideas into new reality. When the beauty of nature fills us with a sense of wonder in the way that Dawkins describes so well, we have a sound theological and philosophical argument to justify the happy smiles on our faces.

But Dawkins himself has a lot less theoretical justification for his positive world view, if he wants to base it entirely on science, and nothing but science.

According to evolutionary biology, which is Dawkins'

primary field of science, the entire miracle of life on earth can be described as the influence of random noise in the sexual reproduction process, combined with a crude mechanism for weeding out individuals that are unsuccessful in the all-out conflict over scarce resources. What's so wonderful about that?

If there is beauty in a universe controlled entirely by chance and mechanical laws, that beauty would have no meaning anyway. According to science and Dawkins, that beauty has just appeared by accident, like if there happens to be beautiful reflections in the pieces of glass on the ground after someone has broken a shop window. Even if it looks like a heap of sparkling and valuable diamonds on the ground, this is just an illusion, and there is little to miss once it gets swept away by the street cleaners.

Dawkins of course has every right in the world to have his positive and confident view of the universe and the future, and we Kopimists share it. We believe that many people would become happier if they joined us in this belief. But if Dawkins wants to maintain that he is basing his positive world view on science alone, there appears to be quite a gap between what the scientific laws say about the universe, and how the scientists actually perceive it on an emotional level.

Albert Einstein is another example of an eminent scientist holding a world view that is atheistic, but filled with a sense of wonder and trust in the future. Dawkins uses Einstein as an example in the book *The God Delusion*, and (on page 36) he quotes Einstein saying:

I am a deeply religious nonbeliever. This is a somewhat new kind of religion.

I have never imputed to Nature a purpose or a goal, or anything that could be understood as anthropomorphic. What I see in Nature is a

magnificent structure that we can comprehend only very imperfectly, and that must fill a thinking person with a feeling of humility. This is a genuinely religious feeling that has nothing to do with mysticism.

Again, a very sensible and positive way of looking at the world, but the positive emotion seems to be quite out of touch with the equations he was basing his model of the universe on.

According to Einstein's theory of gravity, the destiny of the universe is to become either a black hole where everything has been crushed, or an ever thinner emptiness where everything is too far away from everything else to do anything interesting. Which version of infinite boredom represents the future of the universe, according to Einstein's theory, depends on the value of a cosmological constant that may or may not exist, and that nobody likes anyway.

This is what Einstein's theory says about the universe we live in. What does he have to be so confident and positive about?

Kopimism solves the apparent contradiction between the scientists' gloomy theories and cheerful outlook on life by adding the four fundamental principles to the laws described by science, in particular Creativity and Quality. These principles do not contradict science. They are merely an addition to the strict scientific natural laws, and help explain the magic of reality and give us a reason to feel trust in the future, even though we cannot say what that future will contain.

When Dawkins speaks about the inspiring beauty of reality, he is absolutely right. Nature is filled with the most stunning beauty, from the tiniest detail of an insect's antenna up to magnificent ecosystems that go from horizon

to horizon. This is what Robert M. Pirsig in [*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*](#) calls Romantic beauty, the kind of beauty that is immediately apparent to the eye.

Dawkins is also right when he talks about how wonderful it is that we can understand how reality works, that we can learn to see and appreciate what Pirsig would call the Classic beauty of the universe, the structural beauty that makes it all fit together.

For a Kopimist, it is easy to agree with both Dawkins and Einstein in their sense of awe and wonder. This is how we feel as well.

But even if we agree, we should note that the minute these prominent scientists started to talk about beauty, they left the realm of science and entered that of philosophical speculation.

”Beauty” is not a scientific term within either physics or biochemistry. As Pirsig points out, there are no scientific instruments that can measure beauty or Quality objectively, and nobody expects that anybody will be able to design such instruments in the future either. A cornerstone in Pirsig’s philosophical reasoning is that he refuses to provide a scientific definition of Quality, as any attempt to do so would reduce it into something different and smaller.

The Quality that Pirsig is talking about is not a part of science as we know it, but neither is it opposed to science in any way. It is an addition, not a replacement. The reason that Pirsig started to think about Quality in the first place was that he wanted to defend Science, which he called *The Church of Reason*, from real or imagined metaphysical threats.

So even if both Dawkins and Einstein and Pirsig are outside the realm of science when they are talking about beauty, there is nothing wrong with that. Beauty is not *anti*-scientific

concept, it is an *extra*-scientific one. It does not contradict science, it just goes outside it, and talks about things that are not described by the mathematical formulas that represent our laws of nature.

Nothing wrong with that, but it deserves to be pointed out for clarity.

I think Dawkins and other evangelists for what they call a “scientific” atheist world view would do well to admit that their belief system does not just consist of the laws of science and nothing more, but of additional components as well.

I think many people who are considering giving up their old religious beliefs in favor of a more atheist world view get a feeling of philosophical claustrophobia when the case for a scientifically based world view is presented as “science, and nothing but science”.

Since Dawkins is talking about “beauty”, which is not a scientific concept, he has obviously taken at least one step beyond science as such in the world view he is preaching.

Why not admit that, when doing so would remove a barrier that at least some people feel they must overcome before they can seriously consider the message that Dawkins and others who agree with him are trying to share?

We Kopimists believe in the laws of science, but we believe there is more to the universe than just that. We believe not only in science, but also in the four Fundamental Principles, the Four Kopimist K’s of Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality.

With Quality as one of our Fundamental Principles, we can agree wholeheartedly that reality is indeed beautiful, both in a Romantic and Classic sense, as Pirsig explains those

terms in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

Kopimism does not go against science, so just like for Dawkins, our beliefs are not anti-scientific. But we point out that **in order to believe in the beauty of science, it is not enough to believe in science alone. You have to believe that there is something worth calling “beauty” as well.**

We Kopimists acknowledge that we do, that we see a universe that is full of it.

This is an insight and a world view that we want to share.

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11. Kopimism and The God Delusion

Richard Dawkins is an evangelist for an atheist and scientifically based worldview, as opposed to religion. In his book *The God Delusion*, he totally trashes God, at least the Christian god that we are used to (and the related variants within Judaism and Islam). *The God Delusion* is a sharp and funny book, and an excellent starting point for thinking about religions.

We can look at how the Kopimist faith would stand up to the criticism that Dawkins levels against all religions (even though most of his examples are from Christianity).

To start with, Dawkins dislikes the idea of God as the creator of the universe. He doesn't think it makes sense, and he's right: it doesn't. The creation myth in the Old Testament, which is shared by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, is severely illogical.

If God created the world, then he must have been even more complicated than the world he created, and must have existed before the creation. Where did he come from?

Instead of having to explain how the world came into being, we now have to explain how something even more complicated did. Thanks a lot, but that's not much help. Here, Dawkins is absolutely right. This is the wrong direction.

But the Kopimist creation myth, how would it stand up to Dawkin's criticism of the Old Testament?

The Kopimist creation myth begins:

In the beginning, the world was a stinking soup of ammonia, methane gas, and nasty toxic chemicals. The atmosphere was alight with flashes of pure energy. Something wanted to be born.

In ways and for reasons that remain to be explored, the ribosomes appeared, who could copy. This was the beginning of Life. We therefore see Copying as the first manifestation of the Divine Spirit.

What would Dawkins have to say about this?

Kopimism avoids the problem of having to explain where God came from, since he or she hasn't entered the story yet. There is a manifestation of a Divine Spirit, so we suspect there may be a God lurking around somewhere, but since s/he hasn't appeared yet, we don't need to concern ourselves with where s/he came from, at least not yet. So far, everything is okay according to strictly scientific atheist principles. God does not yet exist.

The only prerequisite is an Earth in primeval state, but it is assumed to have appeared in the customary way.

Here we have a well defined starting point that Kopimism and Science can agree on. This is not a demand that Dawkins explicitly makes, but I think it will please him anyway. The main theme of *The God Delusion* is how poorly (the Abrahamic) religions fit with science.

Kopimism does better. Before the story has even started, we have already found a connecting point that fits perfectly with both the proposed religion and with science.

The Kopimist creation myth in itself is perhaps not enough to make Kopimism qualify as a religion. A religion should have more than just a creation myth to offer. As mentioned,

we haven't actually seen any Kopimist God yet, and this is a demand that at least Dawkins makes.

But the creation myth at least provides a starting point for a religion that doesn't immediately run into any of the inconsistencies that Dawkins point out in other religions.

This is a good starting point for Kopimism, I think Dawkins would agree.

We then add the four fundamental principles, the Four Kopimist K's of Kreativity, Kopying, Kollaboration, and Kwality. It is true that these additions constitute metaphysics rather than science (since there isn't a lot of scientific data to back them up, at least not yet). But the addition is nevertheless done in the same way that new scientific theories are added to the body of existing science, by adding the hypotheses that these Four Fundamental Principles represent important aspects of the universe we live in.

There is no conflict between recognizing that science is valid and believing that Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality are forces that exist and drive evolution on. Kopimism suggests an addition to science, not a replacement for it.

I hope Richard Dawkins would find this to be an acceptable religion, even from his perspective.

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12. Kopimism and Sex

Religion critic [Richard Dawkins](#) has made a three-part television series called [*Sex, Death, and the Meaning of Life*](#). The first episode focuses on sex.

Dawkins notes that most of the major religions have very strong views on how people manage their sex life, but that these views are from the bronze age. Today, they quite unnecessarily make people feel shame just because they are people, and at worst provide the foundation for harassment against anyone falling outside the most narrow heteronormative lifestyle.

As a Kopimist, I can only agree with what Dawkins says in this program. He shows with statistics how the persistent propaganda against for example masturbation by the Christian churches has had no effect whatsoever on how much Christians and non-Christians actually masturbate. Those numbers were identical according to the statistics, like 95% of all men and 70-75% of all women.

The only difference was that a large portion of the Christian masturbators had a strong feeling of shame that made their lives miserable. How completely unnecessary. There can be no other activity that is so cheap, fun, and totally risk-free as masturbation, and none so natural.

Even worse is when the bronze age morality of traditional religions becomes an excuse of intolerance against certain groups. How can Western religions, that claim to bring a message of Love, suddenly condemn love when it happens between two people of the same sex?

In this regard, the big world religions should simply shape up. A majority of the world's homosexual people live repressed in societies where they can't show their love openly. Various churches are more often seen on the side of the oppressors than the other. This is not acceptable. When a group of people become the victim of harassment, any church worth its name should be on their side.

In the meanwhile, there is Kopimism. We don't judge anyone because he or she has the capacity to love fellow human beings of a particular gender. All love is good love. Consenting adults can do what they want, and it's nobody else's business unless they are personally invited to take part.

This is the attitude that all religions should have for strict reasons of tolerance. But for Kopimism, there is an additional strong theological argument to have a positive attitude towards sex.

Sex is Kopying, and a tribute to the Fundamental Principle that has given Kopimism its name.

The ultimate purpose of sex is to pass on the miracle of life by producing new individuals. Sexual reproduction is not about making identical copies, but about remixing, which we see as the highest form of copying. Our creation myth is about how life appeared and is passed on through Kopying. It is more or less obvious that Kopimism would see sex as something fundamentally positive.

And with this fundamentally positive view of sex, there is no reason to restrict it to only pure reproductive sex. Homosexuality, pornography, masturbation, oral sex, sex with a condom, or sex between couples that have been married for 50 years, but still like doing it even though they are no longer fertile. None of these forms of sex can produce children, but they quite obviously have to do with sex. Non-reproductive sex is also a tribute to Kopying, the

first of the Four Kopimist K's.

If you insist on placing a religious interpretation on the fact that Onan spilled his seed on the ground, then the reasonable thing would be to see it as a fertility sacrifice, and something to please the Lord. Or, you can just say that it's his private business.

Kopimism sees sex as a gift from the God(s), and a manifestation of the power of Kopying.

And in any case we, think it's wrong smear guilt on consenting adults who live out the fact that they are human. Dawkins is completely right on this.

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13. A Kopimist Moral System

Religions usually contain a moral framework that separates right from wrong. For Kopimism, we can derive a moral framework directly from the Four Kopimist K's: Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality.

- **Creativity**
We see creativity as the driving force behind the evolution of the world, and something positive. This means that we want to see a society built on as much freedom as possible, to let creativity bloom. We see diversity as a positive expression of creativity in the world.
- **Copying**
We see it as something positive when culture and knowledge are shared, and amuse and assist people. We see sex as something positive, and a tribute to the fundamental principle of Copying.
- **Collaboration**
We cherish collaboration and want to have a calm, safe, and happy society where people can live in peace. From this follow the general humanistic principles that more or less everybody agree on. Thou shalt not steal and not kill. Violence may not be used except as a last resort in self defense. Treat others as you would want to be treated yourself. Try to be generous and helpful. Smile, and the world will smile at you. Common sense and common decency. Nothing unexpected in these rules.
- **Quality**
The Abrahamic religions see their moral rules as dictated directly by God. Do they have to be, to get legitimacy? In Kopimism, we don't think so. We say

that there is a fundamental principle called Quality, that we humans have the capacity to sense. We all have an inner moral compass, and we are perfectly capable of knowing ourselves what is right or wrong. Just like Richard Dawkins we Kopimists believe in humans as individuals, but thanks to Quality, we can also explain why.

No Kopimist would be very surprised by the contents of this moral system. It is freedom oriented humanism, just as one would expect. These morals are not at all unique to Kopimism, and have been expressed by many great philosophers since the Enlightenment and onwards.

In the children's musical story [Cardamom Town](#), for instance, Constable Bastian has written a law for his town, and in his Law of Cardamom it says:

You may not do harm to others,
you should try to act your best
Then you do as you see fit with all the rest

That summary is as good as any.

Constable Bastian believes in the good humanity, that we have an inner moral compass that points us right in most cases. He believes in a society based on tolerance, kindness, and that everyone has as much freedom as possible to lead their lives in their own ways. Many great philosophers have said the same. We Kopimists agree.

The only real surprise in this Kopimist moral framework is how easily and naturally it derives from the Four Fundamental Principles, the Four Kopimist K's.

The moral system as such is the one that I feel is at the heart of the global Pirate movement on the internet. It is exactly the moral system that I would have wanted in a religion, and to be perfectly honest, I'm sure I would have

been able to derive that moral system from more or less any set of fundamental principles.

But when I started looking at how the Fundamental Principles of Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality could be used to suggest a moral system, I was very surprised and impressed by how effortlessly exactly the moral system I wanted seemed to flow from the Four Kopimist K's.

This is yet another indication that we are on the right track, and that Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality really are fundamental principles that deserve further study.

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14. Kopimism and Religious Rituals

Kammarkollegiet—blessed be its name!—is the public authority that grants official status to religions in Sweden. On or about the winter solstice of 2011, Kammarkollegiet [officially recognized Kopimism as a religion](#), just like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and others. For this, it shall be remembered forever as glorious.

When deciding on whether to recognize Kopimism as a proper religion, Kammarkollegiet focused quite a lot on whether we had rituals in the church. In particular, it wanted to know how we conducted our service of worship.

After we had added a description of the holy act of *Kopyacting*, the ritual of sharing culture or knowledge under the leadership of an *op*, our Application for status as an official religion was finally approved by Kammarkollegiet—blessed be its name!

This emphasis on the rituals of a would-be church is actually quite sensible. All religions have rituals, and they are usually considered quite important within the churches themselves. The Christian communion, the Muslim daily prayers, and the Norse celebration of the summer solstice each play a central role within the respective religion.

Other than rituals, however, it is hard to come up with criteria that all the idea movements that you would normally classify as religions would fulfill.

You cannot demand a deity, or Buddhism is disqualified from being considered a religion. That would hardly be reasonable. You cannot demand a written scripture or Holy

Book, or most traditional polytheistic religions would fall outside the definition. That would also be unfair. And you most certainly cannot demand that the teachings should make sense or be consistent, or all the Abrahamic religions would get thrown out on their ears and asked not to come back as long as they have a theodicy problem.

But all religions have rituals, so we can praise Kammarkollegiet for its wisdom!

The holy ritual of Kopyacting is described in the Application as sharing information, or files, with fellow human beings. The sharing is facilitated and assisted by an *op*, which serves in a similar function as priests do in other religions. It is as holy and as good to share culture and knowledge with non-believers as with fellow Kopimists. The sharing can be done on-line or off-line, using whatever technology is convenient.

By performing the holy ritual of Kopyacting, we remind ourselves that Kopying is the First Fundamental Principle, and the one that has given name to our religion. We know that sharing is caring, and we want to share this insight with others.

We perform the holy ritual of Kopyacting not only to remind ourselves that Kopying is a Fundamental Principle that we regard as holy, but also to highlight this to others, in the hope that they may want to join us in our faith. We will force no-one, but we invite everybody to start considering sharing a holy act, as we do.

As such, both receiving and sharing culture and knowledge are perfectly ordinary everyday acts, that millions of people do on a daily basis without any metaphysical motives. But the same is true about washing down a wafer with a swig of wine, which is the central ritual of Christianity. Even if the act itself is unremarkable, thinking about it in a spiritual way transforms it into a ritual with a deeper meaning.

Being described already in the Application Of 2011, Kopyacting is Kopimism's first and most ancient ritual. It is fitting that it should be dedicated to Kopying, which is the First Fundamental Principle of the universe, and the one that has given Kopimism its name.

But just having one single ritual is hardly enough for a young and aspiring religion. Most older religions have lots of different rituals, for different purposes and for different situations. Kopimism should have that too.

To define a full set of Kopimist rituals for all life's varying circumstances is a big job, but it does not have to be done immediately or in one blow. As Kopimism grows and attracts more followers, rituals will evolve naturally. This is how most rituals in the older religions and society in general have appeared anyway, so it makes sense for Kopimism to follow the same path.

Kopimism is an open religion that likes and encourages diversity. Anybody is free to add whatever he or she likes to the Kopimist framework. All suggestions for new Kopimist rituals are welcome. The ones that the swarm thinks are good will be picked up, and, with time, become more and more firmly established as rituals. Thus, new rituals in society usually come into existence through a swarm-based process built on Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality.

We note in passing how similar this is to the Kopimist creation myth, which teaches that life itself once appeared on Earth through a swarm-based process built on Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality. When Life appeared it was because proteins voluntarily started to organize themselves into something more complicated. When multicellular organisms first saw the light of day, it was because a lot of unicellular plankton in a primordial ocean had decided to do the same. In human swarm-work,

where each node is a full human mind rather than a tiny protein or solitary cell looking for playmates, we can observe the same fundamental principles applied on a different scale, but otherwise in a similar manner. This may or may not be a coincidence.

In any case, this is an open invitation to anybody who feels like it to suggest new Kopimist rituals. The rituals as such do not have to be new. Copying and remixing from existing sources, both religious and other, is of course always encouraged for a Kopimist.

In this, we can learn a lot from Christianity. One of the reasons for its success in spreading around the world has been its ability to incorporate and remix other religions' rituals and holidays, and turning them into Christian ones. This is how the ancient celebration of the winter solstice turned into a birthday party for baby Jesus. If the Christians could remix other religions so successfully and shamelessly, we Kopimists certainly can do the same.

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15. Rituals for the Four Kopimist K's

In the previous chapter, we noted that rituals are a very important part of all religions. Kopimism has one ritual described in the Application Of 2011 for official recognition as a church (which Kammarkollegiet—blessed be its name!—granted). But just one single ritual is not enough for a church. We need more, and everybody is welcome with suggestions.

In Kopimism, we highlight four fundamental principles that we think are helpful in explaining how the universe we know came into being, and what drives it on. These are the Four Kopimist K's: Copying, Collaboration, Quality, and Creativity. We can look at how different rituals might highlight each of the four different K's.

But the principle of Copying goes beyond making digital copies of copyrighted or non-copyrighted works.

Copying

The most ancient ritual of Kopimism is Kopyacting. It was described already in the Application Of 2011 (which Kammarkollegiet—blessed be its name!—granted). To the outside world Kopyacting looks very much like file sharing (online or offline), but as we saw in the previous chapter, an everyday act becomes a ritual if we choose to give it a spiritual meaning. It is entirely fitting that Kopimism's first and most ancient ritual should be a tribute to the principle of Copying, using the tools that have just appeared in this age.

But we need more.

Teaching and learning are also a form of Copying, where knowledge (or culture) is copied from one mind to another. It makes sense for Kopimism to consider teaching and learning sacred. We can design rituals that help create a good environment for teaching and learning, or we can copy such rituals from other sources.

There is a lot of secular literature on how to create a good learning environment, and there are millions of teachers of different kinds that have their own experiences of what works. Maybe some of the Eastern religions, which traditionally focus a lot on the teacher/pupil relationship, have useful rituals that we could copy or remix. If Karate Kid's teacher has actually figured out a way to get teenagers to pick up their clothes from the floor voluntarily, there is magic there that deserves to be copied.

Sex is another aspect of Copying, as we have noted earlier. Fertility rituals used to be a major part of traditional polytheistic religions. The Romans and the Greek had Venus and Afrodite cults, and the Vikings had plenty of rituals devoted to Freyja. But then the prudish Abrahamic religions managed to turn sex into something shameful that you shouldn't even talk about, much less turn into any public rituals.

But Kopimism sees sex as something positive and a manifestation of the fundamental principle of Copying, so we can side with the polytheistic religions on this. Perhaps there are old Norse rituals devoted to Freyja that we can copy directly into Kopimism. This is the fun part of a religion that recognizes sex as something positive and good, so we have no reason to hold back.

Collaboration

All rituals help promote a spirit of collaboration, which is one of the major reasons they are so powerful. But we can still look for rituals that are specifically designed to promote collaboration within a group.

In the books on leadership and group psychology that we buy at airports, there are many suggestions on how to create a good spirit within a group or an organization. Maybe some of these are useful, or at least can serve as the basis for remix as Kopimist rituals.

In the New Age movement, there are a plethora of rituals where the participants sit, stand, or lay in a circle, and do various exercises to become more united as a group. It would make sense to copy some of the best of these rituals into Kopimism, as a tribute to the fundamental principle of Collaboration.

Collaboration online is an area that deserves special attention. In meat space we have lived together in societies for several thousand years, so we have had time to develop social codes and everyday rituals to avoid misunderstandings. Simple politeness is one of them.

The English word “Goodbye” comes from phrase “God be with you!”, so even if we do not think of it when we use the word today, it started out as a religious ritual aimed at promoting friendliness and politeness.

On the internet, we have the same need for politeness and friendliness as offline, in order to create a good climate for collaboration. We all know how easy it is for flame-wars to erupt over what in the end turns out to have been mostly a mutual misunderstanding expressed in too harsh words. Techniques and rituals that help avoid or mitigate this kind of obstacle to the process of Collaboration are useful tools.

Politeness is a Kopimist virtue, on the net as it is in meatspace.

Because the net is still young compared to other tools for communication and collaboration, we are right now in the process of experimenting with swarms on the net, to try to figure out which norms lead to the best results (whatever “best” may mean in a particular context).

Right now, there are many experiments going trying to find norms and codes of behavior that lead to good collaboration online. Wikipedia has a set of norms or “[behavioral guidelines](#)” designed for this purpose, which includes the famous “[Assume good faith](#)” rule. They also have a system for promoting and rewarding good and desired behavior, by upgrading the quality rating of articles that people have managed to improve to certain levels. This is probably an idea that Kopimism should pick up.

In his [newly published book *Swarmwise*](#) Rick Falkvinge, founder of the first Pirate Party, talks about how you never can influence a swarm by trying to punish people into doing what you want. If you try, they’ll just leave. The thing you can and should do, is to reward good behavior with attention when it occurs, and just ignore any bad and undesired behavior as far as possible. In his book, Falkvinge goes on to give examples on how to organize competitions and similar rituals. This would be a starting point for thinking about possible Kopimist reward rituals.

I don’t know exactly what Wikipedia’s procedures/ceremonies for upgrading the ranking of an article are, but they would also be a good starting point for Kopimist rituals for rewarding good work in the swarm.

There is a strong connection between rituals and norms. Rituals to reward good behavior in line with the norms help reinforce that kind of behavior, both in the individual and in the group as a whole. This kind of rituals can play an

important part in fostering a spirit of collaboration.

Marriage ceremonies, finally, is another group of rituals that fit naturally under the heading of Collaboration. You could argue that marriage ceremonies should be sorted under Copying, since there is sex involved, but quite honestly, there is more to marriage than just sex. When two people get married, they promise each other to cooperate and stick together in life's hardships and joys. This is the fundamental principle of Collaboration at work.

There have been many beautiful wedding ceremonies conducted in this world, and as Kopimists we are free to copy and remix in any way we want. There are standard Christian wedding protocols that talk about collaboration (rather than to “cherish and obey”). Secular wedding ceremonies can be very beautiful, and often emphasize the future collaboration between the bride and groom (or whatever sexes the two people being joined may have). Perhaps there are some old Norse ceremonies that do the same, and deserve to be picked up and remixed—possibly including a dash of Copying as well, to spice up weddings where this would be appropriate.

The Kopimist Church of Sweden does not yet have the right to wed people, despite the fact that we are an officially recognized religion. But when that day comes, we should be ready.

Quality

In ***Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance***, Pirsig talks about the importance of having the right mental attitude when doing technical work, in order to achieve Quality. “Assembly of Japanese motorcycle requires great peace of mind,” he quotes from an instruction manual, and agrees despite the slightly amusing formulation.

When Pirsig himself does maintenance work on his motorcycle he does it in a ritualistic manner. For routine work, he performs the same sequence of movements, to help him reach and remain in a calm state of mind where he has the greatest chance of perceiving Quality instinctively. When doing non-routine tasks, such as disassembling the entire motorcycle (in the hope of eventually being able to put it back together again), he takes care to lay out the parts he removes in an orderly ritualistic manner. This is partly for practical reasons, but just as much to get in the right mental state.

Pirsig's ultimate goal is to achieve "value quietness, in which one has no wandering desires at all but simply performs the acts of his life without desire". A step on the way there is "mental quietness, in which one has no wandering thoughts at all".

In Chapter 25 of *Zen and the Art...*, Pirsig discusses meditation, and how he sees it as a way of reaching the great inner peace of mind required to assemble a Japanese motorcycle, or do anything else with Quality.

Meditation is a central part of many religions, in particular Eastern ones. This practice fits naturally under the heading of Quality, if the object of the meditation is to calm the mind and put it in a state where it is better able to see Quality. A number of selected meditation techniques, copied from existing sources, would make a good addition to the Kopimist set of rituals.

In religions that do not contain formal meditation techniques, such as for example Christianity, prayer sometimes fills a similar function. As Kopimists, we can pick what we find useful from this tradition as well. But Christian prayers tend to have a very strong connection to the Christian world view, so they are perhaps not ideal to use as a neutral meditation technique.

The meditation techniques that originated in the East seem more clean in this respect, as many of them are being successfully taught in a completely secular context in the West. They are probably a better starting point for defining Kopimist meditation rituals.

Creativity

Neither Christianity nor its sister religions are very big on creativity, at least not in their mainstream variants. As far as I know, the word is not mentioned even once in the Bible. The emphasis in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, is on tradition instead.

This seems to apply to more or less all the old established religions, and there is probably a very straightforward reason for this. The old religions do not talk about Creativity because they are—old.

In society today, we are constantly discussing creativity and how to promote it in every possible field of human endeavor, from bringing up children to kick-starting the economy to improving our sex life. This is quite appropriate, and a good thing.

But it is a very new thing. Before the early hippies of the 1960's started to focus on Creativity as something important and desirable, this was not really a mainstream idea until then. It is only for the last fifty years that the subject of creativity has become so prominent in the public debate, and none of the old established religions has picked up this new trend.

(Since we have already noted that the old Western mainstream religions are more attached to tradition than to creativity and change, this is of course what we would expect from them in a chicken-and-egg kind of vicious circle, but it's still worth pointing out.)

But Kopimism is free to choose another path, and by recognizing Creativity as one of the Four Kopimist K's, we already have. The recognition that Creativity is something both good and important is one of the memes that sets the modern information society apart from the closed agricultural societies of the previous couple of thousand years, where new ideas were usually viewed with suspicion or outright hostility, and where Christian dogma ruled.

And even if Christianity is not much help when it comes to rituals for promoting Creativity, there are plenty of other sources to turn to for inspiration. Again we can consult the books we buy at airports, where a large portion of them are focused precisely on unleashing our potential for creativity. A large number of New Age rituals have the same goal. There are many sources to copy and remix from in this area, from basic brainstorming techniques to more elaborate exercises to set free our inner Creativity, as individuals or in a group.

And we can invent entirely new things as well. Not everything needs to be based on old traditions, like in the old religions. Kopimism explicitly embraces Creativity as good thing and a driving force in the development of the universe, rather than staying silent on the subject like Christianity and other older religions.

Kopimism should be a fun and exciting religion in celebration of the Zeroth Fundamental Principle, which is Creativity. But it should also be a fun and exciting religion for the simple reason that the world probably needs one.

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16. Kopimist Holidays For the Four Seasons

One of the great things with being a religion is that you get to suggest holidays, which the state can then turn into days when you don't have to go to work. Although it may take a while before the first government in the world recognizes a Kopimist holiday in this manner, we should be ready. Holidays are an important part of the rituals of any religion.

Kopimism is based on science, and from a scientific point of view, there are four days in the year that stand out in objective terms: the summer and winter solstices, and the spring and autumn equinoxes.

These four days in the year are not only highlighted by modern science. They have also been seen as holy and special days by most pre-Christian religions, from the Stonehenge druids and the old Norse vikings to the Babylonians and the Aztecs and the Chinese, and God (one of them) knows how many other religions as well.

Since both modern science and scores of ancient religions agree that the four special days in the solar year are special, we can follow both traditions by declaring them Kopimist holidays. This is extra welcome considering that one of the goals of Kopimism is to bring Science and Religion closer to each other. If we can copy from both of them at the same time, that is perfeKt.

And since there are four seasons and four Kopimist K's, we can devote each of the four holidays to a different

Fundamental Principle. But which Kopimist K should be celebrated in which season?

Interestingly, it turns out that we can do a quite straightforward and natural mapping between the four seasons and the Four Kopimist K's:

- **Spring—Creativity.** Springtime is when all of nature is bursting with new life. As humans we can feel it too, when light returns and finally overtakes darkness. The spring equinox is a suitable holiday to celebrate Creativity, and the joy of living in a creative universe that is bursting with life.
- **Summer—Copying.** Summer is when the seeds that have fallen on good soil grow up to yield a crop a hundred times more than was sown. This is the miracle of Copying, which sustains life itself. A Kopimist summer solstice ritual should be a tribute to Copying in all its forms, including sex. Fortunately, we have solid old Norse ground to stand on here. Most of the traditional Swedish way of celebrating midsummer, from the phallic maypole to the games you play around it, have their origins in old Norse summer solstice fertility rites. Although we could turn Swedish midsummer into a Kopimist celebration of Copying without really making any changes at all, perhaps we can improve it even further by going back to the origins to see if there are any old Norse rituals that we could revive in a more original form.
- **Autumn—Collaboration.** In the old peasant society, autumn was when everybody cooperated to bring in the harvest. We can probably find find inspiration in old harvest festivals to celebrate the autumn equinox in honor of Collaboration.
- **Winter—Quality.** At least in the old society, before central heating and electric round the clock

lighting, winter was a quiet time when not much was going on, and a time for reflection. This fits well together with Quality, which is something we need to reflect on in stillness at times in order not to become blind to it. In nature, in a more grim and direct way, winter is when the Quality of organisms trying to survive is tested, and natural selection weeds out the ones that are found wanting. This last aspect is maybe not the most cheerful starting point for designing rituals for winter solstice parties, but our need for reflection from time to time is definitely something that deserves highlighting by a yearly holiday.

With this, we have the beginning of a Kopimist religious year with holidays.

Although the mapping between the Kopimist K's and the four seasons is not necessarily a central aspect of the Kopimist faith, it is still an encouraging sign that we can do the mapping so easily if we want to. They even get in the right order.

If the world was just a series of meaningless coincidences, this would be one of them. But since we believe there is a lot more to the world than that, we are free to see it as yet another sign that we are on the right track with our faith.

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17. Summary

Kopimism is a new religion for atheists, agnostics, and believers in other religions who want a new perspective on their current faith.

Kopimism takes its starting point in the evolution of life on Earth, and embraces the scientific description of the world. But science alone does not tell the whole truth about this fantastic universe. Kopimism adds meaning and purpose to the scientific description of evolution, while still respecting science.

The word "gospel" means "message of joy"—good news, simply. This is A Kopimist Gospel, and it is a real message of joy.

Kopimism brings good news in many areas. First of all, it reconciles religion with science. The schism between science and religion that started to appear with Isaac Newton's mechanistic model of the universe, and has widened ever since, is actually quite unnecessary.

Kopimism is based on the modern scientific world view. We think that Science is great, and mostly right in what it teaches. Kopimism is a law-abiding religion, so we respect the laws of nature. We don't claim that we can walk on water, or that our prophets' mothers are virgins. Why should they be?

But we take careful note of the fact that even if Science tells the truth and nothing but the truth (mostly), it doesn't even claim to tell the *whole* truth. There are plenty of

places where Science just gives the answer "undefined" or "random". In each of these places, there could be hidden magic that neither we nor Science are aware of yet.

Accepting Science does not mean that we have to accept the universe as mechanistic, soulless and dead. The universe is big, complicated and weird enough for both science and magic to coexist in it. In fact, they almost certainly do. Kopimism suggests an answer to how science and magic can be made to fit together.

The Kopimist creation myth takes its beginning at the appearance of life on Earth:

In the beginning, the world was a stinking soup of ammonia, methane gas, and nasty toxic chemicals. The atmosphere was alight with flashes of pure energy. Something wanted to be born.

The first two sentences present the general scientific view of how conditions were on Earth at the time. Kopimism does not contradict science. If Science is happy with that description, then we are.

But the third sentence, "*Something wanted to be born*", is of course an addition that goes beyond strict science. There is no hard scientific evidence that anything "wanted" anything at all on primordial Earth, four billion years ago.

But on the other hand, there is just as little hard scientific evidence that there wasn't. Since Science makes no claim one way or the other, this is an example of a spot where we can open up for the possibility of magic without contradicting any of the laws of science.

Science and Religion can easily coexist in peace. All that Science has to do is show a bit of humility, and not claim to

say more than it actually does. And all that Religion has to do is show a bit of common sense, and not insist on parlor trick miracles that quite obviously defy the laws of nature.

The Kopimist faith accepts Science's description of the evolution of life on Earth. Instead of trying to fight that description, as some religious fundamentalists (mostly Christian) do, we are inspired by it and want to learn from it.

Looking at the history of evolution, including the evolution that human societies have experienced, we identify four Fundamental Principles that we think are worth highlighting. These are the four Kopimist K's: Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality.

The four Fundamental Principles are inspired by observation of the history of evolution. As is fitting for a religion, we not only present a tale of how we think life on Earth originated, we also try to learn something from it.

We identify Copying and Collaboration by observing how important these two principles have been in the formation of life on Earth. We see the same pattern of Copying and Collaboration when proteins learn to multiply and start collaborating to build cells, as when cells that have multiplied start collaborating to build more complex organisms, like ourselves.

We identify Quality as a more or less necessary force in the process of evolution, to explain why things have generally moved towards the better, after all.

And we identify Creativity as an equally necessary driving force behind the evolution of the universe, to explain why we didn't get stuck forever in some ecologically stable but ultimately boring state of blue and green algae soup.

The four Kopimist K's together provide a theological framework is consistent with Science and partly based on observation, but which still has room for spiritual concepts.

Thanks to Quality, we have a reason to feel optimistic about the future, even though we have no way of knowing what it will actually look like. And because we see Creativity as a natural force that is present everywhere in the universe at all levels, we have reason to look forward to a future that is exciting and fun as well.

All of this without breaking a single Law of Nature.

There is no Creator God in the description of Kopimism presented in this Gospel. Instead, we think that the scientific description of evolution together with the four Kopimist fundamental principles are sufficient to explain the marvel of our existence.

But even if we reject the idea of God as the Creator, this does not rule out that there could be other Gods. This is an issue that is deliberately left open by this Kopimist Gospel. Therefore, this Gospel can be used in two ways.

In itself, this Gospel is a stand-alone atheistic or agnostic world view that is based on science, but adds some spiritual meaning to the scientific description.

But this Kopimist Gospel can also serve as a reasonable creation myth and foundation for new [cults](#) and [religions](#) that want to include one or more Gods, but do not want or need that God as the Creator.

In support of such a religious belief system, we have noted the fact that Science never claims to tell the whole truth, and that there are spots of chaos and unpredictability all over today's scientific theories.

It may be that the activity in these spots is just random, as some believe. But it may also be that these are the spots where concepts like the Soul, Free Will, or even God can be inserted into the description of the world without violating any of the laws of science.

This Kopimist Gospel deliberately leaves the issue of a God open. But there could be other Kopimist Gospels that give different answers to that question.

Getting down from the high metaphysical mountain tops, we can use the Four Kopimist K's to get guidance in our everyday life.

From the principles of Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality, it turns out that we can quite naturally and directly derive a moral system, which happens to look just like we would want as freedom oriented humanists.

We want as much freedom for the individual as possible, to give her the greatest chance to express Creativity. We see sex in all its forms as something natural and positive, and as a tribute to the principle of Copying. We recognize that to live together in a society, we must respect each other's freedoms, and must strive to create a good climate for Collaboration. And we trust people to make their own choices and get it right more often than not, since we are all guided by the force of Quality.

There is nothing new or surprising in this moral code. It is just normal modern freedom oriented humanism. But the fact that it is so easy to go directly from the Four Kopimist K's to the moral system we would have wanted anyway, that is a pleasant surprise. It is of course not conclusive proof in itself, but it is an indication that we may have made a quite sensible choice in Fundamental Principles in the Four Kopimist K's.

We can also use the framework of Creativity, Copying, Collaboration, and Quality to suggest appropriate rituals for use in the Kopimist church, from wild fertility rites to quiet meditation.

When we turn to the issue of religious holidays, we see that there is a quite natural mapping from the Four K's to the four seasons. This is another good sign that we are on the right track. We can celebrate the summer and winter solstices and the spring and autumn equinoxes, each to remind us of one of the Four K's.

We do not yet have a full set of Kopimist rituals for all occasions and tastes, but we have a foundation to build on. Kopimism values diversity. Ideally, there will be many different churches and belief systems that can elaborate the foundation presented in this Kopimist Gospel in different directions.

Today, December 21, 2013, is Midwinter Solstice Day. It is a fitting day to present a Kopimist Gospel, a message of joy.

Science and religion can coexist, and we are living in a creative universe filled with magic, miracles, and beauty. There are forces that guide the creation towards the interesting and good, so we dare to feel safe in the trust that creates the world.

This is a Kopimist Gospel.

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Afterword: Kopimism, the Pirate Party, and Separation Between Church and State

The Pirate Party is a religiously unattached political party that wants to see a secular state where the state and religion are separated.

Freedom of religion, i.e.: everybody's right to believe in what he or she wants (or nothing at all) is a fundamental human right ([Article 9 in the ECHR](#)), and quite rightly so. Everybody shall have the right to practice and live by their own religion, as long as it does not infringe other people's human rights.

The state should not be a part of the church, and the church should not be a part of the state.

Kopimism is a politically unattached young religion that has official status as a religion in Sweden, after a decision by Kammarkollegiet—blessed be its name! [The Missionary Church of Kopimism](#) is a church that is also politically unattached, and wants to see the Kopimist ideas spread over the world by copying.

So far, there are no problems, of course. But to complicate things, there appears to be a quite obvious overlap between people who are active in the Pirate movement and Kopimism, respectively. Many have pointed this out, and nobody has denied it.

The Missionary Church of Kopimism was started by [Isak Gerson](#) and [Gustav Nipe](#), both active Pirates. Nipe's

daytime job is to be the chairman of the Swedish Pirate Party's youth organization Young Pirate. That is admittedly a link.

Me, I am a member of the European Parliament for the Pirate Party. I mostly blog about pirate politics, but I have also written a number of blog posts on Kopimism, and intend to continue doing so. Both the Swedish Pirate Party's founder [Rick Falkvinge](#) and our current party leader [Anna Troberg](#) have been blogging about Kopimism, Swedish [Wikipedia notes](#).

So it would be slightly silly to try to deny that there appears to be quite a strong personal union between the two movements.

I see no conflict between being politically active in the Pirate Party for a secular society, and being a Kopimist. On the contrary, I see it as to parts that fit perfectly together. If I want the right get to heaven my own way and to believe in what I want (like Kopimism), then it is natural that I defend that right for everybody. "*First they came for the Jews, but I wasn't a Jew...*" etc.

If you are a follower of a religion (in particular a [small unpopular religion](#)) the smartest thing to do is to be in favor of the secular state, for purely egoistic reasons if nothing else. If you let the religion that happens to be the strongest at a particular time get control of legislation and police force, you never know where things will end up. Or more accurately: You know precisely, because that has already happened far too many times in history, and is still going on today.

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's," Jesus said in his days. If he meant that state and church should be separate, I agree with him. That is how it should be.

- **The Pirate Party does not** think that file sharing should be legalized because Kopimism sees free copying as something holy. We think that file sharing should be legalized on purely secular grounds, because it is a good idea from a democratic, economic, and cultural perspective.
- **Kopimism is not** trying to get some sort of religious exception for Kopimists only, that would give us a special license to share files without risking punishment. This is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that the Kopimist church has been founded by people who are politically active in the Pirate Party, and are already working to legalize file sharing for everybody.

The Pirate Party and Kopimism are two different movements, a political and a religious one, that have different goals and work in different areas. But that doesn't prevent any individual from being active in both, if he or she feels like it.

And remember, it's only religion we're talking about. Religion is never more serious than you choose to see it. What is one person's most sacred belief, may be just a more or less silly joke to another. This is how it's always been for all religions, and Kopimism is no exception.

To all who see Kopimism as a joke, I hope that you at least think it's reasonably funny. If not, all you have to do is to surf on to something else.

As long as we all remember to treat each other in a nice and respectful manner, even if we happen to have different opinions on religion or anything else, it's not a problem that we are all different. It is an asset, and just how it should be.

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A Kopimist Gospel – The Creation
version 2.0

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Revised December 2023: The section “What does this mean?” added to chapter 0, and “parsley” changed to “broccoli” throughout the text.