<u>Appendix C</u>: The 'Nunes Memo' as a Salutary Lesson In Self-Deceptive Self-Deconstruction in an Alternative Universe – Seizing the Major Discourse or Seizing Up In a Non-Alternative Universe?

Workshopping Postmodernism, Authenticity, Lying, Deconstruction, the Nature of Ethical Interaction… in the Context of the Infamous Nunes Memo.

Introduction for an Open Forum at The Continental Philosophy Group[1]*

0. Pre-Introduction

In this paper I will be exploring my provisional observation that the relatively inauthentic manufacture and interpretation of texts is a form of textual treatment more prone to deconstruct under any reasonable form of critical scrutiny. In other words, if you lie, either through commission and/or omission, directly or indirectly, your textual treatment is less integrated and more likely to fall apart when subjected to some more focused form of textual interrogation; given its creation in a less integrated, less harmonized environment of textual dissemination. (0)

This paper will have three sections. (1)

In an introduction I will examine these themes of postmodern relativity; authenticity; lying; deconstruction… in the context of ethically oriented interaction. (2)

Then I will introduce the infamous Nunes Memo – outline its political context; note its pretext for public dissemination; and, indicate how this document itself deconstructs the apparent 'Republican' rationale behind the insistence that it find immediate public dissemination (*contra* FBI recommendations) in order to promote a public and political call for the de-establishment of the special council led by Robert Mueller III. (3)

In the last section of this essay, I shall proffer some further provisional observations. Here, I will examine how the dissemination of this document illustrates my main premise that inauthentic texts are less integrated and less harmonized, and, therefore, more prone to deconstruct under critical interrogation. I will also produce a number of other allied observations such as how the reception of inauthentic texts can be spun in a process that avoids critical scrutiny, etc., in line with other considerations that deal with the so-called vexed issue of fake news, etc. (4)

*For the latest version of this paper: www.homestead.com/noelshomepage/noelshomepage4.html

[1] 11 June, 2018.

1. Introduction

Without trying to be too controversial let me say, very simplistically, that Modernism is dogmatic about truth, indeed, might claim that 'Truth' exists. In comparison, in counter-positioning, let me say, again simplistically, that Postmodernism would argue for many truths, and, for some philosophers, that no one 'truth' could or should be privileged over any other. This latter sense of positioning might be viewed as having disastrous consequences in the world of ethical or moral engagement since it could be argued that in a certain situation all moral positions adopted therein have an equal value since no one moral position should be privileged (or under-privileged). If this meta-position of a thorough relativism were to be consistently adopted then one might fear a moral free-for-all in which any person could do anything they like regardless of any residual modernistic connotations that might be perceived as persisting in the public reception of such a process of enaction. Of course, it could also be argued that the ramifications of such enaction; be they actions, non-actions or inactions; would and should be lived with as they unfold in the immediate implication of the present and/or consequentially ensue at some future point in time. Curse someone and then assault them, and, they may well then curse you back and assault you even harder. (5)

Now, it is true that few postmodern philosophers approach this 'hard' or 'bad' form of postmodernism, yet, its ensuing ethos does seem to increasingly permeate our relational environment as we interact one with another. With a breakdown of religious traditions, the hyper-competitiveness of neliberal ideology, increasing stresses of modern life, etc., the assumed moral conventions that societies took for granted are now being deconstructed, discounted if not often ignored or rewritten. This is not to say that modernists were always very moral, or were ever morally consistent, as they certainly operated with their moral blindspots given their overlooking of the natural rights of diverse minorities including the perpetuation of the traditional diminishment or curtailment of an equal role for women in society, e.g., etc. Against this simplistic backdrop, as an aside, let me merely suggest that 'lying' is no longer seen in such a negative light. If all visions of the world have their own 'truth' then let ten thousand contradictory flowers bloom on the stage of this postmodern world… (6)

A Contemporary philosopher can transcend this endless tennis match between Modernists and Postmodernists (through exercising suitably enacted ongoing, overall transcendental suspensions) by seeking to existentially evaluate the value of such a bewildering array of values. By 'existential' is meant 'a pro-relational attitude that attempts to harmonize this complexity of e/valuation'. From the ongoing resolution of this process of relational harmonization we can expect to see a mutual enrichment of those same relationships. In this relational enrichment we can find a certain enhanced degree of authenticity at the very psychic center of those relationships… (7)

However, in the 'real' world we find both harmonization and disharmonization operating in our spheres of relational engagement. No one can be absolutely authentic. Not one person is immune from acts of lying and other forms of deception since it could be argued that much of cultural exchange, in its enacted simulation, is dissimulated, deceptively engineered… be that wittingly and/or unwittingly entered into through forms of cultural oppression, contractual inequality, peer group pressures, conventionally accepted and expected forms of cultural deception, etc. (8)

To convincingly tell a lie, e.g., we must first speak the truth and, then, deceptively tweak some small elements of the same in order to disseminate the 'lie'. A successful liar must know what they are doing and clearly separate these more truthful and less truthful strands of textual narration. Confusing them would be fatal to the expedition of that deceptive event. Consequently, more psychic energy must

be expended by that deceptive individual or group in order to entertain parallel strands of text without either absolutely separating them or absolutely overlapping and confusing their relative distinctiveness. In this dialectical dance, the convincing liar must seem to identify with the disseminated dissimulation whilst at the same time knowing that they do not actually identify with that deceptive strand of dissembling. Obviously, it must be much easier to just speak the truth as you, yourself, see the same, however, speaking the truth itself can have adverse ramifications that might be better avoided through entering into a process of dissembling. To varying degrees, in different cultures, various forms of truth-telling might well be best avoided, just as, on other occasions, acts of non-truth telling might be best not avoided. For prospective candidates before the special council conducted by Robert Mueller III, the thought of lying and being seen to lie, and having to face the legal consequences of such deception, might well be a corrective, to such a degree, that to even entertain that one might follow that deceptive course of enaction would be unwisely countenanced. (9)

Given this metaphorical modeling of deception, where the narrator of a lie must keep these deceptive and non-deceptive strands of narration somewhat apart but not too far apart, and have to be seen identifying with the former whilst inwardly identifying with the latter, it is not too difficult to conjecture that under interrogation it would be easier for a relative liar to have their deceptive texts deconstructed than for those of a relative truth-teller who appears to uphold a more integrated and harmonized single strand of narration. (10)

This desire to be deceptive, be that wittingly and/or unwittingly engaged, makes for a more complex and less integrated vision of 'apparent truth telling'. In examining this infamous Nunes Memo let me demonstrate the inconsistencies buried in the very text itself that was being being put forward as a vindication of Trump's not directly or indirectly colluding with the Russians, and, that this special counsel investigating this proposition, accordingly, was improperly instituted and, therefore, should be disbanded forthwith. A clarion call orchestrated by a certain circle of Republicans echoing the inflammatory rhetoric disseminated by the cable broadcaster Fox, and v.v. (11)

In my use of this expression 'deconstruction' what is meant? I admit to using it in a variety of often co-occurring senses. We have the very technical, philosophical sense of de-privileging privilege in order to de-polarize traditional forms of power relations in a relatively improperly constituted contractual re-writing of the world favouring certain binary elements (and, therein, as a result, sometimes, giving us a more compactual, existential sense of voice to those same proceedings[2]). I am also using this expression to indicate a more conventional use of this term where inherent contradictions are used as evidence of both relatively inauthentic textual performance and depositional representation associated with the same. However, the latter is more a matter of degree since I am arguing that no text can be absolutely inauthentic, nor for that matter can any text be absolutely authentic, but, that relatively less authentic texts are more prone to 'falling apart' given their relative lack of harmonization, integration, integrity, systematization, consistency, relative truthfulness, alignment with our life-worlds as lived, etc. (12)

I am also arguing that the enhanced 'morality' of an ethical relationship is arrived at through the ongoing resolution of relational difference or dissonance in our relationships where this realizes an ex-

[2] By 'compactual', in contrast to the contractual, is meant of a more 'horizontal, non-differential sense of power relations, a greater semblance of equality, a pro-relational and existential attitude towards others, etc. In this I am translating and reinterpreting the expression of a *covenant* or *covenantal* relationship as discussed by the Jewish theologian Jonathan Sachs. The reader might like to refer to this topic in various essays, examining this comparative contrast, as discussed in *Transformation through Re-Self-Organization – The Beneficial Engineering of Social Change*.

istential, mutual, pro-relational enrichment of those same relationships. The spirit of 'authenticity' being observed in those relationships that find themselves being mutually enriched through such pro-relational alignment with others. In essence, finding such alignment through a more receptive sense of ongoing re-alignment as we stand before-others, with-others. (13)

How should we view this memo? In general, particular and specific terms of reference. Let me now explain what is meant, in this regard, in the next section of this essay… (14)

2. The Infamous Nunes Memo

In general terms of reference, I am arguing that a more deceptive text is more easily deconstructed, and, that we can do this by more closely examining the text in question itself. I am also arguing that at the end of the Postmodern era (and the dawning of the Contemporary era), along with its predilection for moral relativism, that we are more susceptible to alternative facts, alternative narrations, alternative universes, fake news, and so on. In a state of effortless thinking, i.e., a lack of critical thinking, a vision of the world found to be in conformity with our current views is more likely to be accepted as 'true' by that person who exhibits that type of conformational bias… (15)

In particular terms of reference, we can note that a 'memo' is a set of headings structured by some implicit and/or explicit argument of set of arguments that set out to impel and direct the realization of a certain course of action or a set of actions in order to deliver a certain intentional objective either implicitly and/or explicitly spelt out by that memo. (16)

Specifically, we can observe the *raison d'être* of this document, as a 'memo', is the disbanding of the special council conducted by Robert Mueller on the grounds that it was improperly instituted on the false proposition that it was instigated as a response to the so-called Trump-Russia 'dossier' of Christopher Steele, that supposedly prompted this enquiry, was improperly promoted and paid for by the Democratic Party, etc.[3] Taking the words of President Trump at face value, in his own words, and who has said on innumerable occasions, "there was no collusion, no collusion with the Russians", and, therefore, there is no need for this special council. That as this counsel was set up on such 'false' grounds it should be immediately disbanded… despite, we should add, leveling a series of serious indictments at various members of Trump's Re-Election Committee, etc., some of whom have admitted to being guilty and are now cooperating with this same committee. (17)

The reader can examine this document in Appendix A. The document is not very long (especially if we separate meta-textual qualifications like introductions, reasons for a reversal of its security classification, etc., and so on). (18)

---

[3] Initially, this venture conducted by Fusion GPS, was contracted to provide political opposition against Trump by a conservative political website, The Washington Free Beacon. Steele was not involved in this initial phase. The second phase was initiated by the attorney Marc Elias, in April 2016, on behalf of Hilary Clinton's campaign and the Democratic National Committee. Steele was hired to assist in June 2016. When Trump was elected president, this research was then paid for directly by Glenn R. Simpson, the founder of Fusion GPS. The complete dossier was then handed to British and American intelligence services. Weeks before the 2016 election, on the basis of Steele's reputation working on Russia-related matters for the last twenty ears, the FBI reached an agreement to pay Steel to continue his work; the agreement was later terminated as information about the dossier became public. (Information as per Wikipedia).

Otherwise, in lieu of a careful close reading of the entire text, let me note a number of key points made by this text and how they contradict with its apparent *raison d'être* to act as device to dis-establish the credibility, authority, institution and constitution of the special council under the leadership of Robert Mueller… 'logically' leading to its disbanding. I.e., the intentional objective of this memo is to orchestrate the cessation of this special council, that for some reason or other, perhaps obvious or not so obvious,was considerably vexing this very dishonest and deceitful president. (19)

Let us list some of the main arguments presented in this document as reasons why the authors of this document thought this special council was illegitimate and should be disbanded. To this end let me cite the following blog titled: KEY POINTS: What to Know About the Nunes Memo (link: http://blog.standuprepublic.com/key-points-how-talk-about-the-nunes-memo-18f51b0b4f62). (20)

KEY POINTS: What to Know About the Nunes Memo

After weeks of hype and hyperbole on the Nunes Memo, what we got was a lot of sizzle, no steak. But the PR blitz by Nunes, the Administration, and other GOP leaders is trying to sell a partisan and misleading memo. *Arm yourself with some facts and key points, courtesy of Stand Up Republic.*

The Administration's Response

It's no secret that the president viewed this memo as a way to stop the Mueller investigation.

- Trump's own tweets prove as much
- His allies have lined up to push the very same narrative:
- Tea Party Patriots want to fire Rod Rosenstein,
- Judicial Watch echoes the same,
- the Federalist says to be a patriot you HAVE to attack the FBI.

Congress' Role

Many Members of Congress have tried to walk a tightrope, saying the memo was important, but didn't discredit the Mueller investigation.

- Maybe they believe that, but after a year of Trump warring against those investigating him, they had to know how he'd use this memo.
- It's naive to think that the president would view this memo as anything other than a weapon against the FBI and Mueller investigation.

Many members of Congress pointed to public pressure campaigns urging them to #ReleaseTheMemo, but research shows that these social media campaigns were by and large the result of Russian information warfare attacks.

The Memo's False Allegations

The memo itself contradicts Team Trump's central claim that the Steele Dossier provided the basis for the Mueller investigation. Rather, it was Trump campaign adviser George Papadopolous who's ties to Russia prompted the investigation.

The memo claims that the Steele Dossier is the only evidence the FBI used in applying for a warrant to monitor Trump advisor Carter Page.

- Page first appeared on the FBI's radar in 2013, and there are literally recordings of Russian spies discussing Page as a potential agent.

The memo also argues that the Steele Dossier—funded by Clinton's opposition research efforts—shouldn't be used by the FBI. It's astonishing that GOP leaders think the FBI shouldn't follow credible evidence or leads if it comes from a source they don't like.

- Despite the memo's claims that the FBI had *not* told judges of the political nature of the dossier, they've now acknowledged that yes, in fact, the FBI did tell judges of the document's political roots.

Ultimately, the memo claims to prove that there is an anti-Trump bias in the FBI, especially during the 2016 election. But there is no evidence that the FBI did anything at that time to tip the scales against Trump. On the contrary, the fact that these investigations were not leaked or made public show that they were not used to influence the election.

We know that Russia did attack our country with information warfare in the 2016 election, and we know that they continue to do so today. We also know that Carter Page has several troubling ties to Russian intelligence agents.

Critical questions to ask:

Why is the Trump administration, Devin Nunes, and the House GOP leadership trying to defend Carter Page with half-truths and partisan memos?

We already know that the Trump campaign included 5 advisors and employees with dangerous ties to the Kremlin: Flynn, Gates, Manafort, Page, and Papadopolous.

- Why did the Trump administration hire so many advisers with inappropriate ties to Putin and the Kremlin?

- Were those advisers hired *because* of their Russian ties, or were people working on behalf of the Russian government eager to inject themselves in the Trump campaign?

- If they've done nothing wrong, why have so many of them openly lied about their connections, and why has the administration routinely misrepresented their work for the campaign?

- Don't we deserve answers to these questions? (21)

In the light of these observations and objections, etc., as articulated above in this blog, on more factual grounds, we can claim that this special council, being led by Mueller, is not foundered on the dissemination of the Steele Dossier. Therefore, moreover, any attempt to 'discredit' Christopher Steele in this memo has absolutely no relevance, and, immediately deconstructs the claim that the response to this dossier was the prime cause of constituting this special council. That, indeed, the FBI was already investigating this claim of collusion with the Russians before the dissemination of this dossier.[4] That the monitoring of one of Trumps members of his Re-Election Committee, namely, Carter Page, had a long history of 'working' with the Russians well before Trump's working to win the GOP nomination for the presidency. Moreover, FISA warrants need to be authorized by a judge and this was repeatedly done so is indicative of the fact that strong grounds for doing so must have been well-argued for by the FBI. Of course, for obvious security reasons, we have no documentary access as to those reasons used for obtaining that series of FISA warrants. On the other hand, it is on the public record that this person has made numerous visits to Russia and has made claims that he has political connections to the Russian political hierarchy, supports the removal of sanctions imposed on Russia over their annexation of the Crimea, etc. Moreover, this person of concern had already left this same committee overseeing Trump's re-election before these FISA warrants were resumed. Basing this claim on this dubious character, as an American citizen allied with the Trump's Re-Election Committee, albeit as a volunteer, and, who, then was no longer such a member, as well as saying he was being illegitimately monitored, is to make a claim that is 'bizarre' at the very least. Obviously, Nunes and its other authors didn't do their homework in putting together this document, and, wishful thinking was more at work in its inauthentic manufacture and controversial dissemination (that was also sanctioned by presidential decree *contra* FBI advice). (22)

That, in the light of such false claims, the memo itself is easily deconstructed given that itself-deconstructs when examined. We don't even have to too closely examine it in order to realize that it consists of cobbled together sets of inconsistent talking points that actually bolster the need for this special council rather than confirming any pseudo-imperative for its dismantling. That, in essence, this document is manufactured and disseminated in such an inauthentic manner that it not only deconstructs its own case, but, reinforces just this need for the very existence of this special council. That this council, instead, should be left to continue its deliberations and release, in due course, its findings. (23)

[4] In its earlier investigations of George Papadopolous, e.g., along with considerable evidence of Russian hacking, attempts to influence democratic elections in a variety of countries, etc.

3. Further Provisional Observations, Conclusions and Comments

The modernist's search for the absolute ideality of truth is unobtainable since, correctly, we can neither encounter such an absolute ideality nor recognize such an absolute ideality. What can be neither encountered nor recognized cannot be engaged! In contrast, the relativism of an ideological postmodernist's vision of an (absolute) equality between all positions cannot be experienced in our engagement with this world as lived because the landscape of this lived world is not flat given that every encountered, recognized and engaged point, therein, is unique and different from all other points, positions, events, situations, relational perspectives, etc., and so on! Such points, or positions, etc., could appear similar but cannot be absolutely identical. But, non-absolute identity does not rule out the fact that the enactment of choice could be experienced between situations with little consequential difference. In a restaurant serving both pasta and pizza we could order either or both… and equally assuage our current degree of hunger. On the other hand, we must not assume that everyone equally likes both pasta and pizza, etc. Nor, for that matter, do we normally observe people eating both dishes at the same time. (24)

Extending this metaphor, we could say that the resolution of our hunger is the satisfaction of our appetite… and that such a process is through a harmonization of such associated desires. We might prefer pizza to pasta, or v.v., but the end result is that our hunger, to that degree it is experienced, is suitably assuaged… regardless of which dish or course is chosen for consumption! (25)

In our interactions with others this process of harmonization must also be entered into. To some extent we must be 'on the same page' so to speak in order to interact with them, and v.v. Just as in any act of relatively successful communication we must find this degree of realized alignment that allows us to actually communicate with each other. Even if we lie to the other person this degree of alignment is necessary in order for us to enact that form of deception. Obviously if we were to engage with them in a more truthful manner we would be in a greater state of mutual alignment. (26)

As argued in this paper, lying, and other forms of deception, must entail a greater degree of psychic 'work' on the part of the deceiver since they need to present as truthful whilst also knowing in what manner they are not being completely truthful with that other person or persons.[5] That in more closely examining the performance and statements of the deceptive person it would be relatively more easy for that interrogation to expose and unravel such duplicity. That this interrogation could be either non-virtual or virtual in the manner of its execution. E.g., a judge could interrogate (the defendant's responses in a cross-examination) both in person or later, in their chambers, when reviewing either a transcript of the trial or in re-addressing their memory of what had transpired in that courtroom. In this process of critical scrutiny statements, as propositions, are examined for their self-consistency, their other-consistency with other related statements, tested in terms of their probability, possibility, probity, the

[5] This additional dialectical 'work' needed to create and preserve the text of a deception reminds me of the following joke that has me wondering what it says about those who find it amusing: 'George Washington could not tell a lie, Nixon could not tell the truth… and Trump doesn't know the difference'. As I have found the telling of this joke always seems to elicit a laugh, and that humour is in some sense insight-forming, in some manner or other, I am left wondering what this might say equally about our general perception of this president and our own sense of self when we go about being deceptive for whatever reason; be that for good or bad? In some measure it seems to suggest that a lie well told necessitates our knowing both how to properly tell the truth and how to properly tell a lie… without confusing these two domains? The acceptance of this insight reinforcing my point that it takes more 'work' to tell a lie and that, in phenomenological reality, the continuing presence of this simultaneous dialectical separation and integration, without complete harmonization, makes the dissemination of a lie more fissile when deconstructively leant upon? Indeed, in the same vein, if we were to find the right trigger, or defect in its performance, then that lie as a textual performance might well disintegrate (be that non-virtually in the immediacy of real time or virtually when reviewed in historical time?).

likeliness that such events had occurred or had not occurred, etc, etc. However, in a frame of mind that entertains more a state of effortless, uncritical thought, the presentation or presentations are merely taken in at face value… and this seems to be the default position for how many people review television, read newspapers, engage on the Internet with stories, memes, and the like. Then, if such representations of reality are found to conform to your desires, expectations, political and other forms of bias, etc., then you might well be more willing to accept such superficial guarantees of their presented authenticity. On the other hand, with some mental effort, etc., such accounts might be seen for what they are, i.e., as representations and interpretations of events that, may or may not be, more or less, in conformity with their overall manner of presentation… therein and thereafter, re-presenting a vision of the world that may no longer seem to confirm such self-represented alignment.[6] (27)

In hindsight, we could say that this memo was poorly cobbled together; its intentions, as to its objectives, were inauthentically contrived both in its construction and in its dissemination; and, that in the final analysis, its forced dissemination actually hindered this conspiracy to dismantle this special council run by Robert Mueller whose investigations were seemingly closing in on the potential wrong doing of this president; be that obstruction of justice, entering into a conspiracy with a foreign power to subvert the 2016 presidential election, or some other set of violations, etc. For those with sympathies for this now beleaguered president such an enquiry may well be seen as a 'witch hunt'. But, for those who believe in the necessity of such an enquiry, the evidence is already in, through a number of guilty pleas, that such a counsel should be in existence and allowed to run it legitimate course! (28)

Strangely, in a rapid repetition of history, this consortium of figures in the GOP who brought us this infamous Nunes Memo seemed to have gained nothing from the fallout of this previous experience. They have now, just recently, brought us the leaked release of the Comey Memos, ostensively, as a further clarion call calling for the dismantling of this same special counsel on the grounds that such a set of documents are a 'vindication' of this president given implied contradictions in these documents with the testimony Comey gave before that congressional committee, etc. The mere assertion of this 'fact', which has no foothold in reality, is solely being used to only reinforce this spurious claim that this president is being subjected, improperly, to a so-called 'witch hunt' led by the FBI. Such claims, taken at face value, might go down well for an audience who only tunes in to Fox, and for those who only seem to practice an effortless form of thinking without critical reflection. However, for the rest of the community, in a majority of concerned citizens, be they Republicans, Democrats or Independents, these memos, instead, have come to be seen more as a reinforcement of the apparent veracity of Comey's original testimony, as publicly broadcast on television, at the expense of the credibility of this president who we might say, without exaggeration, as we all know, is continually wayward in truth-telling… if not missing in action. Furthermore, I am sure, the successful dismantling of this special council would trigger a profound constitutional crisis for the American political world (as well as being the enduring pretext for the release of vast amounts of leaked information that may well further incriminate and damage this presidency, most likely in an inevitably fatal manner?). A presidency, we might say, that is damaged and suffering already from its own continually self-inflicted acts of self-harm. (29)

In this cultural contrast between the wishful absolutism of ardent modernists and the unexperienced relativity of *laissez-faire* postmodernists let it be known that we do not need to favour either side. Let me demonstrate, analogically, how we can transcend this binary opposition. The day before I bought six apples and cannot remember whether I eat one or two of them. But, I don't need to be abso-

---

[66] As seen to have a certain degree of contra-grammatical symmetry to the extent there is a parallel degree of symmetrical alignment between 'their representations of reality' and 'the reality of their representations'.

lutely certain as to whether I have four or five apples left in that fruit bowl in the kitchen since I am certain enough, given the knowledge already to hand, that apples still remain in my kitchen that are ready to eat. Or, and, yes, it is true that oranges, bananas and apples can be found in my kitchen, and that I like to eat all three fruits, but, this does not mean that in the reality of my lived experience that at any given moment I will want to eat one instance, each, of all three at the same time, and, instead, will more likely chose only one instance of those three types of fruit that can be now found in my kitchen where I will act in accordance with my desires as expressed in that period of time in question. Absolute certainty is not necessary to successfully make a good judgment, and, I will push aside the neutral equality of a suspension, in the mere entertainment of possibilities, for the actual enactment of a distinctive course of action. Sadly, we are better to observe and follow the actions of philosophers rather than have our lives conform to their statements of aspirational intent.[7] (30)

Let it be said, that alternative facts cannot be absolutely alternative. Just as there can be no absolute lies or absolute acts of deception. On the other hand, a deception is still an intentional deception regardless of whether the intention to do so was either for good or for bad. However, when we progressively de-align ourselves with the reality of reality, then we become equally unfit to be successful members of our community given this less harmonious or inharmonious manner of relating to others in the falsely believed non-otherness of certain aspects of this 'one' shared world wherein we must live! Furthermore, no major discourse can forever run counter to lived reality. The competence of a major discourse is that it appears to work most of the time for most people. Removing ourselves from 'the reality of our representations' equally removes us from 'their representations of reality'. Practising deception and/or being deceived, either self-initiated and/or other-initiated, is a more wasteful (mis)appropriation of our limited psychic resources. Ideally, in a final analysis, it should be more easy for us to seize a more truthful rendering of this world as lived for we will instead, inevitably, be seized by such misrepresentations and seize up in this alternative vision of a world. A sense of world that must be this same world of life since we must all live together in order to live with others as we find ourselves both being and becoming 'ourselves' with-others, before-others. As there is little that we can do purely by ourselves, for ourselves, other than to breath for a short period of time, a few days at most, then we must attend to living our lives through others just as they must live their lives through us. That, whatever better promotes the harmonious means we need to adopt and adapt in order to ensure such survival, without a doubt, such would better facilitate our ongoing inter-subjective alignment that, in turn, must also better facilitate the realization of our own aspirations... as we continually negotiate with others as to how we, each one of us, will find their passage through this world… through the inescapable auspices of our living through this intimate semblance of the Other..!! (31)

Noël Tointon, Sydney, 25.4.18.

Appendix A: White House Letter & Memo ('Authored' by The Honorable Devin Nunes)
Refer to the pdf for these two documents.

[7] The reader might like to refer to the following paper: Contra (Moral) Absolutism & Contra (Moral) Relativism, etc! A Working Paper in Meta-Philosophy: Denying both Absolutist and Relativist Interpretations in the Reading of (Transcendental Phenomenological) Experience.

Postscript: My Truth is Your Truth..?

We could simply argue that a stereotypical modernist assumes their 'truth' to be true, or more true, than someone else's false vision of reality, whereas, in contrast, a strict postmodernist is happy that your vision of 'truth' is just as true, or false, as everyone else's viewpoint. And never the twain shall meet. But, this simplistic landscape overlooks the transcendental dimension that underpins the constitution of non-transcendentally oriented experience… (32)

Recently I came across an essay by Lucianna O'Dwyer whose final comment in an essay titled *The Relevance of Husserlian Phenomenology to Psychology* I believe is quite apposite to a resolution of this conundrum[8] as to how this divide should be philosophically transcended and resolved. Let me quote her final sentence:

> What the phenomenological psychologist seems to need is, on one side, a thorough phenomenological analysis of how existence is grounded in the transcendental dimension; and on the other side, a phenomenological analysis of the implications, at an individual existential level, of the *forgetfulness* of one's transcendental dimension on the part of the subject.[9] (33)

There is this 'forgetfulness' that there is this transcendental dimension in our experience of this world as lived. From such forgetfulness we forget 'we must live through others as others must live through us'. Just as there is no privileging of either subjects over objects, and v.v., and, no privileging of subjectivity over inter-subjectivity, and v.v., we must recognize this transcendental 'ground' that allows us, therein and thereafter, to discern those elements of our relationships through an analysis, synthesis and naming of those distinguished aspects of our relationships. 'Aspects' that are dialectically enmeshed one with the other before we can profitably discern which 'ones' and 'others' we might wish to focus on either individually and/or collectively. By 'transcendental', among a series of transcendentally oriented equivalences,[10] we can read 'pro-relational', that which privileges the constitution of our relationships in a world of relationships. Upon this metaphorical 'ground' identities, processes and values, therein and thereafter, can be discerned with varying degrees of sense, meaning and meaningfulness, etc. (34)

But, sadly, we are forgetful. Yet, in this apparent 'privileging' of the transcendental, we must de-privilege all post-relational discernments, all ideological inputs, all senses of self and others, etc. Hence the relevance of what I term the *ongoing, overall transcendental suspension*. But, should we be privileging this transcendental dimension if we must invoke this transcendental suspension in order to critically appreciate the import of this aspect of experience? However, we must first accept, e.g., the transcendental unity of consciousness as it relates to our 'later' experience of these discerned aspects of non-transcendentally oriented experience, but, truly, both transcendentally and non-transcendentally oriented aspects need to be equally suspended in and through this same ongoing suspension. That only then through a suspension of this dialectical entwining of both dimensions, and a suspension of the same, and that suspension being suspended, and so on, can we then recover our being in this world with

---

8 This conundrum is examined in closer detail in my paper *Contra* (*Moral*) *Absolutism & Contra* (*Moral*) *Relativism*.

9 My italics. This paper would have been written around 1985?

10 I have argued, from a hypothetically envisaged transcendental perspective, that this transcendental orientation is not only pro-relational but trans-cognitive, pro-judgmental, trans-subjective-intersubjective, trans-cultural, trans-phenomenological, trans-hermeneutical, trans-existential (in what I have described as a systematic sense), trans-e/valuational, etc.

others, etc., in the light of its transcendental constitution of such non-transcendentally oriented experience. A phenomenological (hermeneutical and existential) appreciation of transcendentally constituted experience then allows us to recognize the inescapable dimension of this transcendental aspect as it constitutes lived experience. Then, our transcendental recognition of non-transcendentally oriented facets of this world as lived then returns to us an appreciation of how this pro-relational dimension enters into the formation of all experience and, thereby, gives us an escape from the tyranny of an otherwise ideologically driven world of forgetfulness. That we are not alone, can never be purely alone, even though the forgetfulness of others disseminates a world where we overlook our being with others even in our superficially constituted forgetfulness… Re-awakened, through transcendental reflection, through the exercise of this transcendental suspension, our world of relationships is then revealed to be the true source of all identity, all processes of enaction, and the expression of all forms of value, all forms of e/valuation… along with 'our' perception of all opportunities to oversee the further enrichment of our relationships as 'we both must engage others and as they must engage us'! (35)

That, then, through such alignment, realized through the refined re-alignment of an alignment already in place, through a forgetting of transcendental forgetfulness, can we oversee a maturation of our relationships entered into through a resolution of difference; differences correctly perceived in a spirit of truthfulness… at the existential center of all our relationships… despite and in spite of the obscuration and dissimulation disseminated, either wittingly and/or unwittingly, by others..! (36)

Put as simply as possible, we are equally embodied in a world that is both 'spiritual' and 'material', and, forgetfulness is our overlooking one of these dimensions, usually the former. By 'spiritual' is meant 'relational' and 'being pro-relational', and, by 'material' is meant a 'focusing on the subjects and objects as discerned within our relationships'. This forgotten difference is a bit like realizing that 'the world in its totality has given me the opportunity to buy a cup of copy for only $3.50' and the mistaken belief that 'purely through my own actions I have the power to buy a cup of coffee for $3.50'. However, true non-forgetfulness is when we realize that these two dimensions of our being need to harmoniously work together like 'a hand in a well-fitted glove, or, like 'a key in a well-oiled lock'. With 'two legs' we can walk down the street[11]… as one person… without duplicity… the 'spiritual shaking hands with the material'… in an existential awareness that more often than not, people forget that they have to live 'together' in this one World-of-Life..!! (37)

Noël Tointon, Leura, 2.5.18.

Final Postscript: At the end of May 2018 Trump appears happy to have seen orchestrated another approach to discredit the special investigations of Robert Mueller III, namely, first, the invocation of a 'spy' monitoring his campaign for election in 2016, and, second, then invoking 'spies' in the plural… all totally without evidence that that was the intent enacted by the FBI; despite a number of members of this election committee now having well-documented, multiple associations with people having active Russian political connections. Such inflammatory conjectures have been dismissed as 'ridiculous' by the Republican 'Tea Party' Senator Trey Gowdy, Chair Person of the Oversight Committee. In spite of some Republican criticisms of Gowdy, his opinion was deemed 'accurate' by the House Speaker, Paul Ryan. N.K.T, 5.6.18.

[11] Extending this metaphor, we should note that enaction needs to be enacted; i.e., we must decide to walk, walk down this or that side of the street, in this or that direction, etc. The existential demands that we enact suitable decisions that enrich our relationships (both individually and collectively). The world is basically an asymmetrical landscape contrary to the lack of vision of a Postmodern relativist who, technically, can never enact any form of discrimination given their inability to 'suspend the suspension, etc.,' as argued elsewhere by myself! Refer to footnote no.8.