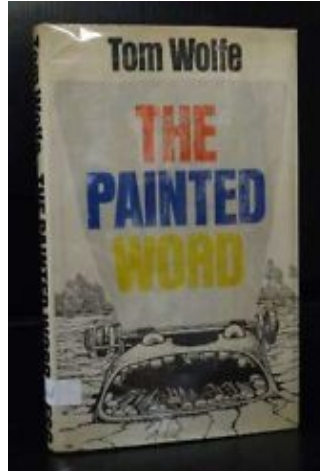


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A Review of *The Painted Word* 38 Years Late



by Miles Mathis

Caveat and disclaimer: this is an *opinion* piece, based on my own personal research. In it I follow what looks to me like a logical line of reasoning, but—as with all things of this nature—the truth is hard to find. It has been made hard to find on purpose, and I am not claiming I *know* everything or anything. My conclusions are based only on the evidence I give to you here. You may come to different conclusions, either more or less standard than mine.

It only took me about 20 years to figure it out, but I think I have finally penetrated what Tom Wolfe was up to in writing *The Painted Word* in 1975.

Like most other Modern literature, poetry, art, reportage, criticism, and history, you cannot unlock *The Painted Word* without studying closely the career of the writer, his bio, and his milieu. I will be told that is true of everything, but you will soon see what I mean. I will show it is far truer now than it was in the past, and why.

I loved *The Painted Word* when I first read it, and that is not surprising since it was written for people like me. It expressed perfectly what we were already feeling, while giving our feelings a sort of scientific basis. Wolfe didn't just express a feeling: he did some research and presented a fairly well argued thesis, one that made some sense. The realists and other anti-Moderns of the time rallied round the book, using it as support for their own agendas, and we realists were still rallying round the book and its argument 30 years later. Wolfe has also lent his name to the more recent Slow Art movement, of which some of my peers and friends were inventors and major players. Although the name “Slow Art” was borrowed from art critic Robert Hughes, the movement was begun—as I understand it—at Hirshl & Adler Gallery in New York by director Greg Hedberg and artists Jacob Collins, Graydon Parrish, and several others. I was never involved, so maybe I have some of the details wrong, but that is the gist of it. Although the movement peaked about a decade ago and you no longer hear much about it, it was pro-tradition and anti-Modern. It was allied for a time with the Stuckist Movement in London,

although I don't know what tangible things ever came of it. A manifesto was published and there were some meetings, I gather, but it never really went anywhere.* It hit big walls every way it turned, though no one knew why those walls were there or who built them. I think I can now tell you.

I was full of naïve hope in 1992, just four years after entering the art market. It was then I sent a letter to Mr. Wolfe, thanking him for writing his book and discussing Modernism and the proper response to it by us realists. I enclosed pictures of a few of my works, so he would know who he was talking to. I hadn't written anything special at that time and had published nothing. My stint with Artrenewal.org was still a decade in the future, and my websites more distant still. But I had plans to write even then. I had hoped to get some worthwhile suggestions from Mr. Wolfe, maybe even a bit of help. Although I got a polite response, it was short and airy.

I had some formless suspicions even then. I found it strange that *The Painted Word* should be the only book by Wolfe I liked. One of his previous books, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* of 1968 seemed to be promoting experimental drug use and other things that I had no interest in. Although I had no use for the book, I didn't analyze it beyond that, which was a mistake.

The Right Stuff (1979) was also not my kind of thing. I wasn't interested in the heroism of test pilots or astronauts. Since I was even less interested in Wall Street, I didn't get ten pages into *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987). I thought it strange fare for *Rolling Stone*—especially during the Reagan era—but again, I didn't analyze it beyond that. Back then I just avoided things I didn't like without asking why I didn't like them, why other people did, or why they were being published. In that, I was not so different from everyone else, which is why I understood about as much as everyone else how the world worked: that is to say, I understood nothing.

My understanding has grown slowly over the years, but to tell the truth, the gigantic awfulness of it all did not hit me until recently. In fact, I suspect I have only just got over the fence, and the whole truth is still far beyond my line of sight. To comprehend what I am talking about here, you should have already read my [recent paper](#) on Theosophy and the Beat Generation, for which I was doing research when I stumbled across [an article](#) at the London *Independent* from 1995. In that article—which appears to have only hit the internet last year or the year before—we find the CIA admitting it was behind the promotion of Modernism and Modern Art in the 1950's and 60's, and of artists like Rothko, Pollock, Motherwell, and Warhol. Although that information is played down and spun by the newspaper, and although most people will suffer only a few moments of shock over it, if any, it is still rolling through my brain and soul like a boulder coming down the mountain, loosed at last from the ice and snow.

In my art papers over the last two decades, I have variously blamed the artists, the galleries, the museums, the critics, and the patrons, but I now see all these parties were only the puppets of a great master. They were not acting on their own volition, or at least not as free agents. They were hired hands and nothing more. Whatever they said or did, they said or did not because they believed it, but because they were paid to say or do it. In the 20th century, art was no longer a field or even a market. It was a MATRIX.

Also remember that this use of the CIA was completely outside its charter. The CIA was not created as the personal marketing tool of the Rockefellers and their art, it was created and voted into existence by Congress as the government's arm for *foreign* intelligence. The CIA isn't even supposed to be working domestically, much less running domestic programs out of the Museum of Modern Art.

With more research, I found that the article at the *Independent* had been tampered with and watered

down. Its author, Frances Stonor Saunders, had produced a film for BBC4 and published a book, *Who Paid the Piper: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*. Although the article says that writers and artists were on a “long leash,” this is contradicted in Saunders' book, where we find that the CIA itself blew their cover, saying the artists knew full well who was supporting them (pp. 397-404). For a more extended analysis of what is only briefly discussed (and spun) in the article at the *Independent*, you may consult [this 1999 article at the Monthly Review](#). There we find this:

Many directors at MOMA had longstanding links to the CIA and were more than willing to lend a hand in promoting AE [Abstract Expressionism] as a weapon in the cultural Cold War. Heavily funded exhibits of AE were organized all over Europe; art critics were mobilized, and art magazines churned out articles full of lavish praise. The combined economic resources of MOMA and the CIA-run Fairfield Foundation ensured the collaboration of Europe's most prestigious galleries which, in turn, were able to influence aesthetics across Europe.

And this:

The Congress for Cultural Freedom (the CIA front) threw its weight behind abstract painting, over representational or realist aesthetics, in an explicit political act. Commenting on the political role of AE, Saunders points out: “One of the extraordinary features of the role that American painting played in the cultural Cold War is not the fact that it became part of the enterprise, but that a movement which so deliberately declared itself to be apolitical could become so intensely politicized” (p. 275). The CIA associated apolitical artists and art with freedom. This was directed toward neutralizing the artists on the European left. The irony, of course, was that the apolitical posturing was only for left-wing consumption.

Although all that is both true and interesting, it still doesn't get to the bottom of the century-long promotion of Modern Art by the Rockefellers, the CIA and others. Since that promotion pre-dated the Cold War and continued on strongly after its end, the Cold War explanation doesn't wash, and neither does the anti-Communist angle. Although both these angles may have been pushed in that period, they cannot have been the primary or fundamental reasons for promoting Modernism over more than a century. As we will be reminded below with Wolfe's mentor Marshall Fishwick, one of the main points of promotion going back to before the First World War and continuing on to the present moment was the “blurring” of any distinction between high and low art—between, say, a 20-foot canvas by Anthony van Dyck and a urinal found by Marcel Duchamp. What is never explained by the CIA or even by Saunders is how such a blurring had anything to do with the Cold War or fighting Communism. Almost none of the old high art was leftist in any way—which almost goes without saying—and the critics all admitted this by dismissing it as “aristocratic.” How could it be leftist and aristocratic at the same time? And if it weren't leftist, why were they so keen on jettisoning high art from the museums and replacing it with low art or popular art?

We are in the grip of another giant contradiction here. We are being sold the idea that Abstract Expressionism was promoted during the 1950's because it was anti-leftist. But before and after this period—and in general—we are sold the idea that Modern Art is anti-rightist. Remember, Modern Art is sold as superior because it is *relevant*, and it is sold as relevant because it is politically aware and politically *progressive*. American realism has long been slandered because it is politically neutral, or worse, reactionary. The magazines and critics have assured us that art must be avant garde, both conceptually and politically. Well, the avant garde is on the left, not the right. The critics at *Art in America* were not suggesting all along that American artists should be out in front (avant garde) of the *Republican* party, were they?

Another contradiction is seen in the promotion of popular or low art, which happened both before and

after the Cold War. This has been sold as democratic, but as a matter of political theory, promoting low art in the place of high or “aristocratic” art is obviously more closely tied to Marxism. America has been a Democracy from the beginning, but almost no one had any problem with the art in museums until Marxism arrived. This is because Democracy or Republicanism didn't create the idea that museum art belonged only to the upper classes. Republicanism as practiced in the US through the 19th century only promoted the idea that museums were for everyone, and that everyone should be given the education to enjoy them. The idea of tearing them down and replacing them with a collection of vulgarities never occurred to anyone in those days. It was Marxism that was used (perhaps pushed) to suggest that the pastimes of the rich and poor were intrinsically different, and that the institutions of the rich should be pulled down and replaced by proletarian creations. Therefore, the idea that Modern Art is anti-leftist in any way is absurd. It may be anti-Democratic—if only because it has been promoted by fascists—but it can't be anti-Marxist since the whole idea of destroying “aristocratic art” came from Marxists. You see how the alliance here is between fascists and Marxists, just as in the Soviet Union. Those like the Rockefellers, who wanted complete control over both politics and economics, allied themselves early on to what was then Marxist or anti-aristocratic art. Primarily they did it because it they had invested in it, and they had to protect that investment. But they found that Marxism also competed with and weakened the existing Democratic principles, which of course was an added benefit to those who wished for complete control. While 19th century progressives only wanted fairness, 20th century progressives—spurred on by a pushed Marxism—wanted revenge. They wanted revenge not only on those who had money, but perhaps even more on those who had talent. In the creative markets, it was revenge against talent that had more to do with the new theories than revenge against money. Both the Futurists and the Dadaists were driven by what Nietzsche had called *ressentiment*—an unabashed hatred of those who could do anything they couldn't. In art, the 20th century was the played-out theory of Futurism, [as I have shown elsewhere](#). But either way—whether it was hatred for those with money or talent—it played right into the hands of the Rockefellers and other billionaires (at least as long as they were hidden). Every time a market was destroyed, for whatever reason, they could jump in and reconstruct it on their own terms. Therefore, any sort of destabilization was welcomed by them, and after a while they began to *create* it. And every time they recreated a market, they rebuilt it on a lower level.

The entire 20th century reads like an inversion of sense, with the Russians killing a Czar, incorporating Marxism, and then holding on proudly to the vestiges of the old art with the ballet, the paintings in the Hermitage, and the old realist schools; while at the same time the US is promoting lotto tickets, slashed canvases, cans of excrement, soup cans, and pornography as art, and claiming to do it to fight Communism. Even more farcical is that when we lift the curtain, we find families like the Rockefellers—who believe in Democracy about as strongly as the Stuarts or Bourbons did—running the show. Although Modern Art is supposed to come from the furthest reaches of the left—think of the far-right Jesse Helms railing against the NEA in Congress in 1989—when we look closer we see the Rockefellers and the CIA behind MOMA. And when we finally get the whole picture in focus, we find them claiming Modernism was promoted in the 1950's because it was anti-leftist. Madness.

Those such as MOMA director Alfred Barr were paid to invert this truth, but in hindsight the truth is pretty easy to see regardless. In a series of articles going back to the 1940s, Barr argued that totalitarianism and realism went together, but that abstract art was an art of freedom and democracy.² Given what we know now—that abstract art was actually sponsored by fascist old-money families who were trying to suppress any real uprisings—that argument crumbles into dust. Pollock and the rest weren't free-style progressives, they were stooges bought off by the billionaires. They were fake artists hired to pose as real artists, so that real artists could be killed off. They were puppets of the cloaked fascists. And that applies to all the famous “avant garde” phonies to this day, who preen as

progressives while being fronts for the Rockefellers. None of this ended with the end of the Cold War or the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is ongoing to this day. Modernism continues to be propped up by the Plutocrats and their million hired mouthpieces and moneybags, against the will of the people, the will of Congress, and the will of all real artists. And this is sold back to us as progressive.

As I have said before, Modernism was never promoted to combat Communism. In that sense this leaking of the program by Saunders and the *Independent* may just be one more turn of the screw. Modernism as promoted by the Rockefellers, the CIA, and the major museums and galleries hasn't been about fighting Communism, much less about promoting Democracy. It has been about promoting Fascism. It has been about control, pure and simple. With the manufactured rise of Modernism, the monied interests of all kinds obtained greater and greater control over artists, markets, and all possible spin-offs of the markets, including political propaganda. What had been the natural history of art, determined by artists and patrons, would now become unnatural, determined completely by the plutocracy in secret, for secret purposes, by secret agencies.

[Addendum: see [my newer paper on Marx](#), where I show that Marx himself was a cloaked plutocrat and an agent, and that Marxism has been a front for the Industrialists from the very beginning.]

Those purposes were many, but the original one and still the main one was to protect the original investments. Remember, Abby Rockefeller began collecting Modern Art in about 1925. Some rich ladies start art galleries, but that wasn't enough for the wife of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. No, she wanted to start a major museum, and did. She founded MOMA moments after the Wall Street Crash of 1929, and although the paid historians go to some effort to assure us that was a coincidence, we aren't convinced. Most people of the time didn't have a way to protect their investments, but of course the Rockefellers did. They knew what would happen before it happened, and they knew because they were *causing* it to happen. At any rate, Abby was soon heavily invested in Modern Art, and within a couple of decades, many of the other Rockefellers were as well. Nelson Rockefeller alone had collected over 2,500 pieces of Modern Art, and thousands more covered the walls of the Rockefeller owned Chase-Manhattan banks. Although some of the superwealthy may have resisted this initial investment on grounds of taste, their light resistance was overcome when they saw how well this protected investment paid out. Since the Rockefellers had infinite amounts of money to promote their new investment—and since they could also use the government to promote and protect their investment—it was a guaranteed winner.

So you see, Abby's original investment seeded the whole tragedy. Once it was done it couldn't be undone. The Rockefellers couldn't let her foray into art fail, and once the whole thing started it couldn't be stopped. It grew and grew and grew like kudzu, until it took over the entire art market. Even before the Second World War, the Rockefellers had already begun to use Intelligence—which they considered their own private staff—to promote and ensure the success of Modernism. And this is still going on. The market is still controlled by the families of the investors, and they still use the government—including Intelligence—to guarantee their investments. This explains why the major newspapers and magazines print a constant barrage of promotion for Modernism and the *avant garde* to this day, although their readers care nothing for it. They are protecting the investments of their owners. It also explains why places like [Forbes**](#) or the [Wall Street Journal have long published articles](#) vilifying realism: they were destroying the competition. This is still happening, which means traditional art requires constant suppression. Without strong outside influence, Modernism and postmodernism would die immediate deaths, to be replaced with quality creations by real artists.

And yet another thing is revealed in all this. In recent papers I have mentioned [the Church Committee](#)

[hearings in the Senate](#), from 1975-76, which investigated improper reach by the Intelligence communities during the term of Nixon (and before). President Ford appointed Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to head a simultaneous investigation of the CIA from the White House. Knowing what we now know, we have to laugh. That was essentially appointing the CIA to investigate itself. What the Rockefellers did is leak inessential and tangential information to the Senate, while at the same time whitewashing it and spinning that information. After Watergate, they knew they had to declassify a few things, to make the public think something was being done. But they weren't about to reveal anything important, and they weren't about to be forced to rollback one centimeter. They used their people in the press—like Paul Harvey and many others—to imply that the investigation was treasonous and that it would hurt the long-term viability of Intelligence. But the truth is, Intelligence was already so powerful at the time it was able to use the event to actually expand. It was almost like a test. The CIA was being tested to see how successfully it could snow the Congress and the American people, in a public forum. It was so *incredibly* successful that it was encouraged to expand. It could see that there were no limits to its power, so why even pretend to obey the laws or the Constitution? This is what led to ever larger manufactured events, culminating in 911.

Ironically, this success also led to the rise of DHS and NSA, which have both now become so large they begin to compete with or overshadow the CIA. We no longer have a government, we just have competing Intelligence agencies squabbling for markets and power in the dark. In China, where Intelligence is a monad, they would take the time to shut down a small-time “blogger” like me, even though I am just a nuisance. But here in the States, they have bigger fish to fry. They know that my readers and I don't have the resources to seriously inconvenience them, so we can write and think what we wish. That is the source of any continued freedom you and I still have, not the Constitution or Congress or the Courts. The Agencies don't *care* what you think. The truth can't harm them. It has gotten to the point where they leak the truth themselves, to inconvenience one another—*or just for fun*. The secret agencies are so powerful they don't even have to be secret anymore. Haven't you noticed how all the movies and TV shows are about the CIA now? They write about themselves, because that is what they know and *because they can*. So what if you see through them? Suppose you learn the whole truth? Suppose you decode the MATRIX? What are you going to do about it? Same thing you are doing now: nothing.

What you don't understand is that the government isn't spying on me or you and isn't buying hollow-point ammunition out of fear of me or you. The agencies learned a long time ago that the American people don't have the gumption for a revolution. They know we don't have the wherewithal to take over a rural post office, much less the Federal Government. The agencies are scared of *eachother*. As we have seen, this fear causes even more expansion and more chaos on a daily basis. The Intelligence agencies are so large they have even begun to threaten the military budgets, which brings another player into the game. So it is not another World War you should be most concerned about, it is another Civil War, and it is already going on. The only good news is that you will probably not be involved directly, except as an ignorant financial casualty. They will not draft you or garrison your home or burn your city. They will only continue to co-opt your capital to fund their (mostly) hidden battles. So your best bet is to live day-to-day and collect only things they don't want: like, say, old books, heirloom seeds, or *realist art*.

And so the mystery is solved, though it gives me little satisfaction at last. All the honest people, in art and out of it, who have over the years struggled to understand why art has become what it has, are now answered. It was no accident, no natural outcome of culture, no fruition of individual choices, no historical necessity. Those who thought it must be an evil plan all along are proved correct, for that is exactly what it was. It appears that art history was destroyed on purpose, with full premeditation and as

part of a grand black architecture, only to further enrich those who were already obscenely rich. In this way it was a precursor to and analogy of the banking manipulation, the stock market manipulation, the energy manipulation, the pharmaceutical manipulation, the GMO manipulation, the military manipulation, and the fake war on terror, in which more and more millionaires become billionaires by destroying a real market and setting up a fake market in its place. This is the New World Order—though it isn't new—and fake art has long had its place in it.

[Addendum: [in a newer paper](#), I show that I still hadn't hit bedrock in this paper. Although down the rabbit hole, I was still at least two floors up from the basement. It turns out that protecting the original investment had little to do with it. Propaganda was also only a sidelight. **Money laundering** may have been the main line all along.]

That article in the *Independent* told us that the CIA was actually much more progressive than Congress and the President in the 1950's and 60's, being composed of agents who collected art and wrote novels in their spare time. I find that hard to believe, but let us suppose there were and are some agents then and now who are progressive, patriotic, or well meaning. Can they be happy about the fact that the country is being controlled, manipulated, and now destroyed, simply to further enrich some old families? Can they be happy about what art has become? I don't see how. Again, this may explain the split we now seem to see. It may be that the Praetorian Guard has grown weary of its own Caesars, and that Nero is watching his back.

If you haven't studied that article at the *Independent*, you had better do so immediately. You had better think about it long and hard. Only after that, return to this paper. Otherwise you won't follow me. You will think I am a “conspiracy theorist”, or that I have gone mad, or that I am making excuses for myself. How many times have I heard that over the years? But it isn't a theory, and it was never *my* theory anyway. I had other theories about why art had become what it is, but the CIA and the Rockefellers were never a part of it. I had long thought that art was mainly beneath the notice of the government. I was never close to unwinding what the government was up to, since I couldn't begin to see how Modernism helped it. I could never see how destroying art was in the interest of anyone except bad artists and people with no taste. The idea that the NEA was actually run by fascist old families who were protecting their 90-year-old investments was the furthest thing from my mind. And, you know, this is what protected the secret: it was too ridiculous for anyone to propose on his own.

But it isn't a theory, since it has been admitted. They have *confessed*. They are still trying to spin it, even in their confession, but it doesn't matter. It is all in the open now and we can see it for what it was. It takes very little extrapolation from the confessions published at the *Independent* to conclude that all the arts were taken over by the government, at the behest of those who were in control of the government (like the Rockefellers, Morgans, Fords, MacArthurs, Carnegies, Vanderbilts, etc.), and redefined to make them easier to control. At first this control just ensured the original investments, but later this Modern Art could be further stripped down and vulgarized and used to promote things no one would think the government would be promoting, like drug use, homosexuality, the destruction of the family, and the destruction of the church. And this takeover predates WW2 by decades. In fact, it predates WW1, as I think you will find if you pursue this research.

To give you an example I didn't get to in my last paper, we may look at *The Great Gatsby*, published in 1925 [same year that Abby Rockefeller began investing in Modern Art]. Once I had proved to myself that the Beat Generation had been manufactured, I began to look at other famous poets and writers, and

my suspicions fell immediately on F. Scott Fitzgerald, whom I have always considered to be vastly overrated. I only did a cursory analysis of the timeline, but I quickly uncovered some red flags. Although I don't have enough evidence to claim Fitzgerald was ever hired by Intelligence (yet), I did find evidence that his fame was later created by them. It is known that *The Great Gatsby* was a flop when it came out. Neither the critics nor the public were impressed. So why is it now so famous? Why was it second on the [Modern Library list](#) of best novels in 1998? Well, although only 25,000 copies sold between 1925 and 1942, the Council on Books in Wartime (CBW) printed 155,000 copies in 1942 and distributed them free during WW2. Do the math, please. That means the book sold fewer than 1,500 copies per year, based on its previous levels of promotion (which were not low). They then printed in one year more than six times as many copies as were sold in 17 years. That is a promotion more than 100 times ($6.2 \times 17 = 105.4$) the demand, which surely qualifies as unnatural. It isn't capitalism, it isn't supply and demand, it isn't even advertising. It is the creation of opinion. It is dogma. It is cultural fascism. What they did with *The Great Gatsby* they have done with many of the other books on the lists.

We are told that this CBW was a non-profit NGO created by booksellers, publishers, librarians and authors, but that is a whitewash. [Even Wikipedia admits](#) the CBW “cooperated with the Office of War Information,” which indicates it was at best a joint public/private initiative and at worst another example of government propaganda hiding behind an NGO front. Knowing what we now know about other such ventures, the odds are approaching 1 in 1 that it is the latter. At the link above, you will find that the aim of the CBW was

to channel the use of books as “weapons in the war of ideas” (the Council's motto). Its primary aim was the promotion of books to influence the thinking of the American people regarding World War II. . . . The Council attempted to achieve its goals by acting as a clearinghouse for book-related ideas, by being an intermediary between the book-trade industry and government agencies, by offering advice to publishers, and by handling all forms of public relations including distribution of reading lists and pamphlets, lectures, radio programs, newsreels, and book promotion and publication.

A “weapon in the war of ideas” is of course the definition of propaganda. And that last sentence doesn't fit the definition of an NGO. An NGO is an entity “that operates independently from any form of government.” Being an “intermediary between an industry and a government agency” is not “operating independently from any form of government.” The words “cooperated” and “intermediary” are being used to hide the fact that the government and publishers were working together to promote art they wished to promote, for whatever reasons they had at the time.

You see, the question is, was this agency working with the government or not? We are told it was. Therefore it was *not* independent of the government. You cannot work with someone and be independent of them at the same time. That would be like someone asking about your girl Gertrude and you saying, “Well, yes, I married her, but we are still single.” Beyond that little reminder of the definitions of words, we should know that we are being snowed in much bigger ways here. It isn't just words that are being redefined as their opposites, it is these word games being used to cover huge lies. The truth is, *both* the government agencies and the NGO's were just fronts for greater powers. Both were controlled by the same invisible hands. Remember, government is just another tool of the very wealthy. Those in the agencies, government or non-government, aren't making the big decisions. They don't call the shots. It is the hidden oligarchy which does that.

But why would these rich people wish to promote the ideas in *The Great Gatsby*? Its claim to being great literature aside, the book doesn't encourage the sort of patriotism the CBW or the OWI would

seem to be interested in. Since the book is mainly a stringing together of adultery, domestic violence, and pointless deaths, with no feel of being any kind of morality play warning against any of these things, we may be surprised to find the government giving it away for free as part of a giant propaganda sweep. I think it is clear that Fitzgerald was not being promoted as part of the war effort. He was being promoted as part of the century-long promotion of decadence and dissolution. The government needed to dissolve everything that had come before in order to replace it with its own new products. Among those things that had come before were art, the family, stability, morality, the church, self-reliance and self-determination. You don't see the government or any NGO's giving out for free 150,000 copies of Emerson's *Self-Reliance*, do you? How about Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*? Do you think the CBW gave out any copies of that?

Which brings us back to Wolfe. It is now clear to me that Wolfe was hired as opposition control. He told us what we wanted to hear and then misdirected our anger to the wrong party. The whole point of *The Painted Word* seems to be to make people like me think that critics were the bad guys in this story. Wolfe goes after the critics Greenberg, Rosenberg, and Steinberg, making us think they are the top of the food chain. Wolfe had done the same thing the year before, attacking Hilton Kramer in 1974 for attacking realists. So Wolfe, while appearing to be our champion, was probably only an infiltrator.

And I bought it. As so many of my precursors must have been led to concentrate on these critics in the 1970's and 80's, I was led to do so in the 1990's. One of my first articles was written to analyze and answer Clement Greenberg. It was later published by Artrenewal, and it is still on my website. But since Greenberg was probably just another CIA hire,¹ posting his pontifications from Langley, Virginia or some such place, all my effort was wasted. Like the rest, I was chasing puppets and ignoring the invisible puppetmasters. Wolfe sent me on a two-decade wild goose chase, a chase that has only just ended with his feathers in my hands.

This also explains why Wolfe was attacked in such strange ways in 1975, and why he brushed it off with a grin, soon leaving the fight to concentrate on other things. One critic called Wolfe a Manchurian Candidate. Agents *would* call each other Manchurian Candidates, wouldn't they? You write what you know. Four others, including the critics for TIME, *The New York Times* Review of Books, and *Partisan Review*[†], used odd images of pornography to attack Wolfe. In three he was a boy at an X-rated movie who couldn't understand the plot. The other compared him to Linda Lovelace in *Deepthroat*. This was a major clue, though no one read it right at the time. How could three major critics hit on the same "boy in an X-rated movie" slur at the same time, unless they were being fed script from the same Agency? As we now see, the whole tempest was manufactured. This was one wing of the CIA attacking another wing, both giving the other credence in opposition. None of these critics, including Wolfe, cared anything about art or the defense of any kind of it. They were simply keeping your eyes off the puppetmasters. Whether you were pro or con Greenberg was not the point. The point was to keep your eyes on Greenberg and all these other writers and artists and off the Rockefellers and the CIA.

It explains why Wolfe, despite seeming to be a champion of realism, never did anything about it. Don't you find it odd that these defenders of realism never discover someone or something to promote? You will say I am just complaining because Wolfe never promoted me, but that isn't the point. He never promoted *anyone*.[‡] None of them ever do. Although they have entrée into all the major magazines and publishing houses, you never see any of them review a realist, much less promote one.

This also explains Adam Gopnik's [recent failure to promote Jacob Collins](#), though we can see he wanted to. Since Gopnik, a prominent art critic for the *New Yorker*, was so interested in Collins, the

natural and logical thing for him to do was to review one of Jacob's shows, or promote him in a straightforward manner. This is what art critics used to do, back before the Rockefellers and Intelligence took over art. Why didn't he? He wasn't allowed to.

It also explains Robert Hughes [and his fall from mainstream grace](#). It appears to me that Hughes was probably on the payroll back then like the rest, but finally turned in his Agency pin sometime in the 1990's. He is the only one I know of who turned his boat 180° and began sailing boldly back into the wind. That is why his writings are no longer published on this side of the pond, and why his films are blacklisted as well.

We were reminded in my last paper that Modernism was very unpopular in the 50's and 60's. The *Independent* admitted it, telling the story of how President Truman expressed the common opinion when he said, "If that's art, I'm a Hottentot." Well, Modernism is *still* very unpopular. Among normal people, it is just as unpopular as it was then, and only Agents, paid academics, and some impressionable youths claim to like it. That being so, you may ask why no rich or famous person in any field ever promotes anything but Modernism. Don't you find it odd that there seems to be absolutely no split, not even a 90/10 split, Modern to Traditional? No top writers promote traditional art, no movie stars buy it, no rock stars, no TV personalities, no computer geeks, no billionaires, no derivatives traders, no bankers, no politicians, NO ONE FAMOUS. In the land of the free, in a country that is supposed to be bipartisan and politically divided, that is supposed to question authority and think outside box, etc, etc, no one buys, promotes, or talks about realism except Tom Wolfe, and he only talks about it every thirty years or so, in abstract terms. Don't you find that the least bit curious?

I will told that Andrew Lloyd Webber collects realism, but that is Victorian realism, not 20th century realism. Apparently you are still allowed to collect realism before 1890, since it doesn't directly compete with Modernism. And Webber is not American. As a Baron created by the Queen, he is allowed to like old realism if he wants to. You aren't.

Although we are told the market is pluralistic, the major magazines, museums, exhibitions, and awards all go to the Moderns. The realists have nothing. Not even a small slice. NOTHING. Yes, the realists have their own separate market, but it is considered downmarket and ahistorical, and is completely ignored by the mainstream—except as a target of vitriol and slander. The total value of the realist market isn't 1 in 10,000 that of the Modern market.

Realism is completely ignored by the mainstream because it is completely ignored by the Rockefellers, the CIA, and the government. Why? Because it does not fit their agenda. Real art is not controllable, it isn't as easily propagandized, and it isn't as easy to inflate as a fake commodity. Real people have some feel for real art, which means they can understand and therefore *estimate* its real value. The new salesmen don't want that. They want art which they can inflate in value by thousands or millions of times, and to do that they need objects that people can't make heads nor tails of. Real things have a grounding, but only fake things are limitless.

With this in mind, I encourage you to revisit Wolfe's *oeuvre*. But even before we get there, we have red flags popping up everywhere. Wolfe attended the American Studies doctoral program at Yale. Do you remember what we learned from my last paper? Quoting from the *Independent*:

At this time [1950's and 60's] the new Agency, staffed mainly by Yale and Harvard graduates, many of whom collected art and wrote novels in their spare time. . . .

When was Wolfe at Yale? 1952-1957. When did Tom Braden's CIA arts programs kick into highest gear? 1953. That is admittedly circumstantial, but the next part isn't. Wikipedia tells us Wolfe followed the example of his Washington and Lee professor Marshall Fishwick, going from Virginia to Yale. Who was Fishwick? Fishwick was the director of the Popular Culture programs at Virginia Tech from 1976 until recently. Big red flag, since the CIA doesn't just recruit heavily from Virginia Tech: compiling all the evidence might make one think it practically owns the place. It ran its [biggest manufactured event of 2007](#) on the campus.

Fishwick graduated from the Yale American Studies Program in 1949. Before starting the Pop Culture program at VT in 1976, he ran similar programs at Washington and Lee until 1962, Lincoln University until 1970, and Temple until 1976. But he didn't just teach Pop Culture, he *founded* the entire movement, which is now referred to as Popular Culture Studies. As a teacher of Popular Culture, Fishwick

worked to shape a new academic discipline that blurred the traditional distinctions between high and low culture, focusing on mass culture mediums like television and the Internet and cultural archetypes like comic book heroes.

So it appears that Fishwick's assignment was to deny that there was (or should be) any high culture, a cunning way to destroy it. [Remember how we saw](#) Thomas Hoving, director of the Metropolitan Museum from 1967 to 1977, asking “why should a museum be any more aristocratic than a movie theater?” He learned this question from Fishwick. Both were trying to redefine art, promoting a new definition that would cleverly leave all the old art out. If the museum is no longer the place for that kind of thing, then it no longer *has* a place. You see, neither Fishwick nor Hoving were suggesting a better place than the museum for the old art. They were suggesting using the old museum for new things, *a la* Krens and the Guggenheim. But of course once pop art moves into the museum, the old art cannot be there, too. It is a zero-sum game. What the Futurists and Dadaists could not achieve by direct attack in the 1920's, the academics and museum directors would achieve by stealth half a century later. We may assume the Futurists and Dadaists couldn't achieve it because they didn't yet have the Rockefellers and the CIA on their side.

Fishwick was instrumental in replacing “high art” with comic book art and other mass-culture media. Of course this fit right into the agendas of the Rockefellers, MOMA and the CIA, which were doing the same things. They wished to replace real art with fake art, because if you can sell a blown-up cartoon by Roy Lichtenstein for 10 million dollars, you don't need to fool with real art or real artists. Why wait months or years for a real artist to create a masterpiece when Roy can whip one up for you in a matter of hours?

But of course if Wolfe's mentor was destroying high art on purpose, Wolfe could not have been confused about why it was being destroyed, or by whom. Why would Wolfe blame Clement Greenberg for the destruction of high art when his mentor Fishwick was founding entire programs for the express purpose of vilifying high art? Again, study the timeline. While Wolfe was publishing *The Painted Word* in 1975, his mentor Fishwick was moving to Virginia Tech in 1976 to lecture on popular culture. There he would promote the continued rise of the everyday object as art object.

Interestingly, Wolfe's first book was a collection of essays in 1965 under the title *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*, a collection that followed the recommendation of Fishwick in his classes to promote pop culture as artistic or otherwise interesting. Essays in the book promote Kustom Kar Kulture, NASCAR, Phil Spector, Murray the K, and Las Vegas. Remember, those are the sort of thing Thomas Krens later imported into the Guggenheim as art, but not the sort of thing you would

expect in a traditional museum. We are told,

Subjects that crop up in this work, and continue throughout Wolfe's career, include his interests in status, culture, form and style.

Not the adjectives of high art, obviously. Those are again adjectives we would apply to Krens and the Guggenheim. They are the adjectives of Modern Art, which makes Wolfe's claimed connection to realism just a pretense. Wolfe was always just a shallow poseur, and his fakest pose was as a connoisseur of serious art.

Wolfe's second book was *The Pump House Gang*, which was another collection of essays. Subjects for this one included Hugh Hefner, a breast-implant stripper, surfers known for beer orgies and breaking things, Natalie Wood, Marshall McLuhan and various New York socialites. Again, not exactly high art or high culture.

But it is Wolfe's third book that should have given us the easiest clues. Unfortunately, no one with any taste ever read it, since they would be turned off by the title: *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. Since it glorifies drug use and promotes LSD as a central part of the hippie movement, those interested in high art or high culture are unlikely to have read it. This is why they were fooled by *The Painted Word*. They mistook Wolfe for his doppelgänger. They saw his white suit and thought he might be a dandy or a throwback to an earlier time, a sort of modern-day Twain. But he wasn't. It now appears he was a hired propagandist and probably a CIA agent. His white suit was chosen early on as a perfect diversion.

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test was a nearly perfect form of propaganda, since although it was manufactured from the ground up, it managed to fool almost everyone in the mainstream. It was sold with extravagant praise by places like the *New York Times*, who were in on the ruse. But Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, as far as they actually existed, look to me like CIA agents pretending to be hippies. Since this was a book, not a documentary film, they didn't even have to do all the things Wolfe said they did. A few bits of corroborating evidence was all that was needed. But if you reread the book now with a little hindsight, you can see it was all just a story. It wasn't a good story, though, not if you were a real hippie. Although the book pretended to glorify hippies, suggesting that Kesey was a minor messiah, it actually makes hippies look very bad. It makes them look like shallow revolutionaries, more interested in getting stoned and laid than in any real activism. And this was the purpose of the book, beyond selling drugs. The book had a two-fold purpose: slander the hippie movement and push drugs to impressionable young people. The first purpose would destroy the movement directly and the second would destroy it indirectly. The second would also enrich the drug pushers, and as we now know, LSD was created in government labs.

To see how ridiculous the whole story still is, I encourage you to go to the page at Wikipedia, where we get this:

Kesey becomes a full blown pop culture icon as he appears on TV and radio shows, even as he wanted by the FBI. Eventually he is located and arrested. Kesey is conditionally released as he convinces the judge that the next step of his movement is an "Acid Test Graduation", an event in which the Pranksters and other followers will attempt to achieve intersubjectivity without the use of mind-altering drugs. The graduation was not effective enough to clear the charges from Kesey's name. He is given two sentences for two separate offenses. He is designated to a work camp to fulfill his sentence. He moves his wife and children to Oregon and begins serving his time in the forests of California.

It is now 45 years later, and they expect us to believe this? The lesson here is, go ahead and do tons illegal drugs, because judges are idiots who will buy any story you tell them about intersubjectivity (as long as you are rich and white), and because even if you get sentenced they will only send you to the redwood forests where you can serve time working as a forest ranger. You may even get to hang out there with David Crosby or the Grateful Dead.

Although *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* was marginally successful in turning mainstream America off the hippie movement, it was much less successful among hippies, who could see it for what it was. It was also much less successful among older activists (who might not consider themselves hippies), since they also knew the movement from the inside. It therefore had little real effect on political activism. Because this book and other propaganda failed to stall the hippie and activist movements in 1968, the government war on the movement had to be taken to the next level in 1969. That was the year the troops were sent in, and when the hippie and activist movements began to be crushed with force—and with much larger manufactured events.

Wolfe's next book was equally disgusting. In *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, he tries in two essays to slander both the Civil Rights Movement and the Office of Economic Opportunity in San Francisco. The latter “bureaucracy” was guilty of trying to help the poor, and Wolfe's puppetmasters saw this as one more worthless “entitlement program.” These programs have since been replaced by private jails, where the poor can be permanently incarcerated for profit. In *Radical Chic*, Wolfe implies very unsubtly that white people making any alliance with black people are doing so only to appear fashionably progressive. He doesn't dismiss the idea that white people may have some genuine concern for fairness: he never even considers it. By ignoring it completely, he can keep his agitprop clean and unilateral.

I would also suggest this is why Norman Mailer, John Updike, and John Irving so dislike Tom Wolfe (see the minor feuds of 1998-2000). They can't give their real reasons, since they are also overwatched from Langley, but since they know he is nothing more than a propped-up propagandist, it must gall them to see him feted as anything real. What should concern you is that these four supposedly major writers couldn't find anything substantial to talk about. Given all I have just shown you about Wolfe, why couldn't Mailer, Updike or Irving talk about anything but style, or about who was the more literary? It reminded me of the old Galbraith/Buckley debates, which were frankly embarrassing for both men. I watched the second of three debates in 1983, when I was 19, and even at that age I could see what a charade it was. I had expected serious opinion, but all I saw was chummy jibes. I knew the opposition was manufactured even then. All those sold to us as heavyweights never seem to get their feet on the floor, and I guess we now know why. They are hanging by wires from the ceilings of the Agencies.

Wolfe's most famous book is still *The Right Stuff* (1979), which looks to me like it was assigned and promoted to continue the space program propaganda into the late 1970's and beyond. The very expensive Space Shuttle Program had been initiated in 1972, but the first launch was scheduled for 1980 (it happened in early 1981). So it was no accident that *The Right Stuff* came out in 1979. The Space Shuttle Program cost around 200 billion dollars over its three-decade lifespan, leading to little more than several spectacular crashes and permanent damage to NASA. [I consider myself a scientist](#) and am therefore very much in favor of space exploration. However, due to what I know of recent art history, you can see why I would not be in favor of using propaganda to sell any program, no matter how worthy. I think we would have been far better off with straightforward public education and honest reportage. I don't like being jerked around by slick writers like Wolfe, and I think you can now

see why.

But it isn't just Wolfe. As I said in my last paper, I think this confession by the CIA concerning promotion of Modern Art allows us to unmask many decades' of propaganda, sully the work of thousands of major writers and artists. The article at the *Independent* tried to shoo us away from that conclusion, but I don't think it did a very good job. Any reasonable person must see that this changes everything. The Intelligence Agencies can't admit they lied for decades and then expect us to keep believing new lies. Fool me for a century, blame on you; fool me for another century, blame on me.

Upon reading that article, I really did find myself feeling like Neo in *The Matrix*, when he wakes up in the vat of fluid with the giant robot bug standing over him. If the article didn't make you feel like that, I don't think you read it closely enough, and I encourage you to read it again and again. Read it until you feel literally sick at your stomach, and then you will know that the truth has finally penetrated your eyes. After that, you can sleep for a couple of days—through fitful dreams—and upon waking you will be in a position to look again at all you think you know. You can make a list of all your heroes, of all your goats, of all the famous people you have heard of in your long or short life, and reweigh them in the scales of your new knowledge. I have lost many of my heroes, but also gained a couple. At first I felt like I had been raped by the razor fingers of a hurricane wind, each cell penetrated and dessicated and pulled into a infinitely long ellipse. But when the wind had gone and my cells had returned to circles, I felt suddenly restored, like an old painting that had been cleansed of a century of soot and cigar smoke and the noxious exhalations of a million polluted men.

*Its name has now been co-opted and turned: stolen by the mainstream and defined in a way opposite to its intent. [On Slow Art Day](#), April 14, 2014, you can join other propagandized people to “look at art slowly.”

**See letter six.

†*Partisan Review* was one of the journals financed by the CIA under Tom Braden's Commission.

‡You will say he promoted Frederick Hart in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1999, but I answer “only after Hart was dead.” Don't you find it odd that Hart was given these articles and [NEA medals](#) after he died, but never when he was alive?

¹ Since both *Partisan Review* and *Commentary* have now been outed as CIA fronts, Greenberg is also outed. See Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, p. 158.

² See for example “Is Modern Art Communistic?” *New York Times Magazine*, 1952.