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I.I The Hermetic Method

Ask, and it will be given you
seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.

Luke 9:9

Hermetism differs from both religion and science, although it does not attempt to replace them. Unlike religion, which accepts things on faith, and unlike science, which is based on facts and theories, Hermetism seeks knowledge. Not knowledge of facts, no matter how mystical, sublime, or luminous, nor knowledge of articles of faith or scientific knowledge, but knowledge of the mysteries, a direct, unmediated, intuitive knowledge.

Hermetism is a way or a path, so it must be traversed. Reading another book or article, or following another guru, will not lead to Hermetic knowledge. Instead, spiritual practice is absolutely essential.

In the *Letter IV on the Emperor*, **Valentin Tomberg** explains the essential prerequisite of spiritual exercises:

One must establish the state of consciousness suitable for receiving revelations.

This requires the following four steps:

1. The state of concentration without effort
2. Watchful interior silence
3. An inspired activity of imagination and thought where the conscious Self acts with the superconscious
4. The conscious Self then stops its activity and contemplates everything which preceded

Tomberg recommends the *Gospels*, *John's Revelation* and parts of the Old Testament (e.g. *Genesis*, *Ezekiel*) as suitable subjects for meditation or spiritual exercise, not only the Arcana of the Tarot.

Now, it will happen that different Hermetists will develop skills in the respective areas they chose to meditate on. But that is not what unites them, since only the depths of their meditations can do so. To further clarify this point, Tomberg makes a distinction between the individual knowledge of Hermetists — which is knowledge of particular facts — and their common knowledge, which is of the mysteries and involves depth of consciousness.

For example, one may know his past lives as a fact, another may know about the chakras — that is their individual interest and vocation. If I, for example, have no knowledge of past lives as a fact, then I simply ignore it; it is not something I am obligated to believe. So Hermetism is not an accumulation of facts to be studied and accepted uncritically.

Rather, Tomberg makes clear that Hermetism is a method. Just reading books will help no one become deep. Tomberg explains:

Spiritual exercises alone have taught [the initiate] — no theory or doctrine may in any way have rendered him capable of knowing how to know.

This will lead to a different kind of knowing, as represented by the Emperor. Hence,

Hermetism does not teach what one ought to believe about man, God, and nature, but it teaches rather how to ask, seek and knock in order to arrive at mystical experience, gnostic illumination, and the magical effect.

Only after having asked, sought, and knocked, can one know.

Posted on 2010-08-09 by Cologero

1.2 Spiritual Challenge and Renewal

A religious factor is necessary as the background for a true heroic conception of life that must be essential for our political alignment. It is necessary to feel in oneself the evidence that there is a higher life beyond this terrestrial life, because only those who feel this way possess an unbreakable and unconquerable strength, only they will be capable of an absolute enthusiasm.

JULIUS EVOLA

After the devastation of World War II, **Julius Evola** was asked to formulate a program for the political and spiritual renewal of post war Europe. Evola was able to recognize the ideal of highest spiritual tradition of Europe, which he described this way:

Certainly, if Catholicism were capable of making a program of high ascesis its own and exactly on this base, almost like a recovery of the spirit of the best Medieval crusader, makes of faith the soul of an armed bloc of forces, almost a new close-knit Templar Order, relentless against the currents of chaos, breakdowns, subversion, and the practical materialism of the modern world — certainly, in such a case, and also in the case that, at the minimum, it held firm to the positions of the Syllabus, there could not be a single instance of doubt about our choice.

JULIUS EVOLA, *Point II*¹

Unfortunately, after looking around — rather cursorily in our opinion — he determined that there was currently no organisation that supported such a spiritual orientation, as it perhaps had done in the past. Hence, he concluded that a “pure reference to a transcendental spirit” would suffice. Well, more than six decades later, it certainly has not sufficed.

We can start, for example, with the Syllabus² mentioned, which is the 19th century Syllabus of Errors. It is an easy to read collection of false opinions. Who today would deny all, or at least most, of those errors? We don’t see that even among *soi disant* Traditionalists. Evola’s attitude was that if George won’t do it, then he’ll go his own way. And he took many along with him. Despite his vast erudition, Evola always remained at the level of doxa (opinions) and dianoia (theories). He never — his writings and interviews show this — was able to reach the level of episteme, the goal of all valid Traditions. Obviously, a vague affirmation of some transcendental spirit goes nowhere.

The True Revival In point of fact, there has been, and still is, such a program. Although not centrally organised, there are texts and even

¹<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=4828>

²<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>

small groups working in the USA and in Europe, that fulfil the conditions mentioned above. That is why, for us, there is no doubt about our choice.

For example, **Wolfgang Smith**, starting from the insights of Rene Guenon, has revived such a tradition within Catholicism. Specifically, he has written on the Christian Kabbalah, the chakras, different levels of existence, Jacob Boehme, Meister Eckhart, in an effort to bring more depth into the Western tradition.

Boris Mouravieff, working completely independently, has revealed and reformulated the teachings of a monastery on Mount Athos. A glance at his bibliography shows many familiar names, including Boehme, Eckhart, and Guenon.

But **Valentin Tomberg** has gone the furthest, particularly in his *Meditations on the Tarot*, which is the summa of his life's work. First of all, he addresses Evola's concern incidentally. As a spiritual reality, the Catholic Church is the Bride of Christ. However, as a human institution, it also has an egregore, a phantom being, which is a human-created parody of the spiritual reality. Many people get fixated on the egregore and reject the whole tradition. Those with spiritual vision, on the other hand, see a living stream of truth and life, as well as a way to achieve them.

An Incomplete Path The Meditations are a massive accomplishment. Nevertheless, there is much that is left out, and he expects the task that he initiated to be continued by those he considers his "friends". I know some of those who have indeed continued the work of Christian Hermetism, although not in such a public way as we have. Still, there is much more to be done.

Tomberg left us a long list of precursors. These include philosophers, saints, Hermetists, theologians, scientists, psychologists, inter alia. We have endeavoured to bring many of their writings to a wider attention. However, as a precursor to some planned articles, we need to make here some specific points. In particular, we need to put his earlier writings

into context with his later. Although he allegedly desired to be known by the Meditations, there are some allusions that make that impossible.

Relationship to Steiner Although Tomberg became quite critical of the Anthroposophical Society (and vice versa), he always held **Rudolf Steiner** in high regard. For example, he wrote this in Letter XV:

And yet Rudolf Steiner has certainly said things of a nature to awaken the greatest creative elan! His series of lectures on the four Gospels, his lectures at Helsingfors and Dusseldorf on the celestial hierarchies — without mentioning his book on the inner work leading to initiation (*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*) — would alone suffice to inflame a deep and mature creative enthusiasm in every soul who aspires to authentic experience of the spiritual world.

Nevertheless, there is really nothing in the Meditations specifically referencing those works. I've read most of those lectures, and there are things in them that may be quite surprising. Nevertheless, we have to assume that they play a background role in the Meditations, even if not explicitly stated. This will be confirmed in the next section.

Cosmology A revived tradition requires a suitable cosmology, certainly one that can challenge the generally accepted scientific version. In *Letter X*, we are given some sources for the creation of such a cosmology.

Firstly, the Fall... here we are confronted with the Biblical account of paradise and the six days of creation; with the impressive tableau of natural evolution that science advances; with the contours of a majestic outline by the genius of ancient India of kalpas, manvantaras and yugas — a world of periodicity and rhythm, a world dreamt periodically by cosmic consciousness; with the exposition (following the *Stanzas of Dzyan*) of

cosmogony and anthropogony according to the Indo-Tibetan tradition, given by H. P. Blavatsky in the three volumes of her *Secret Doctrine*; with the grandiose tableau of the spiritual evolution of the world through seven so-called “planetary” phases that Rudolf Steiner has bequeathed to the dumbfounded intellectuality of our century; lastly, with the cosmogonies and eschatologies — explicit or implicit — of Hermes Trismegistus, Plato, the Zohar and diverse gnostic schools of the first centuries of our era.

That is a vast amount of material to master. Tomberg himself acknowledges this:

May I be permitted to say straight away that, although I have had actual experience of comparing the whole range of these ideas and documents for more than forty years, I cannot make use of them here in the sense of the treatment which they merit, i.e. to classify them, to extract the essential points of similarity or contrast, to make relevant quotations, etc. If I were to do so, I would drown the essential theme in a sea of secondary elements (secondary with regard to the main theme). Therefore I have to proceed in the following way: the spirit of all the various ideas and documents enumerated above will be present as a general background, but it will be necessary to refrain from any explicit use of the material which they comprise.

In particular, this general background includes Steiner’s *Outline of Occult Science*, which Tomberg alluded to. And this brings the entire story of the spiritual evolution of man, his various bodies, and the activities of the celestial hierarchies, both left and right, in the formation. These notions will be used in future articles.

Psychology Conventional Thomism teaches that man is composed of several sheaths: a physical body, a vegetable soul, an animal soul, and

an intellectual soul. Moreover, it is the higher sheaths that form the lower, which is contrary to conventional scientific thought. Unfortunately, philosophers are content to leave it at that, and don't bother to explore the actual consequences of such a teaching.

The esoteric teaching, on the other hand, does so. It may use different names, viz., the physical, etheric, and astral bodies, but the essential elements are the same. The Hermetist, however, will make the efforts to observe the bodies or sheaths. In this way, he can also discern the influences of alien elements on them. That is not the end of the story, since the chakras are also part of one's interiority. The Hermetist will learn about the proper development of the chakras.

The main challenge is that the effort of the I to form the lower sheaths is not yet completed. There is resistance to that; besides, the awareness of the I is mostly dim and the will is weak.

The details cannot all be made public, but it will be shared with our groups at the proper time.

Finis With this being said, we can next complete the discussion of the three temptations in the wilderness.

Posted on 2018-09-09 by Cologero

* * *

Han Fei on 2018-09-10 at 15:56 said:

I wish to ask a question. Would the basic points of adherence required of a Christian be enough for the purpose of personal reintegration, or does the traditional church require the introduction of some sort of esoteric doctrines, morphed over centuries and even taken from exterior traditions such as Judaism and Hinduism? By basic points I mean regular attendance of mass, partaking of the sacraments, and obedience of the commandments. As Evola put it, to follow the Syllabus, I think he meant more than the 19th century document, but rather the fundamental tenets and duties of the faith.

Mikkel on 2018-09-11 at 21:46 said:

Any points of adherence to anything can never be enough for the personal reintegration you speak of, forgive me if I am miss-assuming the direction of your question. Reintegration sounds to be something one would call more true than simply surface level action that we see today.

Many Catholics follow what some refer to as “Traditional Catholicism” and many at least follow the basic tenants of the faith, as referred to in the article, yet we are where we are today in the current state of things, so in short, no it is not enough. As to the Syllabus, it is being pointed to because of how stark in contrast the Church and anyone else compares points to the statements being made in it, but I believe your thought on how it is more than the document that JE refers to is correct. Maybe it would be better to ask what kind of mindset creates the Syllabus, especially if organic, and how does that mindset reflect the principles enacted (the source)?

The basic points must be followed but that is not the real action, the right action, behind the fundamental tenants and duties and what is incorporated as the body of the Church and the world of the people, more so closer I think to the mindset which I mentioned. The Church does contain truth regardless of how much people wish to distance themselves from it and look at it with disdain and no matter how the failures of the members and leaders of said church affect others it will contain it. No one, not one thing or person or excuse or motivation will excuse the lack of adherence to truth for anyone and the truth of heroic life however will always be within the Church regardless of what anyone does or says even within our time.

Though our cycle is referred to as the “Kali Yuga”, does this mean that truth somehow is gone now? That the validity of any sound tradition is gone? It reflects our manifestation in this world, “Ignorance of dharma will occur” does not mean that dharma is suddenly gone, but the ignorance has appeared. No matter how “pointless” it all is, no ladies wearing veils, kneeling for the Eucharist, or others chanting in Latin will somehow make that easier for “George” to be reintegrated or live in a heroic manner. But I do think that investigating the sources of something like the Syllabus would lead us beyond “doxa (opinions) and dianoia (theories)”.

As Guenon states, an elite is required for these ‘esoteric’ doctrines to be put out into the world, especially in our age. These doctrines need not be taken from others, since they are already reflected and perhaps transposed, even if the Church was lacking in such a doctrine, it should be understood from the source. A variation on a variation leaves much wanting. Maybe this could be done much like seeking the interior of man to understand, the Church must be understood from within or from the source, it has not lost any of its esoteric doctrines, only we need to remember better to then enact it. Tomberg found that all of his thought corresponded with the what the Church taught, perhaps as the article mentions our way of understanding what the Church is trying to

say is only “incomplete” so then it is up to us to complete it.

argusandphoenix on 2018-09-15 at 23:53 said:

We’re living through the collapse of a civilization, and not just a culture. So the Church has gotten tangled up in some of the wreckage, or even contributed to it, at times, by dereliction. So the usual strategies (just go to Church, or be a good citizen) aren’t going to necessarily place us in the context of the role we are meant to play. Unless you are fortunate, you’ll have to go and dig, to some degree, and find deeper currents within and connected to the Church, and in elective affinity or sympathy with it. There’s plenty of that material that C. Salvo has been unearthing or dusting off or pointing out on the website. If you just want to be saved and live a good life, the Church certainly still makes that possible. But there are specifically Christian groups of esotericists out there, if that is more of a comfort zone when dealing with “re-integration”.

Agnostia on 2020-09-09 at 23:30 said:

I am not at all convinced that a traditionalist re-invigoration of Catholicism, even within the exoteric domain, is outside the realm of possibility. What is lacking is vision.

It goes without saying that the Church has had little difficulty in incorporating foreign doctrines which are compatible with Catholic dogma or pre-existing doctrine. Perhaps my favorite example of such is that doctrine of ‘guardian angels’, which has it’s own specific (let’s call it) ‘parallel’ in the ‘personal daimons’ of Apuleius (see *On the God of Socrates*, by the same).

It should also be noted that the process of ‘perfection’, ‘divinization’, ‘theosis’ are not at all unlike the procurement of the ‘diamond-thunderbolt body’ or the discovery of the ‘stone of the philosophers’, the ‘VITRIOL’ic process, etc. when dripped of their otherwise heretical, ‘magical’ dross. One such funny example of this can be seen in the friar Roger Bacon, who in his “*On the Non-Existence of Magic*”, trashes any and all notions of sigils, talismans, spells, theurgical and thaumaturgical ceremonial operations, astrological influences and the like, before giving a near-perfect summation of the hermetic *Opus*, only half-allegorized as a recipe for obtaining gun-powder, all the while upholding himself as an orthodox Catholic and material scientist.

What is so great about hermeticism in particular, is that so many of it’s key operations can easily be interpreted, re-contextualized and integrated within a Catholic framework. In fact to do so is hardly new. The concepts, ‘rituals’, and steps mentioned in such works as J. Evola’s *Hermetic Tradition & Intro. to Magic* series (properly understood, as these require much review), Guenon’s *Perspectives on Initiation*, and the alchemical texts themselves (my favorite being M. Maiers’ *Atalanta Fugiens*, but even in the more ‘magical’ grimoires like those of Agrippa or the *Picatrix*, where one finds

simultaneously tables of magical correspondences alongside dissertations on the ‘virtue of religion’!) have their almost direct-correlatives in established and orthodox Christian tradition. With some research, and by dropping the superficial hermetic conceptual labeling, it’s not hard to find analogous practices in the *Philokalia* and the other writings of the mystics and Doctors of the Church. Among the certain circles today, there is also a re-awakening of a sense of an objective ‘esoteric’ meaning in the Biblical texts which are surprisingly neither anti-hermetic nor outside the purview of established Orthodoxy.

What must be done is a selection and compilation of these various techniques, yet presented within a new ‘Active’ framework, for a particular type of individual.

What about the sorts of mysticism and metaphysics common to the Medieval and Renaissance mystics? Can anything be done with these? There is certainly room for a Platonic-Augustinian Idealism. Recent Popes have affirmed this, among other ways, in their canonization of St. Hildegard and their appraisal of Pseudo-Dionysius. This is to say nothing of some of the honourable, if occasionally anti-traditional and often misunderstood intentions, of the 20th century pioneers of Vatican II.

What about the limitations of the ‘mystical-devotional attitude’ to which Evola so frequently lamented? This is, in my opinion, the hardest thing to grapple with. While there is obviously nothing inherently wrong with a purely devotional mindset, traditional Christianity, in my opinion, most certainly has been limited by this approach, which as currently practised transparently lacks the autonomous impetus desirable for the ‘differentiated man’. It is this approach which has also found itself constricted within the paradigms of a strict Thomism and a rigid pre-occupation with ethics. Undoubtedly this is where the rubber hits the road, and will take the most effort. But to successfully tackle this phenomenon could have such an affect, as to re-vivify that spirit which had previously been crushed by that most famous declaration of Nietzsche, while simultaneously affirming the ideal which Nietzsche himself placed forth: that of the romantic ‘free spirit’.

To aggregate and re-present these things, under an old-yet-new framework, has the potential to change the world. More importantly, it has the potential to do so within the range of an established institution and a traditional order. Perhaps there can be no greater ‘holding action’ than the implementation of this, no greater arsenal of which to use against the ‘quantitative’ and ‘malefic’ forces of this end of an era.

Santiago on 2022-03-10 at 21:36 said:

“[Evola] never... was able to reach the level of episteme.”

I’ve been thinking about this line.

Compared to Guenon, Evola (“despite his vast erudition”) does seem far less in-

terested in metaphysics, and far more interested in methods, such as Tantric and yogic practices, cultivation of the chakras, empowerment of the will, visualization practices, and all manner of other techniques. Guenon, on the other hand, will discuss these, but always with the emphasis being on their place within a larger framework and a supreme goal.

It almost seems as if Evola was more interested in prolonging his individual existence, rather than in transcending it entirely. Is this a fair criticism? And whether or not it is, to what extent do the two paths converge?

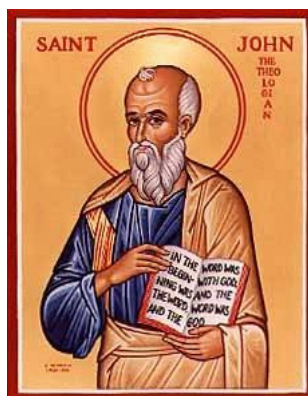
1.3 The Church of John

At the end of his Gospel, John mentions that Peter was questioning Jesus' relation with John. Jesus replied bluntly, "What's it to you?"

In *Meditations on the Tarot*, **Valentin Tomberg** brings up the often-made distinction between the Church of Peter and the Church of John, the former structured and hierarchical, the latter free and mystical. Someone asked me the question: "Does the Roman Catholic Church need Hermetism?" To answer properly, the question needs to be adjusted: "Does the Church of Peter need Hermetism?" and the answer to this question is "certainly not".

The real question is really about the Church of John, and there are several questions: "Does it even exist, has it existed continuously, is its core Hermetism?"

According to the theologian **Hans Ur von Balthazar**, it does exist³, although he calls the two churches "Official Church" and "Church of



³*The von Balthazar Reader*, #66

Love”, and its source can be found in the Gospel of John. He says there is a two-peaked church in harmonious tension, although the Church of John respectfully gives precedence to the Church of Peter. There are no clear boundaries between the two. This interesting discussion concludes with this:

Between these two impossible ecclesiologies, the Gospel of John leaves and dismisses us in a suspended middle point whose foundation lies solely with the Lord. The last thing said to the servant Peter, the last word of the Lord in the gospel, is the admonition (for the church and theology of all times), “What’s it to you?”

So the Church of John exists and has existed continuously. The next question is about Hermetism. There have been many clues about this. **Dionysius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen** are close to Hermetism. There were the alchemists, **Ramon Lull, Ficino, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin** ... all clues that Hermetism has always existed in the Church and only occasionally makes a public appearance.

Rene Guenon claims that the Church used to have an esoteric teaching which he claims was Hermetism. He points to Dante as a member of an esoteric order, and even Thomas Aquinas. The Templars, the Grail Legend, the story of the Magi, Medieval Romances, St Bernard of Clairvaux, Ramon Lull, Michael Scott, and so on, all point to the existence of a Christian esoterism. In *Perspectives on Initiation*, Guenon writes in a similar vein about a dual church:

Within a single organization, a kind of double hierarchy can exist, especially when the apparent leaders are themselves unaware of any link to a spiritual center. In such cases there may exist beside the visible hierarchy made up by those apparent leaders, an invisible hierarchy of which the members may not fulfill any ‘official’ function but who, by their presence alone, nonetheless assure

an effective liaison with this center. In the more exterior organizations these representatives of the spiritual centers obviously need not reveal themselves as such ...

Tomberg and van Balthazar agree on the Church of John. It is not separate from the Church of Peter on which it depends for structure and support. Rather it is a less formal entity, in parallel with, yet not opposed to, the official church. Historically, there have been times they got along, and other times in opposition. With the destruction of the Templars, came the Rosicrusians who found themselves opposed to the Church. Then other Hermetists, such as Cagliostro, Giordano Bruno, or Thomas Campanella were imprisoned and even executed.

Yet to create a visible Church of John with its own separate structure, clergy, doctrine, and so on is, in my opinion, a mistake; actually I believe it to be impossible. That is because it will eventually degenerate into a vacuous, undifferentiated, and amorphous entity, not holding firm to anything in particular. As a witness to that, we need only point to the various so-called New Age and occult movements active today.

The Church of John is in your heart and mind, especially when you are joined with two or three others. So to any self-appointed guardians of orthodoxy, I ask "What's it to you?"

*Posted on 2022-11-20 by Cologero
Originally published on 13 Feb 2011 in medtarot*

1.4 Précis

What follows is a brief précis of the fundamental point of view of the Gornahoor project.

Epistemology We hold to three degrees of knowledge:

- **Doxa** (*sensus*, opinion, sensual knowledge). Direct, intuitive knowledge through the senses. I taste the sweetness and moistness of a mango.
- **Dianoia** (*ratio*, rational knowledge). Indirect knowledge, discursive reasoning, science. I study the structure of the mango and its history as a crop.
- **Episteme** (*intellectus*, intuition). Direct, intuitive knowledge of the supra-sensible. I grasp the idea of a mango.

Ontology

- Spirit is prior to matter
- The great chain of being from God, to the spiritual hierarchy, man, animals, plants, matter

Anthropology This science describes the nature of man. Man, such as he is, exists in one of three states.

- The **sensual man** is focused on *doxa*, or the satisfaction of his material needs and desires. His opinions come ready-made from his social groups and are not questioned or investigated.
- The rational man seeks to investigate the sources of the sensual world. There are two options:
 - **Science.** Only the sensual world exists. Knowledge is achieved by investigating the facts of the sensual world and forming general laws to explain them.
 - **Religion.** A supra-sensible world exists, but there is no way to know it directly. Hence, it is accepted as a matter of belief, based on authority or revelation.

- The **intellectual man** has direct access to and knowledge of the supra-sensible realm.

Cosmology The sensual world is the reflection of the spiritual world and, thus, has no independent existence. It evolves, in the original sense of the world: as the unfolding of an originary idea. An analogy is that of a symphony, which exists as an idea until musicians perform it; thus the symphony is revealed in the sensual world. As a whole, the world process is the unfolding of the three fundamental ideals.

- **Beauty.** The world process is a creative process, revealing beauty and harmony.
- **Good.** The sufficient reason for the world is the Will. Hence, the world process is a moral action, based on virtue (manliness, strength). The world comes into existence through Power.
- **Truth.** The world is a reflection of the Logos (reason, law). Hence, the world process must follow the logos, or else descend into formlessness. The unity of the logos is highly differentiated and hierarchical, since it is infinite and subject to no limitation.

Politics Politics, as the “queen of the sciences”, describes the proper relations of men in their social groupings. As such, it must take into account the findings of all the other sciences, including Anthropology and Cosmology. Hence, all contemporary divisions into left and right are misleading, and ultimately ineffective.

As Evola pointed out, the correct political position is what “every well-bred man considered sane, healthy, and normal prior to the French revolution.” That is, the harmonious over the discordant, the good over the perverse, order over disorder and the undifferentiated mass.

The battle, therefore, is between those who would uphold the Traditional order, and the various revolutionary forces that seek to overthrow it. The revolution operates on multiple fronts.

Western Tradition The Western Tradition is based on the axis from Greece and Rome, and its prolongation in time to Paris (Charles Maurras). We would extend that back even further to its Indo-European roots in Egypt, Persia, India. We, therefore, see continuity from the classical period to the Catholic medieval era and even into modern times.

We acknowledge the existence of a Western esoteric tradition, which at various times has made itself known and at others, has had to hide itself. This tradition has been based on Hermeticism, whether the ancient pagan mysteries or Christian alchemy. The goal of this Tradition is the reintegration of man into his Primordial state; this is true, whether pagan or Christian.

Hence, we reject the typical superficial distinctions between pagan and Christian. This requires the simultaneous rejection of those vulgar expressions of paganism as the life of non-transcendent sensuality, and Christian other-worldliness unnourished by its esoteric sources.

Posted on 2010-05-08 by Cologero

* * *

Matt on 2010-05-08 at 21:15 said:

In thinking about the Western Tradition, and the Tradition in general, I have issues about where Sufism falls. The fundamental point in the Tradition (correct me if I'm wrong) is that the pure Self (not the everyday ego) must be realized and affirmed. And this fundamental point is stated in both the West (as seen in Hermeticism and the mystery schools), and the East (the Buddha's original doctrine, Vedanta and Yoga, Taosim) with the difference being how the sensible world should be treated. Yet with the Sufi view, it appears that the Self must not be affirmed, but annihilated in the divine (granted, Sufism may be alluding to the physical ego, and with going forward in studying it, that could very well be the case). So at least right now, I am perplexed as to where this Islamic mysticism falls under in the Tradition.

Francis Mercuri on 2010-05-09 at 02:11 said:

This "Precis" of the Gornahoor project is an inspirational and succinct statement of principles; your work and writings are appreciated.

Additionally, for those following a Christian path, this tertiary anthropology might also be extended to the correspondences with the "degrees" of the primitive Christian hierarchy:

1. Catechumens
2. The Faithful
3. Christians

Somewhat analogous to the Hellenistic:

1. Hylics
2. Psychics
3. Pneumatics

The Masonic:

1. Apprentices
2. Fellowcrafts
3. Masters

Mouravieff's:

1. Exoteric cycle
2. Mesoteric cycle
3. Esoteric cycle

And Robin Amis' "Three Renunciations", of:

1. Physical asceticism
2. Psychological asceticism
3. Noetic asceticism, which his exegesis compares with:
 1. Proverbs
 2. Ecclesiastes
 3. The Song of Songs

Francis Mercuri on 2010-05-10 at 04:43 said:

Mark:

1. I'm in agreement with some others who say that Islam (and thus Sufism), is neither really "Eastern" nor "Western"; instead, the Islamic tradition represents something of a "amalgam" path, or a liaison between East and West.

2. Along the lines of Guenon's definitions, I don't perceive Sufism as a type of "mysticism", as you call it. Guenon lucidly explained the differences between Initiation and mysticism in his "Perspectives on Initiation", where, in brief, he noted that mysticism always remains an aspect of exotericism (and the theological domain), in that in the "mystical" experience, the individual

still remains the same individual, albeit in a state of passive reception of Superior influences, which are always “colored” by a given theological clothing, and occur in a rather random way.

On the other hand, the Initiate goes beyond the theological domain, meeting the meta-physical, and intentionally seeks simultaneously to divinize his individuality, and individualize the Personality...this is what the Sufis call the “Supreme Identity”, attained in a conscious and permanent manner. While anybody can be a “mystic”, the Initiate is set apart by specific “qualifications”, and travels a well governed path, which is first defined by “psychic regeneration” (the “Primordial State”), and then, if possible Noetic regeneration (the “Transcendent State”). Echoes of this can be noted in the Western tradition, where a man being made a Priest by a Bishop is said to be “elevated” to the Priesthood, or a Mason, on becoming a Master is said to be “raised” to the Sublime Degree. The forum owner’s recent explanations of the three types of epistemology, are another way of expressing the same things.

3. In Sufism, there is indeed, as you observe a emphasis on “extinction” (Fana), and beyond that “extinction of extinction” (Fana al-Fana). But, I’m not so sure that I’d agree that this implies a destruction of the individuality, so much as an “extinction” of what the Sufi psychology calls the Nafs (which are what we previously identified as the Christian “prilogs”, “passions”, or in any other words, false “i’s”). After all, the state of “Fana” corresponds to the grade of *Insan al-Kadim* (Primordial man), while the higher (highest) of Fana al-Fana corresponds with *Insan al-Kamil* (Universal/Transcendent Man). Were this not so, the Prophet Himself, who is regarded as an exemplar of *Insan al-Kamil*, could not be spoken of as having any individuality! No, what is involved here, as explained in section 2, is an example of how traditional Initiation operates:

- a. The Prophet as *Insan al-Kamil*, is equivalent to:
- b. The “Nur” Mohammed
- c. The “Transcendent Man”
- d. The regenerated Nous, or Logos
- e. The esoteric Buddhist “Dianchi”
- f. The “Celestial Jerusalem”
- g. The epistemological “Episteme”
- h. The “Third Birth”, aka “Resurrection”
- i. The Hermetic “projection”
- j. The Hindu “Avatar”
- k. The Masonic “Master”
- l. The Tibetan “Lama”
- m. etc.....

Matt on 2010-05-10 at 12:01 said:
I appreciated that response Francis.

Yes, I probably should have used initiatic teaching instead of mysticism. Some of what I have read about Sufism has probably not been from the best sources and as stated before, I will have to further study it. What you stated about fana has helped my insight though. Thank you.

Oh, and you got me confused with Mark. I'm Matt.

Roger Buck on 2010-05-17 at 15:27 said:

Very good to have this! For now I will only comment on one most striking phrase: "its prolongation in time to Paris"!

I don't really know Maurras, but find myself wanting to know more of either why he says this and/or why you Cologero include this in this précis.

It is quite stirring and moving for me, this phrase and I cannot help but wonder what connexions it might possibly have with the reasons why *Meditations on the Tarot* was written in French, and sought to incarnate into a stream of French Hermeticists who at least in some cases, would have shared similar notions.

Yes I wonder why is Paris singled out like this in the Gornahoor précis ...

Cologero on 2010-05-22 at 11:42 said:

We accept the general approach of Marcilio Ficino: Hermes → Pythagoras → Plato → Neoplatonism (simplified). After Ficino, we find the fulfillment of the Hermetic Tradition among the French: Louis-Claude de St-Martin, Joseph de Maistre, up to the French esoterists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

1.5 Spiritual LARPing

The others, the mages, the theosophists, the cabalists, the spiritists, the hermetics, the Rosicrucians, remind me, when they are not mere thieves, of children playing and scuffling in a cellar. And if one descends lower yet, into the hole-in-the-wall places of the pythonesses, clairvoyants, and mediums, what does one find except agencies of prostitution and gambling? All these pretended peddlers of the future are extremely nasty; that's the only thing in the occult of which one can be sure.

J K HUYSMANS, *Là-Bas*

Role Playing There is the mistaken impression that esoteric studies are based on some secret knowledge, hidden from others. **Valentin Tomberg**, however, makes a distinction between a secret and an arcanum.

Secrets are only facts, procedures, practices, or whatever doctrines that one keeps to oneself for a personal motive, since they are able to be understood and put into practice by others to whom one does not want to reveal them.

You see, it has nothing to do with esoteric attainment; rather, it is a means to retain control and power. Those who are in on the secret can use it to identify in and out groups. At its worst, it only feeds the urge for self-inflation. For these reasons, we prefer to keep everything in the open.

It is not the text or the book that ultimately matters. The text is merely the reflection of the pure act of intelligence, as revealed in the Magician Arcanum. It is only possible to reach the pure act through spiritual exercises. Otherwise, as Tomberg points out, you are only doing philosophy at best, or just role playing at worst.

Our first goal here is to promote the ideal of self-mastery and to show ways to achieve it. This requires control of thinking, feeling, and willing. This control can only result from a purification of one's thinking, feeling, and willing. Without such purification, the mirror will be perturbed, and its reflections will distort the pure act of intelligence.

I have known and spoken to, in my travels, gurus, lamas, anthroposophists, theosophists, freemasons, rosicrucians, priests, gurdjieffians, Jungians, charismatics, channelers, and so on. Even giving the benefit of the doubt, many of the followers are role playing, i.e., they enjoy the fantasy of spiritual attainment without having to do the work. They try to act as they think a spiritual person should act. They dress a certain way, adopt a new diet, say the right words, while leaving their inner life untouched.

In actuality, you would not readily identify an initiate even if he crossed your path. He would have no reason to reveal himself to you, unless you expressed a sincere interest in the teachings.

The Christian Hermetic Tradition Our task has been to serve the living Tradition, which has been assigned by Valentin Tomberg to his unknown friends. To that end, we have described the various manifestations of that Tradition throughout time and space. We have also introduced a great many authors who have contributed to that Tradition. The goal has been to entice others to want to serve that same Tradition. We have been quite open with that material, since it hides itself from those unable or unwilling to understand it.

As a matter of principle, it is problematic to earn one's living from Hermetic teaching. It can lead to subtle distortions based on the need "give the customer what he wants". At its lowest, it is a form of simony, i.e., selling spiritual knowledge for a price. In the olden days, a Hermetist might take the role of a street performer or horse trader. In that way, he could travel from village to village without arising suspicions, and meet with other Hermetists. It would also provide a modest income. That was a motivation for the Tarot cards. Books were too expensive and bulky to travel with. So a deck of cards that encapsulated the teachings in symbolic form was a boon.

Once upon a time, someone was hectoring us every now and then to rewrite or even remove certain posts, to delete comments, or to block links. It made no sense, until I was informed of the reason:

I thought it necessary to free Tomberg from rightist view and people who follow you

That is absurd. No one has the authority to decide who can read this blog or comment on Tomberg. First of all, we don't have any political or

religious tests to join our groups. Instead, we rely on the Law of Affinity; that will bring the right people together if they belong together.

The Traditional way is not partisan, so the distinction between “right” and “left” is a meaningless creation of modernity. Tradition is the path of unity whereas partisanship is dual, hence devilish. **Louis Claude de Saint-Martin** explains:

Now, in order to show how [the numbers] are related to their base of activity, let us begin by observing the working of unity and of the number two. When we contemplate an important truth, such as the universal power of the Creator, his majesty, his love, his profound light, or suchlike attributes, we bear ourselves wholly towards this supreme model of all things; all our faculties are suspended in order to fill us with him, and we really only make ourselves one with him. This is the active image of unity, and the number one in our languages is the expression of this unity or invisible union which, existing intimately between all attributes of this unity, must equally exist between it and all its produced creations. But if, after having borne all our faculties of contemplation towards this universal source, we return our gaze to ourselves and fill ourselves with our own contemplation, in such a way that we regard ourselves as the origin of some of the inner light or satisfaction that this source has procured for us, from that moment we establish two centres of contemplation, two separate and rival principles, two bases which are not linked; lastly, we establish two unities, with this difference—that one is real and the other is apparent ...

But to divide being through the middle is to divide it into two parts; it is to pass from the whole to the quality of the part or the half, and it is here that the true origin of illegitimate twofoldness lies. . . this example is sufficient to show us the birth of the number two — to show us the origin of evil. . .

Choosing a Path In a recent comment, Mikkel asked a very good question:

How does one truly understand what “I want”? Due to the story of my experiences of my life, I find that I am more blind to this unfortunately in periods of distress.

Only by coming to that realisation, is it possible for a man to seek a way out. Most men live in ignorance of their real nature and what is truly good for them.

The Parable of the Coach explains our situation: our body is inefficient, our emotions are uncontrolled, our intellect is asleep, and there is no one in charge. Hence the coach moves without purpose or goal, in random directions.

It may happen that a more awake coachman may pass by and offer help. Usually the help is refused. Nevertheless, some few, due perhaps to karma, fortune, or grace, are willing to accept such help.

It sounds simple, except that in our world there are many offers to help, most asking for money. So it is right to be sceptical. People may spend more effort in choosing a car mechanic or doctor than in their spiritual development. It is reasonable to know what results to expect. The answer is an improvement in one’s thinking, feeling, and willing functions. You should ask those who have been helped previously about their experiences. The results should be permanent, not just some emotional high after a rousing lecture.

Avoid cults. Apply this test when in doubt:

A cult is easy to join, but hard to leave. A free group is hard to find, but easy to leave.

If the goal is self-mastery, then clearly you cannot surrender your will to someone else. You need to understand your situation and learn to choose

your own goals. Simply being told what to do is useless. Either you will dislike the advice and leave the teaching, or else you will like the advice and not bother with the exercises.

A contrary approach is offered by many others. Typically, it will include spiritual counselling, for a fee. The counsellor will then tell the student his karmic tasks and what his life goals should be. To repeat, the student needs to determine that on his own, even if it might require a little encouragement. I have never seen that approach work very well.

Uniting Hermetists I've always hoped for a loose coalition of Hermetists, each developing the Hermetic Tradition in its own way, despite the attacks described above. These different groups would cooperate in various ways, without regard for border. Tomberg's description is what I have in mind:

Spiritual exercises in common form the common link that unites Hermetists. It is not knowledge in common which unites them, but rather the spiritual exercises and the experience which goes hand in hand with them. If three people from different countries were to meet each other, having made the book of Genesis by Moses, the Gospel of St. John, and the vision of Ezekiel, the subject of spiritual exercises for many years, they would do so in brotherhood. ... What one knows is the result of personal experience and orientation, whereas depth, the level one attains — disregarding the aspect and extent of knowledge that one has gained — is what one has in common.

Tomberg tells us how to evaluate a teaching:

There are mirages above, as there are mirages below; you only know that which is verified by the agreement of all forms of experience in its totality—experience of the senses, moral experience, psychic experience, the collective experience of other seekers for

the truth, and finally the experience of those whose knowing merits the title of wisdom and whose striving has been crowned by the title of saint.

In other words, blind belief based solely on authority or on unverifiable claims are not helpful on the Hermetic path. Too much emphasis on unusual or fantastic experiences will discourage students who should be content with slow but steady progress. Steiner, in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, warns several times about the expectation of fantastical experiences, for example he writes:

it is imperative to extirpate the idea that any fantastic, mysterious practices are required for the attainment of higher knowledge. It must be clearly realized that a start has to be made with the thoughts and feelings with which we continually live, and that these feelings and thoughts must merely be given a new direction.

Moreover, it is best to observe the Hermetic principle, “Be Silent”. Boasting of spiritual attainments, even if they are true, is not helpful. Steiner, in the same book, verifies that thought:

know how to observe silence concerning your spiritual experiences.

Mysticism and Initiation **Rene Guenon** distinguishes between mysticism and initiation. The former is passive, individualistic, subjective, and exoteric. Initiation, on the other hand, is quite different. He explains that

Initiation is the transmission, through appropriate rites, of a spiritual influence

Titus Burkhardt expands on the idea that the transmission of the spiritual influence must be conferred

by a master who also communicates the method and confers the means of spiritual concentration that are appropriate to the aptitudes of the disciple

Furthermore, he points out that in ancient times a mystic referred to someone who had knowledge of the mysteries. In other words, the mystic was initiated in the esoteric mysteries, but that is not how the word is used in our time.

Preconditions for Spiritual Science A period of self-purification is necessary before any effective initiation can take place. Otherwise, all sorts of mischief and misunderstandings can result when the unprepared receive esoteric teachings. First of all, it is best to keep one's physical body in good order, lest it bring distractions to spiritual practice. Proper diet and exercise are helpful. Moreover, the concentration required for physical disciplines like athletics or martial arts are a good preparation.

One's life should also be in order. Anxiety over relationships or money will make spiritual practice difficult. Then, work can be done on oneself. The Christian Hermetist **Willi Seiss**, in his commentary on Valentin Tomberg's *Course on the Lord's Prayer* claims:

A precondition is the purification of the three soul-forces of willing, feeling, and thinking.

He summarizes the specifics like this:

- The element of will is trained through the rigorous, many-sided process of cleansing from everything that is impure.
- Through refraining from destructive feelings, that is, all reprehensible emotions
- Disciplining of the thoughts, whereby the essential is freed of influences from fearful, corrupt, hate-filled and empty thoughts.

The Pagan Revival In our time, the neo-pagans are prime examples of this. Misunderstanding the cycles and subcycles in the flow of time, as well as the existence of castes, they claim to hearken back to the exoterism of their allegedly pagan ancestors. Anyone else, they say, are bugmen. Yet that have no idea what caste they descend from. Moreover, since they believe they are the “true” Traditionalists, they do not bother with the idea of purification, and don’t really understand the inner sense of the pagans. The pagans also had their bugmen.

It is true enough, however, that the strata of earlier pagan traditions remain in our psyches. The **Book of Revelation** contains messages about the ancient Indians, Persian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures. Their psychic residues remain in our collective unconscious. They must both be remembered and transcended.

Note Friday the 13th was the day the **Templars** were destroyed. This post is dedicated to them.

And God knows best.

Posted on 2019-09-13 by Cologero

* * *

James on 2018-09-23 at 10:54 said:

Your illness comes up in my meditative moments every now and then . When I focused on it , it always seemed to center around the idea of “filtration” . Kidneys , obviously , serve to filter the subtle substance of our blood .

Whenever I would ponder on it , I thought about how this illness affects that organ which is meant to filter and clean the liquid that is so often associated with the “esoteric” current in man . It seemed “appropriate” considering how so many self-proclaimed esotericists seem to only be “poisoning” the stream and there is no organ capable of filtering it out for the body of humanity .

The interesting thing about the Dante reading that I do is when I think about the circle of Violence and how in one part of it – those who blaspheme – are filled with so much internal burning that they burn more than the flames that descend from the “sky” . I can’t help but

imagine that condemning someone to Hell is some kind of blasphemy (the irony is not lost on me considering Dante allegorically does “exactly this” though the thin line is clear: Dante is conversing in the language of an “open secret” where he “condemns” people to Hell almost as a “test” for us to look beyond the particular person at the eternal work that he’s created and what is being written about is not some canonization of individuals to Hell, but a canonization of sin into Hell – something which an eye looking at only phenomenon and not essences cannot achieve when reading Dante). This is part of the reason why Dante’s greyhound and a mangy, emaciated she-wolf (the symbols of truth and deception respectively) look so “similar” [they are both so ‘thin’]. Dante is speaking of one of the central mysteries of Christianity: “why is what is good so often so indistinguishable from what is bad superficially” [e.g. the symbol of death and torture being the symbol of salvation; God dying being the vehicle for salvation, etc.]. Still, Dante was quite instructive to me in how the sin of blasphemy manifests: that it creates the hellish burning inside the person as they persist in that attitude. Thus, such a statement as, “you will die, die in horror, die for ages, you will burn in hell like no other” is already indicative of a burning interior life.

Naturally, I’m not claiming some kind of moral superiority nor am I gawking at a sinful act considering how much of a hypocritical sinner I can be, but I was merely pausing to think of it and realizing just how contemporary Dante’s trek through Hell can be for me. Here, we pass yet another sinner suffering the effects of the sin itself. The beauty of Free Will is that it’s so easy to see the Hell we create if we but look with the Pilgrim’s eyes. The elegant beauty is that we truly get not just what we deserve but also what we wanted. Hell is the oddly poetic and beautiful synthesis of both free choice and justice. In eternity, we never escape these singularities whether they flow upward or downward. Everything always reaches synthesis. As Flannery O’Connor had put it as her title: “everything that rises must converge”. Obviously the opposite is also true: “everything that descends must converge” (tying it back to Dante’s Satan). The Author of *Meditations* speaks of the same thing with the synthesis to white and the chromatic loss below when he used a colour analogy.

Still, I would consider what your friend spoke about to be interesting. She must consider you to be the blasphemer (I’m only guessing with limited information). I wonder if, perhaps, she imagines that you do not treat the subject matter with enough rituality. That’s not to say she’s necessarily wrong even if her reaction might be counterproductive to her aims (again, I’m only guessing off grossly incomplete assumptions, but I decided to follow it to some ‘logical’ conclusion just to see if it might be at all helpful).

In my encounters with Jungians, for example, there have been quite a few methods proposed to me that ought to be done “properly” and plenty have given me their prescriptions on what this “propriety” means. To do otherwise would invite danger and collapse. A friend of mine recently said that an encounter with one’s Shadow or Anima, for example, could produce years of psychosis (and he might be right). Nonetheless, I’m honestly interested in why your friend

decided that you had been guilty of some kind of sacrilege that you deserve condemnation . It is not that I intend to take sides (that is rather puerile anyway) , but , rather , I wish to “understand”

As for gornahoor itself . I find it fascinating . Perhaps it would have acted as a filter (to tie it back to the kidneys) to try and find one or two or three or however many in order to contribute to the “communal soul of art , science , and religion” together , but I personally , and perhaps quite wrongly , always saw it attract a certain type of individual who was more interested in using esoteric “knowledge” as clubs to swing at “others” . Evola become the new Nietzsche for fiery young people unable to accept reality .

I think your meditation on death and this whole endeavour with Gornahoor is instructive . After all , what I find most interesting about the appeal to sectarianism is that it often exposes a very clear insecurity: the fear of death .

“We” [whoever the “we” happen to be] “are afraid to perish from this earth” .

I have said it once before a long time ago : perhaps the solution is not to live by the sword and die by it , but to learn to accept one’s cross in order to be resurrected . Esoteric knowledge seems to be used as a weapon by many who frequent these halls in order to scream by at the encroaching darkness . Perhaps these individuals need to learn how to properly accept death . It is not a call to cowardice or complacency , but a call to finding that strength in inner peace rather than inner fear .

Mikkel on 2018-09-23 at 14:40 said:

“my advice is to do what you want to do now, and not later.”

How does one truly understand what “I want”? Do to the story of my experiences of my life, I find that I am more blind to this unfortunately in periods of distress. I think this comes in time with self-mastery...perhaps Evola (are we still speaking of him now?) said it well in the translation posted years ago (cited above):

“Against psychoanalysis the ideal of a Self (or “I”) must be validated, a Self who does not abdicate, who intends to remain conscious, autonomous, and sovereign in the confrontation with the dark and subterranean part of his soul and the demon of sensuality; that does not mean either “repression” or a psychotic scission, but he brings about an equilibrium of all his faculties ordered to a higher meaning of living and acting.”

Many individuals seem to want to “dominate” or be in power over those dark parts of his soul, but is that truly equilibrium? The analogy of the chariot/coach is far more apt, there are drivers and what drives (horses), but in totality it is a living system that must function together. Usually understanding and respect in a relationship goes much farther than the whip hand.

“There are some Christian Hermetic groups that prefer to work in private. In our opinion, since Tomberg that is no longer appropriate.” What changed after Tomberg for this to be true? No true line to carry on his work? Sometimes others are far more open than we give them credit

to a surprising extent or maybe I've been careful of who to associated myself with, the Spirit breatheth where he will.

Other times while reading about betrayals like the one mentioned above I notice the melancholy that surfaces within. I look forward to reading the material that comes out from the translation, my German is quite basic so I am sorry that I cannot be of much help. Similarly, I would love to take all of those books, but the sense of responsibility of research with those feels heavy in comparison to my current talents. Knowledge is more similar to that concept than I realized...we look to it earnestly at times, but what happens to us when we do nothing with it? Are we not to help others in some way? Maybe I need to learn my own place, isn't it always like that when one comes down to the essence of understanding any problem?

You and those of the 'community' are in my thoughts and prayers, this I know is true and something I want to do.

Cologero on 2018-09-23 at 16:07 said:

Mikkel, Tomberg made clear that the unknown friends are those who dare to plunge into the currents of Christian Hermetism. There is no secret group that controls who can be initiated or determines what "grade" someone is at. Any such organisation that tries to control a teaching always ends up protecting itself not the teaching. The Hermetist does not offer an alternative to religion nor to science, rather he strives to integrate all knowledge into a larger whole.

Cologero on 2018-09-23 at 16:27 said:

James, perhaps I am a blasphemer in someone's eyes. Of course, even a blasphemer deserves to know the charges and offer a defense.

Or maybe it is a difference in approach. Again, you put me in a position that may seem boastful, but there have been holy fools, zen masters, etc., whose techniques may not meet certain standards of decorum. Then again, a man shouldn't take himself too seriously in these matters.

Maybe you should add Nassim Taleb to your reading list. Knowledge is not usually gained from the top down, but rather from a lot of experience. The Romans built aqueducts, sometime with a drop of 12 inches over the length of a mile. You probably know how to compute the slope, but I don't know how the Romans did that calculation with their numerical system. Nonetheless, water got to the city. Practicality trumps theory in this case.

That is why our method uses heuristics. We try a lot of ways to come to awareness; over time, one learns what works for him. All the theory in the world won't is not helpful, and is usually a distraction.

For example, suppose I tell you that by awakening a certain chakra or invigorating some of its petals, then you will achieve inner peace. Does that knowledge bring you inner peace? Of

course not. First of all, it is necessary to achieve inner peace – I prefer the term *ataraxia* – and then perhaps you can see how the chakras change in response.

The person of deep faith, with no esoteric knowledge, can achieve such a state. That is my model.

Auld Wat on 2022-05-11 at 08:12 said:

“First of all, it is best to keep one’s physical body in good order, lest it bring distractions to spiritual practice. Proper diet and exercise are helpful. Moreover, the concentration required for physical disciplines like athletics or martial arts are a good preparation. One’s life should also be in order. Anxiety over relationships or money will make spiritual practice difficult. Then, work can be done on oneself.”

Thank you for the recommendations.

1.6 Intellectuality and Spirituality Redux

The “true” and the “desired” must find their synthesis in the “beautiful”, for it is only in the beautiful that the urge to play renders the burden of the “true” or the “just” light and raises at the same time the darkness of instinctive forces to the level of light and consciousness. In other words, he who sees the beauty of that which he recognizes as true cannot fail to love it — and in loving it the element of constraint in the duty prescribed by the true will disappear: duty becomes a delight.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Since we began this sequence of gnosis meetings with the ideal of the alchemical marriage of intellectuality and spirituality several months ago, and now that we are finished for this year, it is worthwhile to circle back around on the topic.

Meditation Years ago, I learned centering prayer from Fr. Thomas Keating, not personally, but from some cassette tapes. In this brief video⁴,

⁴<https://www.youtube.com/embed/pkDFaLdRck0>

he asserts the necessity for daily meditation. For our purposes, note particularly his explanation that engaging with spiritual friends is an adequate substitute for a spiritual director. That — if you haven't figured it out that by now — is why we choose to work in groups. Hence, regular attendance is important, not just for yourself, but also for the commitments you've made to others.

Meditation, just like riding a bike or swimming, cannot be explained intellectually. One must simply begin. However, once the practice is established, you can get feedback from your spiritual companions. Just as your biking or swimming can improve, so can your meditating. After all, it is the first step to becoming a Bodhisattva.

The Hermetist and the Hermetic Path The Hermetic path is a gift, if you are called to it. It requires intelligence, resources, and time, so it is certainly not an option for everyone. However — and this is important — it is not “superior” to, or an alternative to, the exoteric path, it is simply our path. It would be a mistake to force these views on exoteric practitioners, or to use them as debating points. The exoteric path is perfectly adequate for salvation and a life of sanctity. There is a reason Hermetic groups used to be secret and closed to outsiders.

The Hermetist often used to masquerade as a trader or street performer; the latter is the primary meaning of the first Tarot card, *Le Bateleur*. Under such cover, they could travel from town to town, allowing them to meet with local groups without attracting attention. Since books were heavy and expensive, the teachings were conveyed in diagrams (as in *Gnosis*), or even a deck of Tarot cards. On the one hand, they were compact and portable, but on the other, they required an accompanying oral teaching in order to be fully understood.

Years ago, I used to follow the books of **Carlos Castaneda**. I'm sure the teachings of the shaman Don Juan are still embedded in my soul somewhere, for better or for worse. The first thing to note is that it is

difficult to find Don Juan. In one scene that I recall, Don Juan appeared at some government office on official business in a suit, just blending in with everyone else. This struck Castaneda, who had never seen him in that context, as something remarkable. Nowadays, shamans seem to be everywhere, peddling their books, courses, and so on. Those converts to some sort of spiritual life often feel they have to alter their outer appearance to be convincing. This is quite unlike Don Juan or even a Hermetist.

The real shaman Don Juan was indistinguishable from his surroundings. Therefore, you could not pick out the Hermetist in a room. He would look like everyone else and talk about the weather or sports to you. Only if you expressed some sort of interest in something deeper, might he open up to you.

St. Augustine tells us that God gives us everything we need for salvation. So if you are still searching, you may be missing the obvious. This might be as good as it gets for you.

The Quest for Novelty Some birds allegedly become fascinated by shiny objects on the ground, thereby forgetting the bugs that constitute their true nourishment. Similarly, we often become distracted by convoluted intellectual schemes or elaborate tableaux. Stay rooted in the core principles, and be clear about the difference between an allegory or secret, and a genuine mystery. Tomberg warns us about this temptation:

Let us therefore not commit the error of wanting to “explain” a symbol by reducing it to a few general abstract ideas. Let us also avoid the error of wanting to “concretise” an abstract idea by clothing it in the form of an allegory.

The Arcana are not allegories in which a card is said to “represent” some qualities along the lines, say, of a work like John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. In Tomberg’s words:

The Major Arcana of the Tarot are neither allegories nor secrets, because allegories are, in fact, only figurative representations of abstract notions, and secrets are only facts, procedures, practices, or whatever doctrines that one keeps to oneself for a personal motive, since they are able to be understood and put into practice by others to whom one does not want to reveal them. The Major Arcana of the Tarot are authentic symbols. They conceal and reveal their sense at one and the same time according to the depth of meditation.

In other words, if the meaning seems to “jump out” at you immediately, it may not be an “authentic symbol” in this sense. Ultimately, we will come to understand the mystery, but only plunging into its depths. An allegory, on the other hand, tries to “solve” the mystery:

Just as the *arcanum* is superior to the *secret*, so is the *mystery* superior to the Arcanum. The mystery is more than a stimulating “ferment”. It is a spiritual *event* comparable to physical birth or death. It is a change of the entire spiritual and psychic motivation, or a complete change of the plane of consciousness.

This cannot be overemphasized. A mystery cannot be resolved intellectually. Unless an arcane teaching leads to, or elicits, or acts as the midwife to, a spiritual transformation, it has not been understood. And worse, it may even become a distraction, with no more transformative power than a parlour game.

Cartesian Meditation Cartesian meditation, which is the search for clear and distinct ideas, is an intellectual task. **Rene Descartes** was a mathematical prodigy. As a boy, I was quite proficient in mathematics, although not at that level, so I enjoyed reading about the lives of the great mathematicians. Now, because of his intellect, the young Rene Descartes

was pampered. Instead of being shooed out of bed in the morning, he was allowed to lounge, giving him the leisure to think.

There is no doubt that there can be great joy in the experience of intellectual insight or learning. Just watch the expression on a baby's face when he takes his first step and young children when they learn a new skill. I've seen people show great excitement in solving a puzzle or answering a question while watching some game show on TV. Adults still do crosswords or Sudoku just for the pleasure of it.

That feeling is magnified with more complex intellectual attainments, particularly in physics, maths, and metaphysics. For example, Newton's discovery of the equivalence of inertia and gravity is mind bending when it dawns on you, as is Descartes' discovery of the transformability of algebra and geometry. I personally can attest to the pleasures in physics and maths. One can struggle with an obscure maths problem, but, in a sudden insight, its solution simply appears, perhaps analogous to the experience of *Yesod*. Of course, the study of metaphysics can lead to a sort of bliss, especially with the realization that certain ideas bring you oh so close to the very nature of God. At this point, the search for Truth becomes the delight in Beauty.

So, back to the young Rene: following his example. I will often lie in bed pondering some issue. Of course, Cartesian meditation is not the source. Rather, the real meditation reaches in the depths, often murky depths, not for the clarity of the atmosphere. Nevertheless, clear ideas are floating in the darkness of those depths, and they need to be coaxed out. Obviously, the discursive mind is required in order to turn those vague intuitions into text. That is the purpose of Cartesian meditation. Ultimately, however, there is not a shortage of ideas, but rather its opposite. There is actually an abundance of ideas, so cutting and pruning is necessary. Much more is discarded than is ever published.

If you allow your intellectual life to be nourished by the real nutrients hiding in the darkness, you will no longer be satisfied with dazzling

baubles, word puzzles, or intellectual trivia. The goal of the intellectual life is to be a Sage, so seek the higher things like virtue, the life of reason, aesthetic beauty, the path of salvation, and the attributes of God.

Living in the Light of Tabor

Hermetism is an *athanor* (“alchemical furnace”) erected in the individual human consciousness, where the mercury of intellectuality undergoes transmutation into the gold of spirituality. St. Augustine acted as a Hermetist in transmuting Platonism into Christian thought. Similarly, St. Thomas Aquinas acted as a Hermetist in doing the same thing with Aristotelianism. Both of them accomplished the sacrament of baptism with respect to Greece’s intellectual heritage.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Letter on Justice*

If the goal of the intellectual life is to become a Sage, the goal of the spiritual life is to become a Saint. Of course, the latter quest is foolishness to the Intellect. Hence, only the Fool can show us the way. Tomberg explains:

The Arcanum “The Fool” teaches the “know-how” of passing from intellectuality, moved by the desire for knowledge, to the higher knowledge due to love.

The Fool is also a Trickster, since there are two ways of sacrificing the intellect:

- It can submit itself to the service of Transcendental consciousness
- It can simply be abandoned

Now, the temptation to simply abandon the intellect is quite strong. Deep meditation may be accompanied with intense sensations of pleasure, or even siddhis. The spiritual quest may then devolve to a quest for the repetition of such feelings as ends in themselves. Common practices such as postures, breath control, dancing, chanting, and so on may help focus the mind. When they fail, some schools resort to stronger practices such as drugs, alcohol, or extreme sexuality. However, the Spirit cannot be coerced by any sort of technique or mechanical practices.

Tomberg points to the Whirling Dervishes and Zen monks as those who have abandoned the intellect entirely. Some of this lies behind the Hesychast controversy. What concerned Barlaam was the ignorance and credulity of some of the monks, so, in compensation, he overemphasised the side of the Intellect. The monks, on the other hand, pointed out that the first disciples were simple men, not advanced scholars. Now that may be true in the Synoptic Gospels, but John's Gospel explicitly identifies Christ with the Logos behind the creation of the world. We take the middle path between Barlaam and Palamas.

The Work In our time apart, we could focus on all the themes of the past few years. We can be Holy Fools, yet still be intellectually competent. Our meditations should be on the life of Christ or something analogous; that is, something that requires an Active Imagination, not the passive imagination of a dream-like state. We concentrate without effort and have mastery over what thoughts and emotions are allowed to take hold in our consciousness.

To achieve the fusion of intellectuality and spirituality, we need to return up the Middle Pillar. That begins with the recognition of one's True Will and ends with the awareness of one's Real I. That is the gift of Integrity that was lost in the Fall.

Posted on 2017-05-26 by Cologero

1.7 Hierarchical Order among Mankind

Among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-7

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-3

The wise man will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients and will be occupied in the prophets and will enter withal into the subtleties of parables and will search out the hidden meaning of proverbs and will be conversant in the secrets of parables.

THOMAS AQUINAS, *Rising Dawn*

Paul could not pass on the solid doctrine to the Corinthians because they were not spiritually prepared for it. The doctrine itself is meaningless unless it fall on fertile soil, so it is with exoteric and esoteric teachings. It is not that the latter is the “true” meaning; rather, it represents a deeper understanding. A fundamental hermeneutic for spiritual texts is that they can be understood on four levels: the literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical. The unprepared need not be concerned, as this passage explains:

Averroes was inspired by the idea that all minds have not the same degree of discernment: to some men the literal aspect, the *zahir*,

is addressed, while others are capable of understanding the hidden meaning, the *batin*. He knew that if what only the latter can understand were revealed to the former, the result would be psychoses and social disasters.

HENRY CORBIN, *Alone with the Alone*

Science vs Esoterism In the *Introduction to Covenant of the Heart*, **Valentin Tomberg** makes a distinction between scientific and esoteric knowledge. Regarding the former, he writes:

The scientific approach is not to strive simply for the truth, but rather to strive for that brand of truth which is of **general validity**, i.e., that which can be comprehended fundamentally by everyone bestowed with healthy understanding and faculties of perception, and which should thus be concurred with.

In other words, the scientific approach does not require an inner transformation. Anyone, who is competent, can read the words and pass a multiple choice test, for example. Regarding esoteric knowledge, he explains:

[it addresses] itself only to those people who are capable of the concentration and inner deepening necessary for intuition. . . . [it is] **a matter for an elite group of special people**.



Figure 1.1: The Hanged Man

He explains what that entails in *Letter I: The Magician* in *Meditations on the Tarot*:

All practical esotericism is founded on the following rule: it is necessary to be one in oneself (**concentration without effort**) and one with the spiritual world (**to have a zone of silence in the soul**) in order for a revelatory or actual spiritual experience to be able to take place. In other words, if one wants to practise some form of authentic esotericism — be it mysticism, gnosis, or magic — it is necessary to be the Magician, i.e., concentrated without effort, operating with ease as if one were playing, and acting with perfect calm.

Those who are just reading the words, and they are beautiful, will be missing the most sublime meaning of the text. Unless the reader makes efforts toward inner transformation, starting with concentration and quelling the perturbations of the soul, he will miss the point. Tomberg explains that the book

is written — and could only be written — for those who have the capacity and disposition to make use of the faculty of intuition as the direct sense for truth. Thus, it is addressed to those “who have ears to hear and eyes to see.

Angelic Hierarchy Like Averroes, Tomberg recognizes that few people are able to experience the Divine Light in its fullness. The task of the angelic hierarchy, therefore, is to attenuate the Light in a manner appropriate to each one as it descends through the hierarchy. The esoteric path then is to reverse course and ascend through the hierarchy. To quote:

Each lower rank of hierarchy is a “moon” in relationship to the “sun” of the rank above it.

The **angels** transmit the tumultuous, strong impulses of the **arch-angels** in a bearable form, suited to human individuals, i.e., in the form of the soft light of moral clarity.

The **archangels** adopt the radical, valid-to-all-mankind commandments and prohibitions of the **principalities** (*archai*) to suit the special characters and capacities of the various peoples, thereby protecting them from becoming over-pressured.

And something similar is effected by the **principalities** in relation to the **powers** (*exusiai*), the **powers** toward the **virtues** (*dynamis*), the virtues toward the **dominions** (*kryriotetes*), the **dominions** toward the **thrones**, the **thrones** toward the **cherubim**, the **cherubim** toward the **seraphim**, and the **seraphim** toward the eternal **Trinity of God**.

Posted on 2022-05-29 by Cologero

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Jonathan Pageau on 2022-05-30 at 13:46 said:

Hey Cologero. Reading the Meditations myself and thought of you. Hope you are well. Haven't connected in a long time.

Michael DeJoy on 2022-06-09 at 10:18 said:

Concentration without effort requires the movement of energy. The areas of the thinking mind must be enlivened by the heart energy and the head energy acting together. When they are working together one finds the contentment they are looking for. The Magician will seem impossible as long as one is trying to figure it out, the ground must be established before that understanding is possible.

Cologero on 2022-06-09 at 14:34 said:

Concentration is the ability to focus energy on one thing, which is the opposite of movement. Movement is due to automatic or mechanical thinking, i.e., the distraction arising from random thoughts that appears in consciousness.

As Tomberg explains:

"concentration is the willed silence of the automatism of the intellect and imagination"

Max on 2022-07-06 at 07:54 said:

I am currently reading "The Julian Jaynes Collection" to complement "Origin of Consciousness". He has a useful analogy for understanding concentration: it is for the "mind-space" what

attention is for sense perception. It is especially difficult to realize when the mind-space is not even properly acknowledged in the first place, as is so common today. It evidently cannot be comprehended fundamentally by everyone.

What is agreeable with Jaynes is that he accepts this mind-space without too much reductionist baggage, even though he has some blind spots as well. In particular how mind-space is explained as a product of language, as if the name preceded the named. At any rate, here is an interesting quote on the topic:

“As the body with its sense organs (referred to as I) is to physical seeing, so there develops automatically an analog ‘I’ to relate to this mental kind of ‘seeing’ in mind-space. The analog ‘I’ is the second most important feature of consciousness. It is not to be confused with the self, which is an object of consciousness in later development. The analog ‘I’ is contentless, related I think to Kant’s transcendental ego. As the bodily ‘I’ can move about in its environment looking at this or that, so the analog ‘I’ learns to ‘move about’ in mind-space concentrating on one thing or another.” -Jaynes

Of note is first that he seems to take the bodily I to be more “real” than this analog ‘I’. That is obviously a prejudice which is not justified but taken for granted, since he subscribes to an evolutionary worldview. Secondly he describes its development process as “automatic”, which is merely another way of saying that he does not know. To be strict, automatic would mean that the I acts by itself, making it unreducible to anything else. Lastly, he says that concentration includes the capacity to move about in this mind-space without, conversely, letting it dominate us.

Jaynes demonstrates, by his accurate descriptions from experience, that he knows concentration. That in itself makes him a more interesting author than the more scattered ones. He is aware of the important questions even though he does not have all the answers, which is an indispensable beginning.

1.8 The Personal Equation and Belief

I often receive correspondence from readers of various quality. In a recent one the interlocutor assumed that my “emotional attachment” to a tradition was preventing me from achieving detachment. Careful readers will not find that anywhere on Gornahoor. However, I noted that Bard — Google’s new AI system — made this evaluation:

Salvo’s writing is often dense and difficult to understand, but he

has a large following of readers who appreciate his unique perspective on the world.

Well, if such a high machine intelligence finds us difficult to understand, then a merely human intelligence can be forgiven for its ineptitude. So consider what follows to be a brief summary of what is being asserted in many and various ways.

Exoteric and Esoteric Living traditions have an exoteric and an esoteric teaching. It is a common misunderstanding to confound the two. The exoteric both hides and protects the esoteric teaching. Moreover, outside observers often see the egregore of the exoteric side, which they presume to be the true teaching. That is unfortunate, yet is understandable.

Metaphysics Metaphysics is as objective and knowable as any science, including physics. However, physics only concerns itself with the working or the physical world, or gross manifestation. Metaphysics, on the other hand, recognizes that reality is much vaster than what science can conceive. There are subtle states which depend on consciousness and can be explored by the intrepid inner researcher. Beyond that, there are many degrees of existence with various qualities. Poets, mystics, and saints — of many traditions — have described those states. Physics and metaphysics are not in conflict unless they intrude into the other's problem domain.

In this sense, Vladimir Solovyov asserted that Christianity did not introduce a new metaphysics. Rather it is base on Neoplatonic and Hermetic philosophy, which are the Western version of the Ancient Tradition. Its contribution comprises the historical events that culminated in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

History and Faith Although history is concerned with the gross world, unlike physics it cannot be known simply from external observations.

The meaning of history requires an understanding of the intentions of the various actors.

Clearly, at that time some believed that Jesus was the Messiah, others that he was an enemy of the state, but most just saw an itinerant preacher. So which version are we to accept? Thomas Aquinas explains:

Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will.

There is nothing there about emotions or irrationality. Of course, exoteric believers will sound very emotional and sentimental about their beliefs, but not those with a deeper understanding. There are two aspects to Thomas's insight.

First of all, belief is a deliberate choice, i.e., an act of will. That is not at all an emotional reaction. Nevertheless, emotions may follow. However, these are higher emotions that follow from the intellect; they do not control the choice as the lower emotions do.

Second, the intellect assents implying that the belief is not compellingly false nor implausible. Without going into complete detail, I can assert this. The intellect sees that mankind is fallen in some sense from its primordial glory. We can also see that there is not worldly solution: no science, pharmaceutical, eugenic, psychological, economic, or social solution can ever remedy that. Only the insertion of a force from outside the system can do so. That may not be a proof for you, but it is a justified belief.

Conclusion So I willingly embrace an exoteric tradition that is helpful to me personally and fits my personal equation. It has spiritually nourished my direct ancestors for 1500 years, so I am loathe to reject it arbitrarily. As I wrote above, there is simply no need to. My reader claims that, "I'm on the side of Man's increasing consciousness, not specifically the Christians, the Jews, the Hindus etc."

That makes as much sense as going to a restaurant and telling the server: “I am in favor of eating, but not specifically Italian, German, Japanese; just give me food.”

Just as healthy food nourishes the body, whatever type of cuisine it is, so does a healthy tradition nourish the spirit. For me to abandon my Tradition to chase after some vague “increasing consciousness” means that I would have to reject the metaphysical teachings of Augustine, Boethius, Bernard, Dante, Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart, and so many others. But ironically, they are the very teachers of “increasing consciousness.”

Moreover, there is also a rich source of teachings on spiritual practice, prayer, meditation, contemplation, and so on. It is hubris for anyone to think he or she can recreate all that *de novo*.

Posted on 2023-04-04 by Cologero

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taivasvaeltaja on 2023-04-09 at 16:38 said:

Even though it may sound sentimental, the gift of tears is still a password for higher realms for many. When Jesus wept, did his tears make oceans?

Sylvan Savant on 2023-04-09 at 18:23 said:

If there's no orthodoxy, how could there be any heresy? If there is no right path to the destination, then how could one go astray?

Excellent quote by Thomas Aquinas. I find it very helpful in my current situation, thanks.

Taivasvaeltaja on 2023-10-23 at 09:28 said:

“In this sense, Vladimir Solovyov asserted that Christianity did not introduce a new metaphysics. Rather it is based on Neoplatonic and Hermetic philosophy, which are the Western version of the Ancient Tradition. Its contribution comprises the historical events that culminated in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.”

I've become to think that perhaps Christianity sort of restricted its metaphysical teaching to a certain level of understanding in order to make men focus on the process of salvation, where all the theology of the churches then sprang out.

That which does not make me doubt in any sense is that the symbolical and mythical life of Jesus Christ was a momentous happening on planet earth and in which the symbols that define the Christic Mythos, the turning of the wheel of involution towards the ascending arch of spiritual evolution, liberation of maya and matter as the bodies of Christ were crucified while his Solar Nature laughs upon the Cross. As Christ is the Light and Lucifer the Light-Bearer, the mental body of Christ is Sophia-Lucifer – the one whom even Gnostics struggled to understand – and the bodily cross of man is Lucifer’s prison. Only the Logos could have done the turning of the wheel of involution, because “The Father and I are One.”

1.9 In the Beginning

In the beginning God

Genesis 1:1

God is whatever was at the beginning. For the physicist, that is some ill-defined quantity of energy confined to a vanishingly small space. It is in some sense transcendent because it does not include any of the fundamental particles that define matter; that happens later as the universe begins to cool.

Yet, that inchoate pre-matter contains all the physical laws and fundamental constants that allow the formation of stars, galaxies, planet, life, human beings, and so on. Hence, the physicist is not an atheist, he just does not recognize God.

Revelation Physics can explain atoms, molecules, even crystals, but not a living thing. Living things have structures apart from their physical and chemical components. No single physical property accounts for life.

But what is structure but its form? So when a metaphysician claims that the soul is the form or the body, that is what is meant. Therefore the form, or the soul, is likewise real.

Human life is inexplicable by physics. Consciousness is not hidden in any theory, and there is nothing to suggest that intelligent beings, capable of understanding the laws of physics, should arise.

The human being discovers that there is moral universe with its own laws, unknown and unknowable to physics. Moreover, unlike stars and planets, the human being wonders why he exists and what his purpose is. This can only be known by revelation.

Moses, who is more important than any scientist, passed on what was revealed to him.

- God is a person, not an inchoate cloud of mass/energy.
- God has a plan for us to be with Him.
- God has provided us with guidance to create a good society and a path to lead us to Him.

Obviously, that is simplified, but still captures the essential. Unfortunately, the principles of guidance are called “commandments”, a word which has taken on misleading connotations over the centuries. Commandments are often misunderstood as directives to compel us to do what we don’t want to do, with the result that we will be punished for failure to follow such commandments.

Rather, commandments like forbidding murder, theft, adultery, covetousness, seem obvious to create both a peaceable social structure and an harmonious inner life. Who would be surprised that breaking those commandments leads to social conflict and inner turmoil? So we are not arbitrarily “punished” for breaking commandments, rather we are warned of the adverse consequences of doing so.

It is analogous to warning your young child not to touch the hot stove, lest she hurt herself. The “hurt” is not your punishment, but rather the inevitable consequence.

We learn to love God's commandments for that reason; if we fail, God loves and forgives. Think in those terms and you won't be left feeling dark and somber about your future prospects.

Posted on 2022-08-14 by Cologero

The Hermetic Tradition

2.1 Death by a Kiss

Modus quo rationales animae per archangelum Deo sacrificantur, qui a Cabalisticis non exprimitur, non est nisi per separationem animae a corpore, non corporis ab anima nisi per accedens, ut contigit in morte osculi, de quo scribitur preciosa in conspectu domini mors sanctorum eius.

GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Cabalistic Conclusions XI*

The way in which rational souls sacrifice themselves to God through the archangel, which the Cabalists do not describe, occurs because of the separation of the soul from the body, not of the body from the soul, if not by accident, as seen in death by a kiss, about which is written “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful.” [Psalm 116:15]. [My Translation]

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

Song of Solomon 1:2

Whosoever would [behold God] before they are cleansed and healed, are so stricken by that light of truth that they see in it not only no goodness, but even much evil, and therefore deny to it the name of truth, and with their lusts and miserable pleasures, refusing health, flee away in their darkness, which is even their death.

ST AUGUSTINE

Before there was a French Hermetic Tradition, there was the Platonic Academy¹ in Florence. In particular, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola first synthesized Christianity, Hermes Trismegistus, and the Cabala, along with Neoplatonism, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Orpheus, and Zoroaster.

He summarized those teachings in the 900 theses. Some of which were adapted from Latin philosophers and theologians, Arabs, Greeks, Neoplatonism, Chaldeans, Hermes Trismegistus and finally the Cabala. The rest were his own opinions. The latter includes the mystical Cabalistic Conclusion #11.

Plato said that perfect or undying love required divesting oneself of human life by separating the soul from the body. Yet an understanding of such love requires first the love of beauty in one's youth. In the story of Eurydice and Orpheus, Orpheus was unwilling to part with his life and therefore saw only a shadow of his beloved. Hence, Orpheus failed Plato's test. Pico explains it this way:

Corporeal and sensible beauty can excite in the soul a memory of its intellectual part and cause it to run away from the earthly life towards the eternal, where it is refined into an angel by the flame of love.

¹[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic_Academy_\(Florence\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platonic_Academy_(Florence))

Pico understood the three worlds:

- Angelic or Intelligible
- Celestial or Astral
- Sublunar (world of darkness)

The sublunar world is known through the senses, but the angelic world is known by the intellectual part of the soul. That is because the angels don't have sense experiences, but know the forms or ideas intuitively. For example, in the sublunar realm we may experience heat through the senses, but the angels know the idea of heat through the intellect, and so on.

Only the world of sensual experience has reality for the common man. He does not experience the ideas directly, which are obscure or are considered to be mental or social constructs. As Augustine points out, the common man clings to his lusts, pleasures, and manufactured drama. The call for spiritual purification would destroy his factitious world, so he resists it in terror. It can only feel like death to him. Yet the Hermetist seeks this out deliberately. Pico describes the experience:

It is possible then through the first death, which is merely the separation of the soul from the body, for the lover to see the beloved celestial Venus and, face to face with her, meditating on her divine image, blissfully nourish his purified eyes; but whoever wishes to possess her still more intimately and, not content with seeing and hearing her, to be worthy of intimate embraces and fervent kisses, must separate himself in total separation from the body through the second death.

In other words, the erotic impulse must be purified of every sensual image in order to reach the beatific vision. He must die before he dies. This

Platonic love still idealises the image the beloved, yet the sensual element is left behind.

Baldassare Castiglione asserted that sensual love is an evil, yet it is excusable in the young provided they show gentleness, courtesy, and valour. He writes:

When they are no longer of youthful age, they wholly abandon it, having that sensual desire, as the lowest rung of the ladder by which man climbs unto the true love.

Castiglione regarded the love of the 63-year old Michelangelo for the poetess Vittoria Colonna as an example of Platonic love. We have previously described how the loves of Wagner and Goethe at an advanced age led to periods of great creativity. Of course, Dante regarded Beatrice as his beloved celestial Venus, and was led into the celestial realm.

The kiss represents the union of the Soul with God. Pico was more modest than the Tibetans who used the image of the yab-yum. He explains why:

Take note that the most perfect and intimate union that the lover may have with the celestial beloved is signified by the union of the kiss, because all other coming together or coupling beyond that, as in the case of physical love, is in no way allowed to be used as a metaphor in this holy and most sacred love. And because the learned cabalists maintain that many of the ancient patriarchs died in such an intellectual rapture, you will find in their writings the expression the death of the *binsica*, which in our language means death by a kiss, which is said of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Mary, and some others ... nor will you read more in their books than that *binsica*, or death by a kiss, occurs when the soul unites itself with those things separated from the earth in an intellectual rapture to such a degree that being lifted out of the body it abandons it entirely.

What then is this *binsica, mors osculi*, death by a kiss. Ioan Couliano illustrates it with some examples:

It is a terrifying vision of the intelligible world that Pico rediscovers in the fable of Tiresias: because he saw Diana naked, which means nothing other than ideal Beauty, the source of all true wisdom, Tiresias went blind, losing the use of his sensual sight but receiving the gift of prophecy, or incorporeal sight. The same thing happened to Homer in the throes of the inspiration that made him contemplate the mysteries of intellect. And Paul too, after his journey to the third heaven, went blind.

The death by the kiss is therefore the contemplation of the divine intelligences. The body is in a state of catalepsy analogous to sleep paralysis². There is still the question of the means to reach this state. We can start with **Marsilio Ficino**'s understanding of the angelic hierarchy in Table 2.1.

The angels are not “seen” in a sensual way, but one can see them incorporeally by ascending through deeper understanding of the higher intellectual centre. By developing spiritual vision, one learns to see the forms or ideas animating the conditions of the sensual world.

The Guardian angel is the prototype of one's own being, or one's more perfect double. Through understanding the archangels and principalities, one learns to discern large groupings. For example, in the sensual realm, one sees people as simply individual beings. However, on a higher level one sees the roles of nations, ethnicities, clans, families, and so on. Yet, that is never static. At the level of the powers, one discerns how everything is manifested in time.

Ultimately, one experiences the world as a reflection of the order and providence of God. Hence, in previous posts, we suggested meditations on Being, the Moral Order, and so on.

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep_paralysis

<i>Seraphim</i>	Speculate on the order and providence of God
<i>Cherubim</i>	Speculate on the essence and form of God
<i>Thrones</i>	Speculate, but some descend to work
<i>Dominions</i>	Architects who design what the rest execute
<i>Virtues</i>	Execute, move the heavens, and concur for the working of miracles as God's instruments
<i>Powers</i>	Watch that the order of divine governance is not interrupted and some of them descend to human things
<i>Principalities</i>	Care for public affairs, nations, princes, magistrates
<i>Archangels</i>	Direct the divine cult and look after sacred things
<i>Angels</i>	Look after smaller affairs and take charge of individuals as their guardian angels

Table 2.1: The Angelic Hierarchy and their Functions

Yet there are real dangers there for the Magician. If he has not properly prepared himself through the purification of his will and his intellect, he risks contacting bad angels.

References:

H/T **Charlotte Louise** for alerting me to this Cabalistic Conclusion.

Eros and Magic in the Renaissance, by Ioan P Couliano

Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, by Frances Yates

The Religion of Beauty in Women, by Jefferson Fletcher

Posted on 2019-01-23 by Cologero

2.2 The Hidden Tradition

For most men life is made up of two days:

1. In the first they believe everything.
2. And in the second, nothing.

For a few others, life also has two days, but what distinguishes them from ordinary men is that

1. In the first day they believe only in illusions, and these are nothing;
2. While in the second day, they believe in everything, for they believe in truth, which is all.

LOUIS-CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN

Since **Rene Guenon** was an initiate into a **Martinism** order, it may be of interest to explore their teachings. Martinism derives its name from the two “Martins”: **Martinez Pasquales** and **Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin**. The former mysteriously appeared with an order based on theurgy or ceremonial magic. The latter joined that order, but eventually abandoned it when he felt that he moved beyond “operations”. There was a loose group that gathered around him, the S.I. for the Order of Superieurs Inconnus (Unknown Superiors) and initiation was decidedly less formal.

Now Martinism claims its origin from God which was communicated from Adam to Noah to Melchisedek and then Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Zerubbabel. In other words, there has always been this hidden tradition. **Valentin Tomberg** called it the Church of John. In a sense Tomberg completes this teaching, since he claims there is no longer a need for an “order”. Furthermore, the uneasy, and often hostile, relationship between the Johannine and Petrine churches is to be rectified.

Martinist Doctrine The doctrine hinges on a particular view of the fall of man; these are the fundamental points:

1. Original Man (or Primitive Adam or Archetypal Man) was emanated by God and dwelt on a high plane where he enjoyed a privileged position.
2. Through the misuse of his free will, Primitive Adam sinned and as a result fell.
3. As a result of the Fall, Man, originally a unified being, became shattered into numerous individualities who are now the men and women of the material world.
4. Individual man's task is to reintegrate himself back to the Archetype. All men and women must reintegrate with the Archetype so that Primitive Adam can be reconstituted and unity be again achieved.

The purpose of the order was to provide a way to achieve that task of reintegration.

Gregory of Nyssa on Adam Lest anyone think that is absurd or even heretical, I refer you to **Gregory of Nyssa**, as explained by **Vladimir Lossky** in *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*:

The person, however, transcends and is free from his nature, i.e., not determined by it. The individual, on the other hand, which is the material manifestation and individuation, is often confused with the person. Thus, it is the individual which must be transcended. The Person is in a formless state. After the Fall, human nature became divided and broken into many individuals. Man has a double character: as an individual nature, he is a part of a whole, but as a person, he is in no sense a part, he contains all in himself.

So in our language the individual is a lower state of being and the person is a higher state. Human nature is disintegrated into multiplicity; in theological terms, human nature lost the “Integrity” which Adam possessed. It is man as individual that is transcended, not man as person. In the latter state, he is in the image of God and able to reach the Divine Union.

Saint-Martin’s Principles Saint-Martin was attracted to the spiritual and esoteric life from an early age and remained a lifelong Catholic. He tells us the principle he discovered that guided his life:

1. Despite all the confusions of philosophy, he had attained certitude as to God and his own soul.
2. The seeker for wisdom had need of nothing more.
3. The foundation of happiness lies in contentment with the truth.
4. Absorption in material things was incomprehensible for those who knew the treasures of reason and the spirit.
5. Human science explained matter by matter, but after its putative proofs, there were other demonstrations needed.
6. The inmost prayer of his soul was for God to abide therein to the exclusion of all else. Thus Divine Union is the true end of man.
7. We are all widowed and are called to a second marriage.

Nothing could be clearer. He starts with knowledge of the self and knowledge of God. He ends with the Divine Union, which he relates to a type of marriage. In brief, we can refer to a couple of high points in his doctrine, specifically as they relate to recent discussions.

The Will and Silencing the Mind Saint-Martin makes clear that the Divine Union can be accomplished in this life, rather than postmortem. First of all, a man must become aware of himself as a Person. He writes:

When we have once sensed our soul, we are left in no doubt as to its possibility.

The individual whose inner content is filled with opinions, desires, emotions, likes, dislikes, and sensations will experience nothing but doubt. To overcome that, the will must be conformed. He tells us:

Let me affirm that divine union is a work which can be accomplished only by the strong and constant resolution of those who desire it; that there is no other means to this end but the persevering use of a pure will, aided by the works and practice of every virtue, fertilized by prayer, that divine grace may come to help our weakness and lead us to the term of our regeneration.

The Martinist way now makes sense. It is not a question of overcoming human nature, but of transforming the fallen nature into something higher. Without understanding the state of Fallen man, one can only interpret such writings as overcoming human nature itself. That is not so; rather the goal is to transcend the fallen state and rise back to the Primordial State (“reintegration”). Clearly, man in the fallen state cannot accomplish that on his own, but requires an impetus from above him. This is not an indication of passivity, since it is the Will, the very source of activity, that must be employed.

To recap thus far: first, a man becomes aware of the possibilities of his soul, which makes him dissatisfied with ordinary life. Then he purifies the Will, which is no longer interested in ordinary pursuits. However, he still does not know how to proceed without an impetus from above. Unfortunately, the lot of mankind, although steeped in ignorance, is to make stuff up. Saint-Martin writes:

It is a sad vision indeed, that when we start looking at Man, we see him at the same time tormented by the desire to know, failing to find a reason for anything, but daring nevertheless to give a reason to everything.

Hence, man must first admit that he knows nothing, so he can follow his path open to Divine Grace. Otherwise, the knowledge he imagines he possesses will form an insurmountable obstacle to his progress.

The Active Path Although Saint-Martin uses the word “mysticism”, he technique is more active. First of all, let’s see how he understand mysticism:

The only initiation which I preach and seek with all the ardour of my soul is that by which we may enter into the heart of God and make God’s heart enter into us, there to form an indissoluble marriage ...

Once again, there is that alchemical imagery with the idea of “work”. The marriage of the soul with God is both a union and a separation. That is the proper meaning of “non-duality” ... not two, but not one either. A marriage is the apt symbol, since it is a union without annihilating either one. For “God” to annihilate the man is a form of monism, not non-dualism.

The Inner Way of Saint-Martin is individual and particular for each person. Concentration and contemplation are actually active, not passive. Try it, and you will see how difficult it is to maintain the focus of the mind. In the book which we shall mention below, his way is compared to Saint John of the Cross, who says that contemplation is infused passively so that illumination is awaited rather than sought. Saint-Martin sought to establish the correspondence of the soul with the Divine by the active path of WORKS. For the path of the Inner Way, we

seek to explain material things by man, and not man by material things.

That certainly deserves more thought than the few seconds required to read it. Who is prepared to understand the entire course of his life and the manifestation of his inner states?

Acknowledgment For the source of the doctrines and quotations, I relied on the little book, *Five Christian Principals*, by “R.C.,” which describes the spiritual sources of the Martinist Doctrine. What follows is my own interpretation of their significance.

1. Martinez Pasquales. The link to the hidden tradition of all ages.
2. Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. The link from the hidden tradition to the Roman church.
3. Jacob Boehme. The culmination of the current of German mysticism that began with Meister Eckhart.
4. Thomas a Kempis. Another German, he provides the basis of the path as the imitation of Christ.
5. Emanuel Swedenborg. He restores the tradition of the symbolic interpretation of Scriptures.

Posted on 2013-05-20 by Cologero

* * *

Caleb Cooper on 2013-05-21 at 09:03 said:

It's worth noting that in 1917 Valentin Tomberg was initiated into Martinism at the age of 17, Providently right before the Communist Revolution convulsed Russia and forced his family to flee for their lives to the West. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentin_Tomberg

Avery Morrow on 2013-05-21 at 11:06 said:

Is Swedenborg part of Martinism? He's certainly an integral part of the most ridiculous kinds of New Age spiritualism where all metaphysics goes out the window.

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-21 at 13:58 said:

I have issues with this – if Saint-Martin was so Catholic why did he refuse the sacrament of extreme unction at his death ?

According to Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs sur l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, Tome 2, Martinism is egalitarian and a predecessor to the French Revolution.

Also, according to Barruel and Leon de Poncins, Martinez was a Jew. Could his "tradition" be seen as the introduction of false Judaic-derived cabalistic (countertradition) poison into Catholic France ?

Joseph de Maistre, speaking as the character of Le Comte in Dialogue 11 of *Les soirees du Saint-Petersbourg* refutes martinism (considered as part of the illuminist movement) and defends the Church.

Cologero on 2013-05-21 at 23:23 said:

Perhaps, Jason-Adam, Joseph de Maistre is an ambiguous source since he was an initiate into Martinism and knew Saint-Martin personally. Charles M Lombard's intellectual biography of de Maistre, although it border on hagiography, documents the subtle ideas of Martinism in de Maistre's works. It may be a good project someday to verify his references. I would see de Maistre's cautions about "illuminism" to be like Tomberg's, viz., it needs to be brought back into the fold, so to speak.

The point, however, is that Saint-Martin fulfills pretty well Evola's requirements for a Christian initiation. That will require a decision: to follow or to reject that path. Saint-Martin probably rejected last rites because he felt he achieved the "true immortality" that Evola described.

As for de Maistre's defence of the Church, who today is willing to defend him? Apart from Cioran and Gornahoor, that is. Stendahl complained that the Jesuits who trained the French priests were imbued with de Maistre, and therefore called him the "French St Paul". That would be inconceivable in our time.

Constantine on 2013-05-22 at 09:18 said:

I wonder would Evola or Guenon approve Mormonism?

Cologero on 2013-05-22 at 12:30 said:

Guenon wrote a rather longish essay contra Mormonism, included in "Miscellanea". What in it warrants approval?

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-22 at 13:17 said:

Plinio Correa de Oliveira wrote, the counterrevolution is taking place against the subversive elements within the Church. It is a hard fight we may not win but we fight for truth and honour, not for vain material victories. That is what it means to a knight. "Saint-Martin fulfills pretty well Evola's requirements for a Christian initiation" – but Evola believed in hierarchy, are you saying that the Abbe Barruel was wrong to classify Saint-Martin as an egalitarian and a predecessor of the French Revolution ?

Mercurius on 2013-05-22 at 14:19 said:

It is difficult to understand what Mr. Adams means by "false Judaic-derived Cabalistic derived counter tradition poison"–does this imply that Cabala is "counter-traditional" (not just anti-traditional either, but counter-traditional) as an esoteric doctrine, or is it counter-traditional because it is "Judaic derived"? In either case, Cabala certainly entered Christianity long before Martinez–examples can be found in primitive Christianity, and St. Jerome himself, who gives the Vulgate was considerably influenced by Cabala as seen in his letter to Marcella discussing the Divine Names (which are the names ascribed to the Sephiroth).

The question of whether Martinism "is" or "isn't" egalitarian is a bad question. If something represents an initiatic doctrine (and method), then by its nature, spiritual realization/the spiritual order is its sole concern–if, as Guenon pointed out, an organization having initiatic leanings at some point elevates social and political concerns to a rank of primary importance, it is no longer initiatic *de jure*, but a "secret society". So, to know what Martinism is one ought look first to its major "landmarks"–which can be said to be Martinez' "Treatise on the Reintegration of Beings", the "degrees" which became grafted onto an Masonic structure (so, the "form" they took for expression), and then, the writings of St. Martin, either as addendum, continuation, completion, or expression not of theurgical operations, but the "path of the heart" (it is interesting that a sort of similar thing can be observed in neo-Platonism, with say Proclus' school stressing contemplation, and representatives like Iamblichus arguing for theurgy; or the shift from Vedic ritualism toward Vedanta and the beginnings of yoga–but I digress). At any rate, there isn't anything in those landmarks pertaining to a social/political "egalitarianism"–consequently, the question doesn't have much meaning when thinking about Martinism as initiatic doctrine and method.

Now, on the other hand, if in time, certain lodges and individuals within Martinism have been, or promoted egalitarianism, then that was/is their proclivity, secondary or tertiary ideas caused to become associated with their initiatic work, basically innovations. Interestingly, in his book "Beyond Enlightenment", Harvey shows many arguments supporting the thesis that Martinism was anti-semitic, racist, and proto-fascist! But again, if some lodges could be found as such–neither egalitarianism nor "proto-fascism" constitute the landmarks represented by

Martinez “Treatise” simply because it never was set forth as a social-political doctrine. “Bringing it back into the fold” as Cologero notes above.

Some of the criticisms above seem to be hinged around an “us versus them” criteria—or the (Roman) Church versus Martinism—but this too is a non-issue, as such a conflict doesn’t exist. Martinism is not a religion, and never had desired to replace the Church—Martinez and St. Martin were Catholics, and did not repudiate exoteric religion; rather, they attempted to “complete” it with a doctrine/method suitable for the qualified (for the non-qualified, the Church always still remains).

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-22 at 18:14 said:

1. The Cabala is not Christian so therefore any system based on it is not a Christian initiation, am I wrong or right ?

2. Many writers have shown the anti-Western nature of Judaism, even Evola, a better writer in this regard is Leon de Poncins.

3. There are many supposed initiatic organisations that are egalitarian, Franc-Masonry to name one.....one area Evola was superior to Guenon was in his recognising Masonry as a false, evil group.....

4. I am relying on the Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs sur l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, Tome 2, for my information on the egalitarian and revolutionary nature of Martinism. If anyone would care to read my source and offer information that refutes it, I am willing to change my opinion.

Ash on 2013-05-22 at 19:27 said:

The writings from the eastern Church are rather apt, as Martin’s doctrines appear to correlate very closely with the Orthodox doctrine of theosis. However, as I understand it, the Eastern Church goes beyond restoring man to the primordial state and intends to set man back on the path which they were on in Eden, suggesting that Adam in Eden has himself not yet attained his fullness; perhaps Adam is not yet Adam Kadmon? C. S. Lewis did a marvelous job exploring this idea in “Perelandra”. Perhaps someone more informed on Martinist doctrine could elaborate on how that could affect Martinism as a traditional path.

Francis Mercuri on 2013-05-22 at 19:43 said:

Mr. Adam:

1. I suppose this entirely depends on how you define Christianity—my perspective understands it as being a union of the Hebraic and Hellenistic traditions. Yet, even if one were to disregard the Hellenistic elements, being Hebraic (at least in terms of having an OT relationship or foundation), one could certainly see how Hebrew esotericism would, or could be, part of Christian theosophy—I don’t think that is stretching the logic too far. On the other hand, I’m not so certain we share the same idea concerning what Cabala happens to be.

Still, looking to our Traditional authors, in Schuon we find him several times insisting that there can never be a complete understanding of scriptures of any type in translation (“Gnosis is not Just Anything”, “Some Difficulties Found in Sacred Scripture”)—one must, he argues, always return to the sacred tongue—in terms of the Torah, naturally Hebrew. Then, in the essay “Keys to the Bible”, he goes even further, saying:

“In order to understand the nature of the Bible and its meaning, it is essential to have recourse to the ideas of both symbolism and revelation....for the literal meaning of the Bible....affords sufficient food for piety apart from any question of symbolism, but this nourishment would lose all vitality and all its liberating power without an adequate idea of revelation or of superhuman origin....When approaching scripture, one should always pay the greatest attention to rabbinical and cabalistic commentaries—and in Christianity—to the patristic and mystical commentaries”

2. Evola wrote many things about “Judaism”, often times in apparent contradiction—in *Men Among the Ruins*, he seems to say that he uses the word “Jew” and “Jewish” to denote an economic Judaism (and he draws much from Werner Sombart on all this), or “spirit”—akin to what he writes about the “races”—so, it pertains in certain contexts more to a “type”, because in other places, such as “Revolt”, he has positive things to say about Cabala, and quotes from the Zohar, with the particular quote representing he states, the very meaning of the traditional world. It isn’t so easy to be cut and dry with such things.

I tend to agree with the Gornahoor position on the issue, as expressed in the post on “The Nine Worthies”:

“The characters are also archetypal and the symmetry of the scheme reflects the Medieval view of history and destiny of European man. The Old Law prepared the way for the New. The Pagan law created the Pax Romana that allowed the spread of the New Law. And of course, medievals saw themselves as the true heirs of both the Hebrews and the Pagans, and their civilization as the fulfillment of God’s divine plan”.

<http://www.gornahoor.net/?p=331>

3. If you considered what I previously wrote, i.e., there is a difference between an Initiatic Order, and a “secret society”, you would see that the comment is null, because if Francmasonerie can be regarded as “egalitarian”, one is speaking not of an Initiatic doctrine and method or a metaphysics, but of a political-social construct, which is secondary. When it comes to Masonry, that is where I think Evola was often at his worst—for he could not see it beyond what had emerged as political Masonry, he could not, as the “conspiracy theorists” of today continue, disentangle an acquired Jacobinism from an Initiatic process and symbolism in Masonry—something Evola hardly touched upon, but is all through Guenon, and heavily in “Great Triad”, “Esotericism of Dante”, and of course his writings assembled into “Studies on Masonry and Compagnonnage”.

4. One could say similar things about the Daoist “Triads”—with no, or minimal “Jewish” influences involved, Triads have historically gotten involved in “revolutionary” activities—often to the point of eliciting governmental crackdowns; yet, again, one can’t simply take the political

activities of an isolated Triad as descriptive of Daoism—that is just kind of common sense. We are likely getting far afield though—so, since the essay “Hidden Tradition” pertains foremost to the doctrines of Martinism, I’d suggest our discussion center more on the Martinist treatises and symbolism—allowing them to do the speaking about themselves.

Cologero on 2013-05-22 at 22:54 said:

In the Spiritist Fallacy, Guenon points out that there are many nuggets in Swedenborg if one knows how to find them. However, he is to be interpreted symbolically, not in a new age fashion. Nevertheless, Guenon concludes that what is good in Swedenborg can be found elsewhere in a purer form.

Mihai on 2013-05-23 at 03:29 said:

“my perspective understands it as being a union of the Hebraic and Hellenistic traditions.”

To regard Christianity as nothing but this union of these two traditions is to view it the same way as the profane historians do.

Certainly, Christianity assimilated and made much use of Hellenistic thought, but the latter is the support, while the former the essence. There are essential points in which Christian doctrine clearly surpasses or fulfills the thought of a Plato, Aristotle or the neo-platonists. The failure to realize this is what caused the scholastic collapse. The same goes, I believe, more clearly in relation to Judaism.

“When it comes to Masonry, that is where I think Evola was often at his worst”

Evola considered the implications of political and subversive masonry, which, I believe, is all that truly remains of Masonry in the modern world. If there are any traditional organizations left in that field, they are probably so well hidden and reclusive that they are close irrelevant for all purposes regarding initiation and spirituality for those seeking them.

I have always stated that Guenon’s defense of Masonry, beyond showing what used to be traditional in the organization, marks the lowest point of his writings. For much of the time while he was in Europe he struggled to make Masonry act as an esoteric organization in order to fulfill what he thought was the entirely “esoteric-less” Christianity. Not only was such a point fruitless, but it may really fuel some of the subversive forces he so much tried to counteract.

He had really made better use of his time to find in the Patristic mystical writings the starting point for the reconstruction of a higher perspective for the West, instead of wasting time trying to revive a long dead and buried organization.

V.O. on 2013-05-23 at 10:46 said:

Christ annihilated the boundary between the esoteric and the exoteric. The only “initiation” now occurs exoterically in the Orthodox Church. Mysticism as the “estoeric” is practiced by forms

of the anchorite, perhaps away from the world, but still within the Orthodox Church. (Although the Orthodox Christian is always away from the world)

The ascetic alone with the wolves in the mountains is exoteric because the Church is universal and the Cross transforms the world. Mysticism as term is a terminological advancement away from the exoteric-esoteric split. The initiate as the preserver of the esoteric and exoteric split is Antichrist, because their absolute gap is not between God and the world, but within the world itself. They are only concerned with the world. The “secret” organizations are thus always practicing a form of counter-initiation and inevitably degrade into complete Satanism.

francismercuri on 2013-05-23 at 12:06 said:

It was never suggested that Christianity was “just”–or “merely”, anything–as if an external assembly of lifeless fragments from “cultures”. One would assume that as understood though in such a forum as this, hopefully without needing to emphasize the obvious repeatedly. I'll try to be more lucid hereafter.

So called political and “subversive” Masonry are certainly not (and this can be looked at entirely objectively) “all that remains”. What is there in regular Masonry are all the same landmarks, rites, symbols, and lectures that have been there since the operative went speculative–the very same things that Guenon would have worked with (granted, there are some variations between Grand Lodges in wording, and “floor work” due to pedestrian and insignificant details)–there is no need for anything to be “hidden and reclusive”. Everything is entirely present if one desires a “virtual” initiation, and wants to receive such in the context of an “order”. All this back and forth stuff about masonry is silly–if what is contained in Masonry in terms of the rites and symbols is “political and subversive”, then the bulk of “esotericists” ought throw in the towel, because these are the same symbols and doctrines that are present in other forms of Western esotericism–say Hermeticism/alchemy for example.

Aside from all that, all this talk of political masonry is in day-to-day reality something of a tremendous exaggeration–if not completely false! “Political” lodges are likely the exception, if you can even find one–such topics are not even permitted in lodges, they just are not discussed. What lodges do is this: they occupy themselves with performing degree work (initiations)–this takes up 75% of members time, between practice, memorization, and performance–after which, it is up to the initiate to either penetrate the deeper meanings of the rites–or, do nothing at all–only “research lodges” with a “philosophical” bent talk about this stuff. The remaining time, members sometimes spend socially, relaxing, outings, and/or doing some charity work–hospitals, disaster relief–whatever. That is the true life a regular lodge–all these other things people talk about are fantasy.

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-23 at 21:34 said:

I fully agree with you !!!!!

Eliphas Levi had said something similar in his History of Magic and so did Fritjof Schuon. not for nuttin but the first 2 sacraments are known as the sacraments of INITIATION.....

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-23 at 21:42 said:

Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin was a supporter of the French Revolution, I can provide sources for this if needed. How can you be a reactionay and support this doctrine then ?

Guenon ABANDONED Martinism when he realised its counterfeit nature.

Mr Mercuri, how do you know that stories of political Masonry are exaggerated ? are you a Mason ? if you're not, you can't know for sure because Masons are sworn not to reveal what happens in the lodge to non-Masons. If you are a Mason then you may be trying to cover up your activities.....

I choose to trust the irrefutable testimony of many researchers who know the evils of Satanic Masonry.....

My interest in esotericism these days tends toward the Hieron du Val d'Or.....Cologero have you ever read about that group ? Guenon was associated with them for a time.

Cologero on 2013-05-24 at 01:09 said:

Jason-Adam, I've never located any primary literature from the Hieron; Guenon's involvement stems from his association with Regnabit and the correspondence between Guenon and Louis Charbonneau-Lassay. I don't know if that has been published but let me know if you can find it.

I've never found any writings from the founders of the Hieron, so I can't say if the description on Cesnur is accurate. Nevertheless, some of the themes have been taken up here. E.g., the common tradition, which has been mentioned several times. Another is the Christianization of Masonry; this, we believe, was ultimately the task of Valentin Tomberg. Apparently, that group was instrumental in promoting the feast day of Christ the King. I will write on that soon provided I can make it of general interest. I think it promotes a better societal vision than what any of the new pseudo-right groups have been able to do. The recent meaningless gesture at Notre Dame has made this suddenly a relevant topic.

Mihai on 2013-05-24 at 03:35 said:

Granted, when it comes to certain so-called conspiracy theories (although I really detest the term, since it is used by those who deny any hidden activities that influence historical events) there are many exaggerations.

But there is an old saying, which I strictly keep in mind when it comes to things such as these: where there's smoke, there's fire. It is a fact that Masonry has participated in almost every revolutionary movement of the last few centuries- including the American revolution, the French revolution, the 1848 movements and even the Soviet Revolution. If these days Masonry

has ceased to be so political is because there is no further need for it as a platform to spread certain subversive goals, since there are other, more adequate ones.

Anyway, the fact that it was possible, back then, to use Masonry for subversive purposes, denotes that it had already degenerated beyond any relevance.

"Everything is entirely present if one desires a "virtual" initiation, and wants to receive such in the context of an "order"."

My question is: even if such were true, and there is still some spiritual influence acting in those lodges to pass a valid initiation, I don't see what good it could do if its members do not distinguish themselves, in their mentality, from the least of the profanes and can provide no significant guidance or knowledge to anyone.

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-24 at 17:37 said:

I've had the same problem in detecting primary sources as well, Charbonneau-Lassay interests me greatly though, his train of thought today seems to be represented by Jean Borella whom I can recommend strongly.

As for the monsieur who was a suicide, I believe that is a representation of utter nihilism. For myself as a knight, I do not care what the world around me is like – it is sinful always. I follow God and do not depend on others for my inner serenity.

I did some more research and Eliphas Levi did admire Saint-Martin and said there was a revolt of the subversive illuminists (Weishaput and co.) against the legitimate authority, Baruel perhaps was too exoterically minded by lumping all the esotericisms into the category of egalitarian and atheist. I don't know enough yet. I still distrust Martinism due to de Maistre and Guenon's rejection of it but I keep my mind open to the future work Gornahoor will undertake on it.

2.3 The Spirit of Joseph de Maistre

Joseph de Maistre was an Hermetist (in the school of **Martines de Pasqually** and **Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin**), Traditionalist, Reactionary, European, and a source of the Russian Idea. In his Self-Defense, Julius Evola includes Maistre among those well-bred men holding sane and normal views common prior to the French Revolution. In this brief review of the Maistre's St Petersburg Dialogues Evola again reveals his high regard for de Maistre, despite their fundamental disagreement on religion and providence.

In *Materialism and the Task of Anthroposophy*, Rudolf Steiner says this about Joseph de Maistre:

With de Maistre, a personality of the greatest imaginable genius, of compelling spirituality but Roman Catholic through and through, appears on the scene.

High praise indeed, especially from a man who was in fundamental disagreement with de Maistre.

Digression To complete the circle, we have mentioned that Evola included Steiner's picture not once, but twice, as demonstrating "spiritual penetration", despite being in fundamental disagreement with Steiner's doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. So here we have the example of three esoterists demonstrating respect despite their disagreements on specific issues. This is how men of high intellectual attainment behave, since they understand what "thinking" is. Lesser men treat thought as a weapon, and means of combat. They confuse the use of words and ideas, with the words and ideas themselves. Let this serve as a model.

Returning to the topic Steiner has some interesting things to say about de Masitre who represents the reactionary trend to Steiner's progressivist view of mankind. This is how he characterizes de Maistre's basic worldview:

All of humanity falls into two categories, one representing the kingdom of God, the other representing the kingdom of this world.

As we recently pointed out, this is also the view of **Vladimir Soloviev** (not to mention **St. Augustine**), and the reason for this seeming coincidence will become clear. But the point is that there is an essential difference in the quality of being between the two groups of humanity: one

spiritually aware, the other not. This is more than a superficial adherence to one system of belief over another, but represents a real change in the level of being.

Steiner writes:

there are those in Europe who cling to this view that since the beginning of the fifteenth century divine world rule has assumed a quite different position in regard to earth humanity.

Of course, this is not just representative of the Catholicism of de Maistre, but it also reflects the point of view of both Julius Evola and Rene Guenon, who saw the Reformation as the beginning of the end of the last vestiges of Traditional civilization in the West.

Steiner astutely points this out:

De Maistre had the grandiose idea to tie in with Russianism, particularly with the element that had found its way since ancient times from Asia into the Orthodox Catholic, Russian religion. From there, he wished to create a connection to Romanism. He tried to bring about the great fusion between the element living in the Oriental manner of thinking in Russian culture, and the element coming from Rome. already imbued with this view.

Here we see this revealed in the writings Soloviev who in his own way tries to tie the “Oriental manner of thinking” into contemporary Western ideas.

Steiner continues:

de Maistre refers back to what Christianity was in regard to its metaphysical view prior to the scholastic age, what it was in the first centuries and what was acceptable to Rome. De Maistre aimed for Roman, for Catholic, Christianity as a real power.

Again, as Evola also points out, the Catholic counter-reformation was not enough, it only went back half-way. It needed to return to the primordial sources of its spiritual power. Instead of being the opposite of a Reformation, it merely contented itself with being a reformation in the opposite direction. The spiritually weak state of Christianity today is the result.

Steiner's short essay puts the issue in perfect clarity.

- Is the human race on the way to some progressive, evolutionary, utopian future?
- Or is there a fundamental and irreconcilable divide between those on the side of Tradition and those on the side of Revolution?

If the latter³, then the task is to begin the reconstruction of Tradition from the insights given by de Maistre, Soloviev, Guenon, and Evola.

Posted on 2010-05-23 by Cologero

³The idea the evolution and progress of the human race is one of the features that distinguish "New Age" teachings from Tradition.

3.1 Prequel to the Three Worlds

Cornelius Agrippa, in *Occult Philosophy*, posited the existence of three worlds: the elementary, celestial, and intellectual worlds, hierarchically arranged, as illustrated, for example, in **Robert Fludd**'s Diagram¹.

Since each inferior world is governed by its superior and receives its influence, so the mages believe that one can penetrate naturally by means of the same levels and for each one of these worlds up to the “archetypical world”, constructor and ruler of all things and from there to act not only on natural powers, but to also create new ones.

In the essay on **Hermann Keyserling**, **Julius Evola** added that as a footnote to some of Keyserling's ideas, in particular, “The representation

¹<https://www.gornahoor.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/hierarchy.jpg>

creates reality, not vice versa.” Clearly, both Keyserling and Agrippa recognize that the subtle rules the dense. At this point, it is worth the time to consolidate the ideas about the three worlds.

Other terms for the three worlds are “hylic, psychic, and pneumatic” or “exoteric, mesoteric, and esoteric”. I was going to summarize these worlds in a post, but it became too long and involved. So, first there is this prequel which serves as the introduction.

What Is Spiritualism I recently saw part of a movie, which I don’t recommend: you will meet a tall dark stranger. In it, the ditzy mother, a divorcee, met a man she described as “spiritual”, because he dabbled in séances, reincarnation, psychics, etc. Obviously, that is quite far from what we mean by spirit. Rather we mean interiority.

That is the heart of the Western tradition, also called “spiritualism” in other languages, but, unfortunately, that has much different connotation in the Anglosphere. So we are forced to use the term “idealism”. As we have pointed out many times, Plato is but one link in a long chain that goes back much further than him. It took different forms in 19th century Germany, moved on to France and Italy, where the trail goes cold in the second half of the 20th century.

In the mission to contribute to the living stream of Hermetism, it is imperative to revive this way of thinking. At a time when materialism and positivism are seen as the touchstones of rational discourse, the spiritual worldview may seem incredible. Nevertheless, an intellectual conversion is possible, in which case it will be understood as the most sane and intelligent view. Since Julius Evola consciously attempted to tie European idealism to Hermetism, his system of magical idealism is worthy of study.

For more background, I suggest reading through *The Science of Peace* by **Bhagavan Das**², reviewed by Evola³. He connects Advaita Vedanta

²<https://www.gornahoor.net/library/ScienceOfPeace.pdf>

³<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6328>

to German idealism, particularly Fichte.

Macrocosm Whenever some people hear of “occult philosophy”, “magic”, or “mages”, they tend to shut down, visualizing something heretical, dangerous, or even satanic. However, properly understood, it is the consequence of orthodox teachings. The purpose of exoteric practices is to create certain states of consciousness, although in a spontaneous and passive way. So a particular devotion may lead to one such state or another. As spontaneous, it is experienced by the practitioner as originating from the outside.

The esoterist, on the other hand, achieves the same states in an active way, as the free act of the will. He does not oppose the exoterist, but rather understands the teachings in a very different way. This can be revisited after the commentary on Keyserling on the topics of understanding and meaning. Since the exoterist cannot understand the esoterist, he assumes there is something false about it.

Another difference is the relationship to ideas. The exoterist uses ideas more as weapons to buttress an argument or to win debates. For the esoterist, an idea is a real, active, and living force. So let’s take the idea of the three worlds into consideration. Basically, it is saying that the Divine creates the order of the universe, the angelic hierarchies are charged with the maintenance of that order, and the elementary world, i.e., the phenomenal or natural world, is the result. This is the principle that the subtle rules the dense on the macrocosmic scale.

The exoterist agrees with that, but sees it as something happening from the outside, with no further relevance. The Mage, as Agrippa points out, instead understands that teaching interiorly and then strives to “penetrate” into those levels. There is certainly justification for this. Since God and the angels are spiritual beings, there is no “outside”. Either they are known interiorly or else the possibility of gnosis is denied a priori. Those who have experienced gnosis know the answer.

Microcosm The analogy of being —as above, so below— is also orthodox. So corresponding to the three worlds in the microcosm is the spirit, the soul, and the body. These are definitely experienced interiorly. And they functionally correspond to Agrippa's three worlds. The spirit rules the soul and the body. The body is not independent; the spirit and soul are the form of the body. Hence, any mage who can penetrate into the knowledge of the inner workings of the spirit and soul can then have control over the natural world as represented by the body. This can even happen spontaneously in various psycho-somatic manifestations.

The point here is not a scholarly discussion of Agrippa, but rather to come to experience these teachings from the inside.

The Thirst for Action **Theophan the Recluse** pointed out that there are three stimuli that motivate the thirst for action:

Stimulus → Object of desire

The Necessary → Duty

The Useful → Service

The Pleasant → Pleasure

He writes that there are natural and legitimate activities of the will,

which is the master of our powers and our whole life. Its work is to determine the form, the means and the degree of satisfaction to be given to the different desires that arise from our needs, and to decide on substitutions so that life may flow smoothly and bring peace and joy to the individual.

The high-functioning Will, then, will balance the natural needs that relate to the soul, the body, everyday life, and to society. Unfortunately, the Will can be dissipated and “alien things stimulate desires that are foreign [unnatural] to us: anger, hatred, envy, miserliness, vanity, pride, etc.”

Active Spirituality The last time, I contrasted two spiritual perspectives:

- The desire for worldly things
- Detachment from the world

As such, they are both passive approaches, so what happens if we flip them around as active forces. Two things result from that. Rather than being two distinct incompatible approaches, they instead become complementary.

1. The prayers for worldly successes turn into the work of the mage to penetrate the archetypal world of ideas in order to bring them into manifestation. However, the desired manifestations should conform to our natural needs arising from our sense of duty, the utility of the manifestation, and legitimate pleasures.
2. Yet, there is detachment from the world and the results of our willing as described in the fruits of mental prayer.

As Theophan concludes, all is done for the greater glory of God. The Warrior-Monk will have complete confidence that his Will is in conformity with the Divine Will and his prayers will be answered. Yet he is also detached from the world.

Posted on 2014-07-28 by Cologero

3.2 The Esoteric Path

In this case it would be better, although not absolutely necessary, for the elite to be able to take as its basis a Western organization already enjoying an effective existence. It seems quite clear that

there is now but one organization in the West that is of a traditional character and that has preserved a doctrine that could serve as an appropriate basis for the work in question, and this organization is the Catholic Church. It would be enough to restore to the doctrine of the Church, without changing anything of the religious form that it bears outwardly, the deeper meaning that is truly contained in it, but of which its present representatives seem to be unaware, just as they are unaware of its essential unity with the other traditional forms.

RENE GUENON, *The Crisis of the Modern World*

Western Tradition It was Guenon's position that, at least for those at a sufficient level of development, the choice of an esoteric path was a matter of personal choice and opportunity. In **Boccaccio's** *Decameron*, which Guenon regarded as the work of an initiate in the same Tradition as Dante, there is the story of the three rings. In that tale the true religion, between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, was represented by a golden ring. In the tale, two identical copies were made making it impossible to tell which of the three was the true religion. There are three possible interpretations of the story.

Nevertheless, Guenon thought that the Catholic Church was the natural basis for the re-establishment of Tradition in the West. Obviously, not as it was constituted, but presuming that a spiritual elite might arise who could restore the deeper meaning contained therein. In several of his early works, he provided clues to what they may look like.

We have mentioned Guenon's writings on the Crown of Creation ⁴ as the basis for metaphysics and the Social Reign of Christ as the model for social organization. This is not the place for details, but it is certainly sufficient as a sound beginning for the restoration.

⁴<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=7768>

Certainly, it is a sound project to investigate the Medieval period as a model since all writers of Tradition regard that age as the most recent Traditional civilization in the West. Although Guenon saw its demise in the Renaissance, Evola referred to what “every well born man considered sane and normal prior to 1789.” The spiritual basis of that sane and normal time is irrefutable.

Guenon believed that the revival of Thomism following Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical left out an important element. Specifically, Thomism became too dependent on Aristotle, while leaving out the more important influence of Neoplatonism, Augustine, and Dionysus. In this he was opposed by Jacques Maritain who even lobbied to get Guenon’s books place on the Index while he was the French ambassador to the Vatican. Therein lies a clue to the possible restoration, which should be further enhanced with a dialog of more the more ancient Vedic teachings.

Adoption The three Western traditions are in continuity. We have pointed this out several times: Christianity is esoteric paganism⁵, Augustine referred to the one Tradition, Dante built on Virgil. More recently, **C S Lewis**, **Valentin Tomberg**, and **Joseph Ratzinger** regarded Christianity as the fulfillment, not only of the Hebrew religion, but also of paganism.

The idea of a new people founded by a God-man was not unknown at that time and would have colored the understanding of early Christians. In his studies of the spirituality of Ancient Rome, Evola focused exclusively on a given bloodline. However, birthright was not the only means to participate in a spiritual stream. A man who had no male heir was able to adopt one into his family. From the spiritual point of view, that served the same purpose.

For example, Romulus was the demigod son of Mars; this is not totally fictional since the martial spirit of Rome certainly existed, however

⁵<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=7152>

you want to understand that. However, Jesus Christ was the Son of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit, hence, not a particular god of a certain spirit, but the Absolute God of all creation. This started a spiritual race, not of blood, but from adoption. We become sons of God by adoption. Sons share in the nature of their fathers and are entitled to an inheritance. This is much more than mere creaturehood. In our time, this notion has been sentimentalized to turn believers into perpetual children.

Initiation Guenon insisted that a valid initiation was necessary for an initiatic path; the validity was guaranteed by an unbroken chain of initiates. Certainly, this is not sufficient since Guenon himself pointed to several Hindus and Sufis who proclaimed heterodox doctrines despite their initiations.

Evola criticized Guenon in that regard for the bureaucratization of initiation. More important than the horizontal was the vertical, so Evola proposed that there was an initiation from above. He never really identified that. Tomberg, however, wrote that all initiation is from above and is the second birth in Christ.

Thus, in the West, Hermetic groups appear and go dormant, without a visible continuity. That is so it does not become as sort of counter-Church.

Buddhism

Guenon has made a commendable effort to interpret the true spirit of Hindu culture to the West in his many works ... The form of regeneration consists not in a fusion or synthesis of the two cultures, but in the West regaining, as the result of a dynamic turn in its present trend, those springs of true spirituality through the help of the East. It would be hazardous to forecast the time of the change or the precise manner in which it would be brought about.

T R V MURTI, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*

However, about 20 years ago, I took Guenon's point very seriously. If it was true that there was no available initiation in the West, I searched for another, which came done to taste and opportunity. I had a romanticized vision of Tibet. There were the tales from Alexandra David-Neel, the Roerich's, not to mention the various claims of the occultists. Tibet had been the last patriarchal, hierarchical, theocratic society. Since there were a few Tibetan centers locally of different lineages, I decided to get initiated at one of them, in the tradition of the **Dalai Lama**.

So for a few years, I followed that path. It was not so different. There was a priest, an altar, flowers, incense, a rite, veneration of relics, icons, prayers, meditations, heaven, hell, and a period of post-mortem purgation. I followed the precepts of the vows, which were very much like the Tao described by C S Lewis. A minor transgression, or "venial sin", could be rectified by suitable prayers. A "mortal sin", such as stealing a freight train or having anal intercourse with your wife, put you outside the sangha and could only be rectified by retaking the vows.

Nevertheless, virtually every Westerner I met told me how they had surpassed the religion of their upbringing. From a practical point of view, I couldn't see much difference. Clearly, they were ignoring several points of the vow. Instead, becoming a vegetarian or rescuing a dog from the pound became the main focus.

I never heard anyone of them advocate the desirability of a patriarchal theocratic Buddhist state in the West. Even the Dalai Lama ended the reincarnations of future Dalai Lamas and came to prefer a Euro-style parliamentary system for any future free Tibet. Hence, it was time to leave.

Can it be said that the initiation really made any difference, beyond a post hoc, propter hoc argument? Certainly the many hours spent in meditation with mala beads and the study of Madhyamika must have

accomplished something. At the very least, it was the “help from the East” that Guenon claimed was necessary.

I am not recommending this choice, since I see that the same, or more, can be accomplished within the Western Tradition. Buddhism is a paganism and thus can be superseded while absorbing its best practices and metaphysical teachings. Then there is the matter of recognizing the real ring.

Posted on 2015-02-09 by Cologero

* * *

Cologero on 2015-02-12 at 20:54 said:

I appreciate your comments, Mr Obscure, but I need to keep making the same point over and over again. The Tradition is one thing, the current management is another. That is a distinction to always keep in mind, especially given Guenon's claim that the current leaders are not likely to be aware of the full Tradition. As I've tried to show, this is not an idle opinion ... Guenon did indeed try to reinvigorate Tradition. There is also the model of Guido De Giorgio with his “Vedantized Christianity” as Evola called it.

I agree with your points, but what I reject is that we have to wait for George to do it⁶. We do not need more kibitzers and complainers, but men of action. This is George's motto:

Personal notice: Danger's my stock in trade. If the job's too tough for you to handle, you've got a job for me. George Valentine.

Is that clear enough?

Cologero on 2015-02-12 at 21:03 said:

I'll iterate these points since new readers may not have encountered them yet.

Evola developed an interest in Idealism (it was the dominant Italian philosophy at the time), so he taught himself German so he could read all the German Idealists (and Nietzsche). From that, he created his own philosophical system while still a young man. He was not concerned about any “suspicion” that his system would arouse.

A second point. Do you think that God chose Joan of Arc, a young woman, to save France? Not at all. First He went down the list but all the men, one after the other, refused the task. As He neared the bottom of his prospects, she was the only one not to refuse. I bet there is a lesson there.

⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Let_George_Do_It%28radio%29

3.3 Esoterism and Christian Mysticism

This essay was originally published by **EA**, or **Julius Evola**, under the title “*Esoterismo e Mistica Cristiana*” from the third volume of *Introduzione alla Magia*. Obviously, Evola was quite interested in the topic since the essay runs to 20 pages and he was quite familiar with the secondary literature.

Note that Evola’s critique is serious and has no similarity with the puerile critiques by some neopagans who pretend to be following his lead. Ultimately, it is unclear what he accomplished, or what he hoped to accomplish. If this critique stands as is, it is a Pyrrhic victory, more like a man sawing off the tree limb he is sitting on than anything constructive. Certainly, there is no “ancient” tradition that can meet the standards he defines here, and of the non-European traditions, there is currently only one that offers a real possibility.

On more than one occasion it was said, in these pages, that Christianity represents a religious system which, if it contains various traditional elements, is nevertheless lacking an esoteric and initiatic counterpart. In comparison with what was typical of ancient, or non-European, traditional principles, this constitutes in a certain way an anomaly and is quite far from corroborating the claim of superiority asserted by the religion that has come to predominate in the West.

As to the traditional elements mentioned, they do not refer so much to Christianity as such, i.e., as the pure evangelical doctrine, but to the corpus of Catholicism, with relation to the symbols, myths, rites, and dogmas by which its orthodoxy is defined. Here more than a few elements also apt to draw from a higher plane and to be catholic in the etymological meaning of the word, that is, universal, assume a merely religious form and validity.

Catholicism lacks an esoterism, because there is no regular elite in its hierarchy, endowed with adequate authority that, in order to be in

possession of the corresponding knowledge, is aware of the deepest metaphysical and meta-religious dimension of those elements.⁷

Regarding the experiential side, the rather complex problem of the importance of everything that in Catholicism is rite and sacrament should be confronted, establishing both the similarity and the difference of the religious plane compared to the initiatic plane. Also at the base of a religious tradition, such as the Catholic tradition, there is a spiritual influence and its transmission in an uninterrupted chain through regular and well defined rites. Such continuity in Catholicism is centered in the so-called apostolic succession. In its principle aspect, the transmission is tied to the ordination of priests and bishops. The other sacraments, the first being baptism, are intended to recover, aggregate, and establish the individual in the traditional current, in the middle of the transformation that by virtue of the principle rites would be held to produce in his nature.

Naturally, this structure is characteristic of not only Catholicism, but is found also in every traditional form, even those not specifically initiatic. Only that in Catholicism the claim is more explicit that the rite has

⁷Related to one of the “intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit”, to the comprehension of the deep meaning of the symbols and sacred scriptures that Thomas Aquinas mentioned. That remains however a simple announcement, no concrete example of an interpretation of the type being found in Thomas nor in the other authors of the Church. In patristics, e.g., in Origen, one finds the distinction of three meanings of scriptures, corporeal (historical), psychic (moral) and pneumatic (spiritual), that last of which is to be discovered through “analogy”, with the use of a “spiritual intelligence”. Here he proposed to transform the sensible Gospel to the spiritual Gospel”, on the basis of the principle that “the Saviour has willed to make symbols of his own spiritual actions”. But in the concrete, for the Old Testament this is reduced to an allegorical interpretation that tends to make it a prefiguration of the New; and in this the last word is always the Christian mystery, where the esoteric interpretation should bring back this mystery—as the particular expression—to a metaphysical, universal, and super-Christian plane. The fact that even these authors touch so many points of Judeo-Christian scriptures containing effectively initiatic elements without even realizing it, proves that it would be difficult for them to recognize the gift of “gnosis”.

the effect of a supernaturalisation and a divinization of human nature⁸, which otherwise, through the effect of original sin, would be corrupted and vain: whence the idea that the Christian represents spiritual man par excellence in respect to whoever is not such, and whose salvation is only in the mystical Body of Christ, which is the same as saying in the Church as community and chain formed by the rite and carried by the corresponding spiritual influence. Objectively, this claim can only serve for “internal use” and is lacking every justification. Every regular tradition can propose it with the equal right as Catholicism, because every tradition is likewise formed on the basis of an influence from above, that transforms the naturalistic element of the individual and gives rise to a new current among the forces of the world. In fact, one cannot then see where the Christian shows himself superior to the members of other traditions and has a spiritual dimension that is nonexistent anywhere else.

We need to emphasize, which often is not done, the fact that in Catholic orthodoxy the rite is conceived with the same characteristics of objectivity, independence from sentiment, from “psychology”, and even from the morality that are typical in the magical and initiatic order. That is evident in the rite of baptism, since its effect would be independent of any intention and merit of the baptized (as is quite clear with newborns); so pure in fact that the sacred quality induced in the regularly ordained priest both acquired once and for all and is not even lost in the case or moral unworthiness and also of unbelief. And the same is valid, in terms of principle, for the other rites and sacraments of Catholicism.⁹

⁸In this regard, the expressions of the liturgy of Holy Saturday with reference to the baptismal waters are characteristic: “Deem it worthy, Holy Spirit, to make fruitful with the secret mixture of your divine virtue, this water prepared for the regeneration of men, conceived by sanctification, may emerge from the immaculate womb of this divine font, a celestial race, a renewed creature.” [This is my adaptation of the translation from the the 1962 Roman Missal, modified to match Evola’s translation, which he apparently took from **Kremmerz**]

⁹Strictly speaking, in Catholic theory, one even goes beyond the sign, as far as the

Nevertheless, even when the conditions are present for the real efficacy of the rite, and this does not live through itself on a plane of mere devout fervor and mysticism, even when, therefore, one admits a certain non-human and sacralizing power of the Catholic rite and sacrament, one cannot confuse the order to that which is typical with the initiatic order, and even less can one think that the former can take the place of the latter. Guenon indicated the difference, in this regard, in the following terms: the religious rite propitiates a participation in the supersensible order maintaining however the individual limit, while the initiatic rite would realize that of a super-individual character; the former would aim for the “salvation” of the soul of the individual, in terms of a prolongation of his individual existence beyond death; the latter would lead instead to true immortality. The most essential difference regards however the presence or the absence of the theistic premise in the concept of the sacred. Everything that is religion, and especially Christian religion, has as limit the idea of a personal God, distinct, as such, from the creature; for it, the idea of a plane in which this distance is abolished by the supreme metaphysical identity is unknown, with which both “liberation” and initiatic “awakening” are defined.

In a complete traditional form, religion and initiation are two domains that do not exclude each other but, though remaining firm in their heterogeneity, admit a passage from where the possibility that has religious value to a higher degree, can also assume an initiatic one. But where, as in Catholicism, that does not occur, religious rites appear in a certain way as a useless and misleading parody of initiatic rites, that sometimes almost seems as profanation, while on the experiential side, the highest peak is represented only by mysticism.

Mysticism is one thing, initiation another, this is a point as essen-

belief in the magical power of the rite. Regarding that, it is the case, for example, for the power of “dissolving” in the rite of absolution, that would certainly suspend the karmic law of cause and effect.

tial as it is generally unknown. The tendency to reduce the most diverse states to mysticism is widespread. There are certainly cases in which the mystic passes beyond the sphere typical of his path leading to transcendent realizations; but that implies a true metanoia and always represents an exception — even prescinding from the fact that similar realizations indicate, in such conditions, almost always a fragmentary and confused character. Besides, in Christianity mysticism is presented in a characteristic form, constituting itself almost as a closed system, where the noted exceptions are extremely rare.¹⁰ Precisely in Catholicism mysticism is presented as the simple continuation of religious and sacramental experience, and the *cognitio Dei experimentalis*, the experiential knowledge of God, that would constitute its essence, in spite of the misunderstanding to which one can be led by some expressions, remains in the domain of subjectivity and affectivity, and has little to do with pure intellectuality, with the effective destruction of human nature and real deification.

Esoteric meaning of silence and homelessness Anyhow, it will not be useless for our readers to delve deeper into this question, considering at various points the meaning of asceticism and Christian mysticism according to an esoteric valuation.

Above all we have to notice, in the history of Christian mysticism, a process of degradation in a certain way. If we refer here to the first centuries of the Church, we find in patristics not a few elements still having a connection with initiatic teachings, and that due to the simple fact that it was formed in the environment in which the influence of the traces of the preceding and co-existing mystery wisdom and neoplatonism was still alive. From Augustine on, and then with the Spanish mystics, there is a rising humanization or psychologization of Christian mysticism, which not even the Thomist stream avoids. The subject of mystical experience

¹⁰After the period of Greek patristics, they are limited almost exclusively to German mystics, starting with Meister Eckhart.

becomes more the soul rather than the spirit, the affective aspect prevails, and moral views take the upper hand over the ontologico-existential.

The fundamental character of Christian mysticism is passivity. According to the Thomist conception “the fundamental element of mystical contemplation consists in a passive movement of love for God, which often depends on a certain feeling of his presence”.¹¹ It “is not the product of our activity but rather it is usually preceded by asceticism and meditation, and is normally received as the reward of one’s own efforts. But it depends on God’s initiative; and our spirit is passive in it, although it reacts vitally under the divine impulse.”¹² This idea of passivity is accentuated with the theory of double grace, one called “sufficient”, tied to normal Christian life, and the other extraordinary, due to the mystical gifts of the Holy Spirit, who would permit them alone a truly supernatural development. The same arising in the soul of the love of God—which takes the place here of the fire of intellectual initiatic asceticism—is conceived as an effect of divine grace.

Some positive aspects of Christian asceticism, as preparation for contemplation, were present especially at its origins. We will note them.¹³

A first guideline of asceticism is isolation and simplification. It, moreover, is justified in terms of analogy, with reference less to Christ than to the Father, and reflects the earlier pre-Christian ideal of “deification”.

“The man, who through the gifts of grace and his continuous esoteric effort will have to arrive at resembling God, must necessarily be an image of the simplicity and unity of God. . . Little by little deification increases, man approaches always closer to the perfect divine simplicity that asks nothing outside of itself, that is sufficoent in itself. It is obvious that a

¹¹Padre F. D. Joret, *La contemplation mystique selon s. Tomas d'Aquin*.

¹²*Ibid*, p. 9

¹³On this topic we refer to two books by Father Anselmo Stoltz, *L'ascesi Cristiana* [AC] and *La Teologia della mistica* [TM], part of the current that is seeking to revalue Greek patristics.

theology that (like the Greek) gives so important a place to the concept of deification and that conceives God first of all according to the aspect of a single, simple being, sufficient in Himself, will have to see the ideal of Christian perfection in man completely free from all passions and tends to God reproducing in him, as far as he can, unity and simplicity” [AS]

Originally, a not different base had the anchorite as the ideal, physical external isolation, in this case having to have, therefore, only a symbolic and ritual value, hence that of a discipline limited to the training period. In a higher degree, the *extra mundum fieri*, the isolation from the world, is no longer necessary to occur materially, but only in the spirit. In that regard, Christian and initiatic asceticism can meet halfway.¹⁴

Ascetic detachment can also assume the form of *instabilitas loci* and *xeniteia*. The detachment from one’s own land and from one’s family or people, eschewing a fixed home, wandering, bringing oneself to foreign and distant lands—all that can likewise have a symbolic or ritual value in order to bring to awareness the idea that one is not in this world as in a definite place and in one’s own country, but rather as a wanderer and an exile, not forgetting one’s celestial origin and end.¹⁵ This meaning, as was noted, was very alive in early Buddhism and, we can mention, with a more special connection to the life of action, was not extraneous to the chivalric ideal in the form of the “knight errant”. One must nevertheless note that in Christianity the premise for the coherent realization of a more general meaning is missing, because Christianity rejects the initiatic theory of the pre-existence of the soul to this terrestrial life, and only with reference to this theory can terrestrial existence signify the passage of one who came from far away and again turns towards other states of being.

Christian asceticism also knows the technique of silence. “That is

¹⁴Cfr. Islam, which has no monastic asceticism, the concept of *zuhd*, which is not actual material renunciation, but inner detachment.

¹⁵AC, 53-60. In such visual persecutions, expulsions, and similar situations, it would be of value as extraordinary means used by God to remind us of what is our true country.

not only a renunciation of communication with other men, but is also a positive factor of the interior life” [AC, 62]. We know, therefore, the part that the discipline of silence had among the Pythagoreans, as well as the meaning of yogic and initiatic silence in general. In Christian asceticism almost all the practice of the more interiorized degree of such discipline is lacking, that is “being silent” not only with the spoken word but likewise with thought (Ibn-Arabi’s “not speaking with oneself”). The so-called “prayer of quiet” is known, where we meet the expression *quies contemplationis* and Saint Gregory, among the conditions for mystical contemplation, touched on freeing oneself from the noise of thought [TM, 112]. A precise and active method, in this regard, which is known in the East, however is missing in Christian asceticism. And in the monastic forms, as the anchoritic ideal is supplanted by the cenobitic ideal, more consistent with the collectivizing tendency of Christianity, as well as the liturgic element, brought to a hypertrophy, predominates over the individual discipline of silence even in contemplative orders, such as the Carthusians, the Carmelites, and the Camaldolese.

In Christianity in the state of, what we call, “silence”, one is more inclined to follow the techniques than to cultivate certain internal dispositions. The so-called “cognition of external things” comes back to that.

“It is actually the knowledge of Satan’s kingdom, in deriving the power that this exercises on the sensible world and in intuiting the true place that material things must have in relation to the divine plane. This knowledge must not remain purely speculative: it is necessary that the soul at the same time express it in practice, i.e., that it frees itself from the disordered affect for the creature, incompatible with the life of union with God”. In such regard there are those who think that such “knowing” must be received from angels, no natural and human science being able to give it to the soul. [AC, 130-3]

Initiatically, “separating the real from the unreal” corresponds to that, that are achieved essentially through lives of pure intellectuality, loosened

from emotional being; the neutralization of “demonic” forces is one of its natural consequences. In the second place, always with the same goal, it is said that the soul of the Christian must know what it is before God, which would be tantamount to “being convinced of his own nothingness”, freeing himself from egoism, redeeming himself from his own will”. Such a discipline undergoes nevertheless the deformation peculiar to the Christian way of understanding “mortification” and the “creaturely” passive attitude. Initiatically, it is about “disidentification” and surpassing oneself as simple individual being, a surpassing, that does not come about through degradation and humility, nor with reference to the image of God as a distinct being, but rather in conceiving one’s own persona as a contingent mask and in itself irrelevant in relation to the true I, almost as in the consciousness of an actor who does not confuse himself with the part that he played. In every way, these are the two principle ways through which, the knowledge of external things of oneself as individual being achieved, Christian asceticism seeks to propitiate the quies contemplationis and to not be more susceptible to inner things, or to passions and frivolous desires.

Sacramental life and initiation If we now consider the grades in Christian asceticism beyond the preparatory levels, those which are realized in it and are actually mystical, the fundamental point, which is almost exclusive of references, is the imitation of Christ on a sacramental base. Here we will omit the purely devotional and emotional forms, which lack any value for us; that they were able to take root in active and volitive races, in general, as are the Western races, remains an enigmatic point. The mystical view that is encountered on a slightly higher plane is the following: Christ has transfigured the human nature he assumed by incarnating himself in the body of the Resurrection and Ascension. And the glorification of the body of Christ must be likewise understood in its deepest sense, in relation to the Redemption as restoration and fulfill-

ment of the life of our body in paradise. Christian asceticism considers moreover the event of Christ as the way to glorification with reference to the restoration of the Adamic state in which the body was completely subject to the soul, and its sensory part to the spirit. And since in the redemptive work of Christ the way toward a renewed harmony between the soul and the body is passed through death, and since we must only follow this way in order to assure for our body victory over the effects of original sin, so Christian asceticism has as its central point the concept of mortification, of dying and being reborn in Christ [TM 182,183].

That was accomplished previously in the sacraments beginning with Baptism. It is believed that redemptive and sanctifying grace shared in man by baptism already contains the seed of supernatural mystical life, because one is baptized in the sign of the death of Jesus and the crucifixion of ancient man. If in baptism, the faithful imitate and follows Christ into death, and in the Eucharist the food and nourishment of new life, they would participate mystically at the sacrifice, in the resurrection and ascension: a real participation already in the mystery of the sacrament, even if it is fulfilled in a veiled, invisible way, not accessible to our experience [AC 71-79].

Therefore, the idea prevails in the orthodox Catholic conception, that there is no essential discontinuity between the sacramental life of the common believer and the mystical life: the latter should not be exceptional, it was already contained germinally in the former. The mystic, instead of leaving the seed of union with God inactive, brings its energy into actuality to the point of realizing this union as experience [TM 44-50]. A more concrete interpretation is the following: ritual (sacramental) participation in the death and resurrection of Christ does not transform the entire man in a single blow. It is first of all the interior man (*eso anthropos*, Rom 7:22) who is to be transformed. Then the ascetic, aided by a special grace, will have to kill little by little the "law of sin" in his limbs and to prepare in that way, according to the new supernatural principle

of life received, a new body, the resurrection of the flesh, physical death ultimately to would divest man from the “body of sin” [TM 39-42]. In terms of dogma, this realization is nevertheless remanded to the time of the “universal judgment”. It is not admitted that one can accomplish that in life.

We now see how one can judge the whole of this doctrine from our point of view. In this area, there is no need to emphasize that the model of death that opens the way to the supernatural order is not specifically Christian; even if it is not essential for every way of spiritual realization (because it is not claimed that this must always entail a crisis), it can have initiatic value. Specific to Catholicism is the idea that it is not an exceptional and dangerous initiatic operation, but the religious rite accessible to everyone that has a power to induce in man a supernatural quality, even if only germinally and potentially, and to produce it in a certain way from the outside, without any participation of the person, even beyond his consciousness, as is evident in the case of infant baptism.

Even if, as was mentioned, one speaks of the further actions of the grace of the Holy Spirit for mystical development, this view contains the principle of a dangerous confusion of planes. If conceived in terms of reality, death, resurrection, and glorification in the sacraments, it cannot be other than symbols and prefigurations, concealing an order that transcends the generic sacralization connected to religious life. And it would be erroneous to suppose that the Christian, having had baptism and participating in the other sacraments of his tradition, finds himself for that reason in any position of advantage through the realizations foretold by an effective initiation. The Alexandrian distinction between the *pistikos* and *pneumatikos*, i.e., between the simple believer and the gnostic or initiate, must be maintained. Only through mystical experience can the idea fit, that is does not necessarily imply a rift, but can be an almost natural development of life which, in the Christian, is supposed to be supernaturalized by the work of the sacraments. Sacramental life, as pure mystical

life, cannot go beyond a psychological, subjective or moral plane, while the initiatic life has an ontological and super-individual character. In regard to the former one can speak, at most, of sanctity, not of deification.

As for formal correspondences, through some details we can point out that baptism is a simple ritual image of contact with the “Waters” of “dissolution” in the life-principle anterior and superior to every individuation or form: experience, that in its radical, exceptional, and even dangerous character cannot obviously have any comparison with whatever is happening—even if invisibly—in Christian baptism.¹⁶ The notion of the “glorified body”, in which the law of death is conquered, comes directly to Christianity from the earlier mystery traditions, losing nevertheless, in the form of the dogmas of the resurrection of the flesh or of purely eschatological perspectives in the afterlife, its concrete and initiatic meaning. The scheme, actually, is already found in the rite of the *transmutatio* [transmutation] of the Eucharist: the bread counts as the body, the wine as blood and soul. The one and the other principle are transformed and when, after that, a piece of the host is united to the wine, the meaning is the joining of the transfigured soul with the body in the manner proper to the resurrection body or immortal body of Christ.

Now it would be the case of speaking truly of superstitions whenever one presumes, in the Eucharistic participation, anything more than a simple allegory, with effects of moral elevation and, if one prefers, of mystical rapture: certainly not that which always is taken as the furthest limit of possible accomplishment on this earth to an adept. In regard to all this, whoever has a notion of what it actually is about, would come to think of it almost a profanation.¹⁷

Aside from the hoped for intervention of grace, in the purview of

¹⁶The Gospels speak of a baptism by fire beyond that of water. This double baptism and double regeneration corresponds to the two phases of initiatic work called albedo and rubedo in Hermetism.

¹⁷Cfr. the article on the “immortal body” in Introduction to Magic.

realization, i.e., of the development and the actualization of the influences induced by the sacraments, there is no precise way recommended to the Christian. The simple subjective dispositions corresponding to the so-called theological virtues, i.e., faith, hope, and love, remain. “Mortification” is conceived in essentially moral terms, with undeserved stress on the value of everything that is suffering and “penance”. Here there is actually an incompatibility with what is typical to a healthy and normal Western type of man: on the basis of the sense of “guilt” and the congenital sinfulness which every man must be conscious of, we know that almost pathological tendencies have often appeared specifically in Christian mysticism. Moreover, prayer, oration, understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit, is conceived as the fundamental power of the mystical life, to the point that ecstasy itself is considered by some as a level of it, the highest level [AC 121].¹⁸

The gifts of the Holy Spirit, the tollhouses after death, early Christianity and mystery cults. According to **Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite**, the fundamental phases of Christian mysticism were the purga-

¹⁸The contemporary writer, **Frithjof Schuon**, who strove to find initiatic prospects in Christianity, believed that the active counterpart of passive participation mediated by the sacraments was (with specific reference to the Eastern Church) the practice of the invocation of the saving name of Christ. This is one of the more primitive techniques for the “killing of the manas”, i.e., for the neutralization of the mental ego, analogous to the continuous repetition of the “divine Name” in Islam. Moreover, the abuse of the liturgy in the Catholic contemplative orders does not have objectively any other end. That, beyond the negative aspect, the “virtue of the name” also enables certain states of illumination, is something problematic. In every way, it is a chance event, and it is necessary to have faith in the protective actions of the sacraments in order to unwrap the possibility of an action of the most diverse extra-sensible influences, once the manas is “killed”. In any case, the mystic has little way of interpreting correctly the phenomena that occur, because it is held on an emotive, rather than intellectual, level, and the Christian devotional framework, with its various images, rather than helping him, serves instead to lead him astray.

tive, illuminative, and the unitive ways, a schema which, in that form, can be also be found in the initiatic path. As a reality, however, things were quite different. Therefore, concerning the first phase, Guenon's comment is absolutely correct, when he points out the confusion due to the use of the terms "union" and "unitive way" by mystics.

This union does not have the same meaning as Yoga or its equivalents, so that there is only a wholly outward similarity. It is not illegitimate to use the same word, because even in current language, one speaks of union between beings in many different cases where there is obviously no degree of identification between them, but it is necessary to take the greatest care not to confuse different things under the pretense that a single word is used to designate them both.¹⁹

Moreover, the frequency of the use of the symbolism of matrimony for the mystical union is significant. It does not mean a unity that maintains the distinction that occurs in uniting a man and a woman, in the same way that the relationship of an "I" and a "Thou" exists in prayer, even in its highest levels. Only by analogy can one speak of a *cognitio Dei experimentalis*—experiential knowledge of God—in Christian mysticism. A condition of "eccentricity" (in the sense of non-centrality) is essential, almost without exception. That, moreover, is indicated by the term "ecstasy" which means "to go out from oneself". Initiatically, it is more about the opposite, i.e., of a coming back into oneself, of making oneself "central", through which someone correctly spoke of enstasy, instead of "ecstasy" for the states of Yoga.

The phase of the illuminative way could induced by putting it in relation with the effects of the gifts of the intellect of the Holy Spirit that are six [sic] in the Thomist conception: namely, to be able to discover

¹⁹Guenon, Rene: Direct contemplation and reflected contemplation, from *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*.

1. the substance behind accidents;
2. the inner meaning behind the words of sacred texts;
3. the truth behind the symbol;
4. the spiritual reality behind the sensible types, i.e., behind the phenomena which appear to common experience, and consequently also the hidden effects of a cause and the hidden cause of specific effects. [Joret, *Op. cit.*, p 274]

Formally, it would be a question of powers of an effectively initiatic character, connected more or less to “intellectual intuition”. But it suffices to read the same examples made by St Thomas in order to see that there is none of that, or rather that it does not go beyond a theoretic framework.

Concerning the purgative way, again with the goal of indicating the reflections of initiatic views, let us reproduce this citation:

Many writers of Christian antiquity affirm that the souls, when leaving this world, must pass through various tollhouses of the demons of the aerial region. They examine the soul to see if they can find something in it that belongs to them ... The soul is not able to continue its voyage until it has been purified from all its dross. At the same time, beyond purification, the soul is also instructed by good angels in every divine science, so that it is capable of understanding the Mysteries of God. This whole process of purification and instruction is repeated until the soul has arrived at perfect purity and the fullness of knowledge. This gradual purification after death generally is no longer admitted by Catholic theologians in all its particulars. It was however practical to the anticipation of our asceticism that is confirmed in the life of prayer, and in such applications, the aforementioned doctrine expresses some absolutely indisputable truth. [AC, 128-129]

Now, in all that, the reflection of the mystery doctrine is quite visible, such as the Mithraic, with the passage through the septenary or planetary hierarchy, which does not have to do with the world of prayer, but with that of initiation, in which, as the same “purifications”, were often distinguished by exactly seven grades.

Other “residues” not lacking interest are the views that, in the ancient Christian writings, were about the restoration of the Adamic state, understood as prior to the goal of Christian regeneration, because in patristics they insist exactly on the continuity on the fact that one must achieve the perfection characteristic of the primordial state, by embarking on the search for the lost terrestrial paradise.

It was the ancient Christian idea, maintained moreover up until the 16th century, that this place, from which our first parents were driven away, still exists, in a higher region, inaccessible to men, unless they are helped by exceptional divine grace, as would have been the case for Elijah, Enoch, and even Saint Paul (II Cor 12:1-5). This inaccessibility was expressed with the symbolism of desolate and impassable places, equivalent to that of the angel on watch with his flaming sword or a fire zone that encircles paradise. That copies the initiatic doctrine of the “center” in its relation with the primordial state: always present from the metaphysical point of view. And the symbolism of passing through the wall of fire is not different from that of baptism of fire, referring in that way also to the theme of Hercules who achieved immortality (he ascends Olympus to marry Hebe, the perennial youth) only after the fire consumed his human nature on Mount Oeta: a theme that refers to still many others of initiatic origin, e.g., that of a virgin enclosed in a circle of fire, who will belong to whoever can pass through it without perishing.

Obviously, in projecting it to an afterlife, the Catholic conception of “purgatory” reflects the most general theme of purification.²⁰ Moreover,

²⁰It is said: Only who is purified through fire can enter paradise. St. Ambrose (In Ps. 118, serm. XX,12)

there is also an allusion to the initiatic idea that paradise and the kingdom of Heaven represent two distinct “places”.²¹

In the ancient Christian view, there was always a mingling with magic, when, once admitted that the Adamic state can be re-achieved through the other levels of mystical contemplation, they indicate the prerogatives of that state. The first is the gift of knowledge, or *gnosis*—through which the fact is recalled that Adam had given the animals “their names”—the name, according to the ancient conception, expressing the very existence of a thing or a being. In relation to that, St. Thomas also writes:

This rectitude of man in his original and divine institution consisted in the fact that the lower part of his being was subjugated to the higher part and this was not obstructed by the other. Therefore the first man did not find in exterior things an obstacle to pure and steady contemplation of intelligible effects, perceived by means of an irradiation of the first truth. [TM, 89]

That, however, is also related to the second gift, which is *apatheia* in the most general sense of being undisturbed in respect to passion, of not being preoccupied by impulses, and of a natural sovereignty over instincts.²²

²¹TM, 25-6. Where this passage from St. Ambrose is cited: ‘Paradise is a permanent region of heaven, but it is, so to speak, the ground floor of the kingdom, the foundation on which the kingdom of heavens properly called is constructed at the summit; it is the lower region of the invisible heaven, from which the elect, each according to his own merits, will ascend sooner or later toward the different higher regions or heavens.’ In Christian terms, the distinction is also expressed by saying that the grace of Christ is superior to the grace of Adam and leads to a perfection that is beyond the ordinary paradisiac state.

²²St Augustine’s (*De civ. Dei*, XIV, 15) view is of interest, according to which at the very point in which the soul separated from the divine world, the body ceased in its turn to be subject to the soul and to obey it, and came under the state of passivity defined by concupiscence.

Cult of Mary and the initiation of the Fedeli d'Amore Moreover, according to patristics, man as microcosm comprises the entire creation, through which the dominating power possessed by man over himself is manifested likewise in the macrocosm: the dominion of man over nature is the prize of the complete victory that man brings back on himself: the hierarchical relationship established between the powers interior to man are transferred into the relationship between man and the world [TM, 84]. It is through such a way that an unlimited power over creation had been promised to the saints, according to the words of Mark 16:17-18.

And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.

It is unnecessary to point out that the premises just noted are the same as in high magic or theurgy: Agrippa and Paracelsus did not express themselves any differently. Finally, as the third prerogative of the adamic state, there is the gift of immortality, *athanasia*, “corporeal immortality being a sign and proof of the interior presence of God”. For that reason, “a restoration of the primordial state would also include the reacquisition of immortality”. [TM 82-4]

At the origins of Christianity, there was, as an echo, the ontological ideal of deification—assimilation to God and participation in his nature—as an effect of the earlier mystery tradition and it still predominated over the morality of faith, love, and the merits that carry essentially their fruits into the afterlife. Therefore, there were still half-closed perspectives of the type that, once the dross has been separated, tends toward a world higher than that of mysticism, and of which the world of mysticism is only a weakened and rather humanized echo.

One final point. We know the part that Mariolatry, i.e., the cult of the Virgin as “Mother of God”, has in Christianity. If this cult, in its most

external aspects and from the historic point of view, gives evidence of the influence that gynocratic views had in Christianity, i.e., the pre-eminence of the feminine divinized principle (Magna Mater, Gaia, etc.), as in the archaic, pre-Indo-European Mediterranean cycle, then only an esoteric assumption of it is possible. A rather unique thing, it is suggested by the same Catholic author, to whom we referred repeatedly, when he says: Mary is “the highest ideal of the ascetic”, because “the ascetic tends to form Christ in the soul, to make it become the Christ bearer and the Mother of Christ” [AC 192].

Although this symbolism, itself attributable to the scope of initiation, at its base contradicts the principle of passivity characteristic of the Christian mystical way and as emphasized by the conception of the indispensability of grace (i.e., of the activity of a force that psychologically is experienced in terms of grace) for every supernaturally efficacious effort. If in Christian symbolism the Virgin is only fecundated—by the Holy Spirit—according to the initiatic symbolism the “virgin birth”, it is, more precisely, the birth that has no need of external help, the endogenesis due to a pure and intact force. Kumari, the Virgin, is the “power of the will”, according to a Hindu text.²³

Another mystical interpretation of the “Mother of Christ” is that which makes her the representation of the Church, the mother of supernatural life. [AC, 193] That is, in relation to the supernaturalizing influence that would be connected to its tradition, to its organization, and its rites.²⁴ Usually, such a point is, however, in connected with the

²³We note the correspondence with the expression used by Dante (Par. XXXIII, 34) for the Virgin: “Queen, who can do whatever you will”.

²⁴As much to the form, or doctrine, as to the organization that is its deposit, the symbolism of Woman was applied in various cases in the initiatic domain. So, in the case of the Medieval chivalric initiation of the “Fedeli d’Amore”, Woman represented both “Sacred Wisdom” and one or the other organizations of that current. The passage at the active movement was often portrayed through the symbolism of marriage, or even of incest (the Woman or the Mother becomes the spouse of the initiate).

exclusivist claim, a characteristic of Catholicism.

Mysticism considered as a development of the experience of the insertion of the individual, effectuated by the sacraments and above all by the Eucharist, into the current of divine life, and the Church, understood as the mystical body of Christ, as the bearer of this current, is the obvious conclusion that there cannot be true mystical life if not in the Church [TM 77]; and that Non-Christian mysticism, being less than union with Christ (which, evidently, is considered along the lines of an historic personality conceived as the Redeemer, not of a superhistoric and universal role model to imitate), is in fact naturalistic, if not the result of demonic influences. In such a way, we end up presuming that in the non-Christian Mysteries, there could not have been any question of true deification, but only of more or less contingent psychic states. [61-71]

The well-known principle *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* [no salvation outside the church] sanctions, in general, the idea that only Christian redemption could result in liberation from diabolic power, expressed as the breaking of the circle of the demonic force that surround us, while helping us to doubt its power, and that making us think that redemption in the sign of Christ and the Church is superfluous, would be the most dangerous victory that Satan can attribute of his activity [66].

We previously said that all that can only have value for Catholic “internal use”; likewise, we noted that these views have an exclusively practical justification, no different from that of exclusively analogous views that are encountered in outer, exoteric forms of most other traditions: but they still lack every foundation beyond the sphere of the jurisdiction of each tradition.

In relation to that, we can pose, as the last issue, the question of the extent in which, for those who have an initiatic vocation, it is useful to adhere to and join a religious tradition—specifically, to Catholicism in the case of a Westerner.

As the conclusion of the preceding examination, it seems clear the

Christianity, as compared to other traditions, has a particular character. In fact, from one side it is not, like ancient Judaism or orthodox Islam, a pure religion of the “Law”, but that inner experience is important to it. On the other hand, it does not know the experiential, esoteric, and initiatic plane, so that its level is inferior to that of traditions where this plane is adequately taken into consideration. This intermediate nature of Christianity can be characterized by defining it exactly as an essentially mystical religion, which has absorbed and adapted some esoteric elements into its mysterico-sacramental form.

Now, a current that is defined in such terms has a predominantly psychic and collective, rather than a spiritual and metaphysical, character. In every way, that seems rather noticeably what Catholic tradition has become in our time, so that it leads us to think of one of the cases of entities, from which, through involution, the influences that are truly from above have in a good measure receded. But since psychic entities of that type conserved their vitality and strength through inertia, uniting itself to it, for those who have an initiatic vocation, it can serve more of a bond than as the basis for higher development. We come back to a “chain”, from which it is difficult to free oneself and whose subtle influences are difficult to control. So through the doctrinal side, there is something characteristic that even those who sincerely live out the Christian faith sacramentally and mystically are the most “taken”, the most fanatic, the most incapable of recognizing and respecting anything which is anterior and superior to their tradition and that has been realized in other equally legitimate forms in the world and in history.

In every respect, in the case of Christianity, it must be judged that the relations between the outer religious way and the metaphysical way are minimal and that one can immerse oneself in the mystical-devotional current to the point of reaching relatively high levels without perceiving anything of the initiatic and metaphysical order. With its character of a closed system in its own way, with elements which represent only a for-

mal, reflected image of the mystery of transformation and of deification, we would almost say “lunar”, Christianity is perhaps, among the traditional forms, the one which is least recommended to those who want to enter the “direct way”.

Posted on 2013-05-19 by Aeneas

* * *

X on 2013-05-19 at 18:53 said:

One of the most valuable articles on this site.

Such Evola is sane, not that one who talks about Nordics and Jews all the time.

Ash on 2013-05-19 at 20:09 said:

As I understand it, Evola is saying that the Traditional teachings can use the Christian and Catholic faith as a language to explain themselves, but that this language has shortcomings (elements of the sacraments, the personal God, etc). Would that be correct? It also makes sense of what he says about those revolting against the modern world: “When we appear to be destroying, we are in fact rearranging and replacing what is on the wane with higher forms, forms more vibrant and glorious.” Might one say, he is seeking a new and better language?

If so, that would be a rather heartening clarification of my understanding of the interrelation between Tradition proper and the faiths in which it manifests itself. The language of the Triune God has of course been used to great benefit in leading people to truth, but to his literal existence I have usually taken the point of view of Buddhism or the Vedanta. I rather hope we'll see Evola touch upon the person of Christ. While the Logos is central to the students of Tradition, the teacher himself as a historical figure has been less discussed in relation to the more esoteric currents within his Church.

Mihai on 2013-05-20 at 03:38 said:

There is much to combat in this article (which I am sure I have one or two years ago integrally). Right now, I do not have the time, but I will limit myself to saying this:

1. The so-called barrier between esoterism and exoterism is never as absolute and strict as it is usually claimed today. The opposite is usually true, since the degree of esoterism and exoterism are usually determined by the capacity of understanding of the one receiving these doctrines. Nor should such a schema be regarded as universally true, since it is not true in Christianity, where esoterism is the upward extension of dogma. (Of course, I speak from the

point of view of human realization- the dogmas are actually the downward extensions of esoteric principles in reality).

2. There is also this procroustean bed of delimiting esoterism and mysticism. This, of course, has its origin in Guenon. However, let it be said that in the Christian East, mysticism has nothing to do with anything of a sentimental and individualistic nature as it is regarded in the West, and, from this point of view, mysticism here is the same as what Evola and Guenon mean by 'esoterism'. There is however, a problem in these authors' conception of what constitutes actual esoterism and what "mere mysticism" or "mere theology". For example, I don't see why a St Dionysius the Areopagite, Maxim the Confessor or Simeon the New Theologian should be all regarded as mere "exoteric theology", while the writings of an al-Ghazzali or ibn-Arabi as pure esoteric teaching. What exactly is the difference between these authors, even when regarding expression ?

It is clear that the fault here is to be found in the too narrow conception of esoterism as having to do with secret rites, completely separated from the exoteric dogma. When discarding this all too procroustean ideas, the truth about Christianity will appear in its true light.

There is one phrase here that is completely unwarranted :

"religious rites appear in a certain way as a useless and misleading parody of initiatic rites, that sometimes almost seems as profanation,"

Even if I were to accept as true Evola's views on Christian esoterism (or the lack of it), I don't see how an incomplete understanding can be a "parody or a profanation". To understand incompletely means to not derive the full efficacy or benefices from a doctrine. A parody is the subversion of a doctrine for nefarious uses.

Evola is so focused on what he calls esoterism and initiation that he goes so far as to think that everything religious is simply useless or of limited appeal and only good enough for the masses.

My question is: when one strives for the highest peaks, doesn't that same one have to, first, climb through the simple roads at the base, before reaching the barren cliffs at the top ?

To strive for a higher realization does not mean to reject what the masses are doing, but to surpass it. If one cannot even do as much as the "mere exoteric" does, how can one legitimately have pretenses to esoterism ?

Graham on 2013-05-20 at 20:57 said:

"the effective destruction of human nature and real deification"

This stood out to me. "Real deification." The Christian theologians I've read, the few who mentioned the possibility of deification or divinization, always take care to clarify and limit, to stipulate in what sense deification is achievable, in a way that the traditionalists don't. I might summarize the difference as 'participation' versus 'identification'. It could be a difference in perspective, theological speculation and metaphysical realization, or (for argument's sake) a limitation in Christian theism itself, as Evola maintains. I don't know. I do see it as a stumbling

block in the Gornahoor project, when the Christian deification is equated with Sankara's "atman is brahman"; it seems facile, but I could be wrong. The recent entry on the Thomistic doctrine of Personality was stimulating.

Now to the other part of that sentence that struck me, "effective destruction of human nature." This is characteristic of Evola's style, and it's what the younger just-post-Nietzschean me found attractive about him, this pungent contempt bordering on hatred for the human. Today it strikes me, distinctly, as heretical, perhaps Nestorian or Apollinarian, and definitely smacking of false Gnosticism. Christ himself has human nature. That Evola would choose to speak of the "destruction" of human nature, instead of its purification through grace, to my mind suggests a malady. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Graham on 2013-05-20 at 21:15 said:

To clarify, I was speaking of heresy in a 'pan-traditional' sense, and attempting to apply the specific heresies mentioned in a metaphysical sense with respect to deification, rather than with respect to the historical person of Christ. So if there's a heresy that holds that Christ had no human nature, but only a divine nature coupled with a human body, this Christology has obvious implications for deification; on the other hand, the Catholic doctrine holding that Christ had both a divine and a perfect human nature suggests a deification which Evola deems somehow insufficient.

August on 2013-05-21 at 00:32 said:

One might object that there can be no heresies in a metaphysical sense, within which domain one is free to exert his will to the extent of his capability, up to 'identification' if one's power allows it. This seems to be the spiritual attitude of the warrior that is often ascribed to Evola.

Specifically, this attitude might smack of heresy because it suggests that God, or Pure Being if you like, is not something entirely fixed and active, and is only a certain 'domain' within which manifold beings aspire to take possession of a great power. This is problematic for those who conceive of Being as culminating in a personal, theistic way.

Mihai on 2013-05-21 at 03:31 said:

"is not something entirely fixed and active, and is only a certain 'domain' within which manifold beings aspire to take possession of a great power. This is problematic for those who conceive of Being as culminating in a personal, theistic way."

This is plainly luciferian non-sense, regardless if we conceive the Absolute as personal or impersonal. Read the Hindu Upanisads- in no way do they suggest that Brahma can be conquered through individualistic will-power and a Promethean attitude.

Come to think about it, not even the gnostic heresies or any kind of heresies for that matter claim this. The only possible exception to this may be some of the most degenerate tantric sects.

On the other hand, I really have come to ask this, since all too many traditionalists take this for granted : why is an impersonal conception of Deity “clearly” superior to the personal one ?

“This is characteristic of Evola’s style, and it’s what the younger just-post-Nietzschean me found attractive about him”

Yes, same here. And it is precisely this reason why Evola is such an excellent bridge between the abyss of nihilism and the plains of Tradition.

August on 2013-05-21 at 06:03 said:

You seem to misunderstand slightly, yet your critical attitude is welcome, so I will try to explain better.

There is no question of conquering Gods, let alone doing so through individual will. Rather, it is about achieving an equivalent existential status, and thereby establishing oneself (one’s Personality) as the center of a whole state of being. What else is meant by complete freedom in the context of initiation? For this to be possible, the principle of Being cannot be equal to Brahma, or the particular God of any tradition, so long as that tradition ascribes any characteristics to God other than pure Being, which is the potentiality of the indefinite possibilities of formal states. Hence, beyond Brahma there is the Supreme Unity, Brahman, because Being is not the Infinite.

As for me, I do not necessarily consider an impersonal conception of the Deity as superior to the personal; the reason I consider them both is because both must have their place. If the impersonal conception were senseless, or impossible, there would be no need to consider it as it would not be true. If it is true, it must be taken into account, and an objection based on preference does not free us from this fact.

Ash on 2013-05-22 at 15:52 said:

Perhaps we should consider the effect having a personal theistic God would have on the formulation of a doctrine of apotheosis. In my mind, it would probably be heretical to say that the human ego is identified with the persons of the trinity or their essence. It would not be to say that the divine element of Being that is the foundation of all states of existence, including human existence, is identifiable with the Godhead. That is, not the person of God but rather the transcendent reality which the personal God puts a face on. A christian would need to differentiate between these meanings, leading to different definitions of words like “identification.”

Cologero on 2018-05-19 at 21:32 said:

There is a way out of the impasse. The first step is to recognize a knowledge path within Catholicism. We are commanded to “know, love, and serve God”, i.e., the three traditional paths

of jnana, bhakti, and karma yoga. Pace Evola, there is a path of divine union, not just the duality he mentions. E.g., St. Catherine of Genoa hints that the Self is God.

Moreover, Gornahoor has followed the suggestion in note [4]. That accounts for the emphasis on the Fathers (via the *Philokalia*) and the stream inaugurated by Eckhart, in particular, Ruysbroeck and Jacob Boehme.

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-26 at 21:16 said:

Catholicism is incompatible with what is "healthy and normal" for the "active and volitive" Western man.....and what is the source for Evola's characterising Western man this way? Nietzsche doesn't count as the man had no transcendent knowledge so why repeat his prejudices?

The dismissal of Schuon strikes me as very superficial. I've spoken to hesychasts and they told me that actively repeating the Jesus prayer does induce a transcendent state, it's not a mantra. And also the hesychasts have methods for recognising false and deceitful visions.

Cologero on 2013-05-26 at 21:56 said:

Well, Jason-Adam, as Guenon pointed out in a letter to Guido de Giorgio, Evola was full of prejudices. That is unfortunate, given his otherwise brilliant insights. Evola, apparently, was not so concerned with intellectual coherence. For example, he referred to the time before the French Revolution as "healthy and normal". Were the medieval knights not healthy and normal? Painting with such broad strokes does not produce any art.

Even if the hesychasts are at a "low level", that is still much higher than anyone else. Evola included, since he was never initiated into anything.

Mihai on 2013-05-27 at 03:21 said:

The problem, it seems to me, is the terminology employed. Since the Eastern Church (as did the One Church in the beginning of Christianity) describes its methods, disciplines and knowledge as mystical, and Evola identifies "mysticism" solely with what came to prevail in the West under this name- that is individualist and spontaneous achievements of an admittedly sentimental and subjective nature- he comes to the conclusion that the Jesus prayer must be nothing more above this sentimental and subjective experience.

He clearly had no direct insight into the mystical teachings that have been kept here until the modern times, he probably had no adequate knowledge of the *Philokalia*- and this is proven by the fact that he doesn't once cite a given Church Father, but only modern authors talking about the Fathers, so his conclusions in this area are terribly superficial.

Mysticism means here something that resembles his definition of esoterism- and I say resembles, because even his definition of esoterism is somewhat strained and certainly only

includes a portion, not the whole of what used to be 'named esoteric' knowledge throughout history.

Mihai on 2013-05-27 at 03:27 said:

"Even if the hesychasts are at a "low level", that is still much higher than anyone else."

True, and I would even go further to say that even doing nothing but the 'external' discipline of going to church and receiving the Sacraments is still better than doing nothing but stand in front of the computer screen and complaining on 'traditional' forums of how the West, because of Christianity, has lost all contact with esoteric knowledge- much like the pseudo-traditionalists of our days are doing (not surprisingly, many being affiliated to the new-right).

Logres on 2013-05-27 at 13:51 said:

"The Alexandrian distinction between the pistikos and pneumatikos, i.e., between the simple believer and the gnostic or initiate, must be maintained."

Certainly agree with this; lately, reading Ousepensky's *The Fourth Way*, and certainly (for myself, and perhaps other believers) would agree that there is a danger in Christianity today of assuming that one "knows" when nothing of the kind has happened, when the individual has merely transferred illusions to another plane. If there is a danger of giving in to a "higher" illusion, that danger can be obviated by efforts not to succumb to further illusions. The danger, inherent if any, could come merely from institutionalizing those tendencies to illusion in the forms and sacraments, which certainly goes on, but can still be obviated by the individual, if they are being guided in that Tradition by a higher spiritual impulse. There are many resources, within the Faith, to aid in that possibility. I don't think blaming Catholicism or Christianity in toto, as Evola dances about the possibility of doing, flirting with it, so to speak, serves a constructive purpose in and of itself.

Logres on 2013-05-27 at 13:54 said:

F. Seraphim of Sarov, for example, is spoken of in the Eastern Church, as actually having transcended monasticism, and gone back into the world. Isn't there more than a "trace", here, of recognizing that the journey doesn't end in mystical absorption into God?

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-27 at 17:01 said:

Evola strikes me sometimes as getting close to schizophrenic – I mean here's this guy who's an admirer of De Maistre, Cortes, De Poncins, who says the pre-1789 world is the healthy one, yet then he's also into Dadaism, Beatniks, Crowley, is anyone seeing a split mind ?

Mihai on 2013-05-28 at 03:23 said:

Not really, but, admittedly, he does have problems identifying genuine spiritual knowledge from counterfeits. For example, he cherry-picks some interesting bits from Crowley found here and there in his doctrine, but he doesn't see the big picture in all of this: namely that Crowley was, in the end, just another occultist whose system is no more than pseudo-spiritual syncretism with certainly lots of material that strikes me as of sinister origin.

(By the way, when I enter the facebook account for Gornahoor, I see a Crowley picture at the top: I believe it harms the mission that Gornahoor has set for itself and attracts all sorts of unwanted individuals).

In his first volume of the Introduction to magic, there is some material written by antroposophists, which (the material) is certainly filled with occultist concepts.

I think Evola was one of those individuals who feared getting past and leaving behind certain initial steps (such as Nietzsche) of fear of contradicting himself.

scardanelli on 2013-05-28 at 12:53 said:

Well said. Your response, I think, sums up the entirety of Evola's problematic relationship with Christianity. It seems that both he and Guenon largely ignored the Orthodox church, and i've often wondered why this is.

There seems to be competing ideas of Orthodoxy as Eastern Orthodoxy, meaning a cultural phenomenon, and Orthodoxy, meaning the true, historical, ancient form of Christianity. Perhaps the former conception made it possible for them to overlook Orthodoxy. The more I learn, however, the more I tend towards the latter, though I do feel a certain sense of loyalty to Catholicism.

August on 2013-05-28 at 16:49 said:

Evola considered the world to have suffered a schizoid event, namely the consolidation of modernity as negation of existing traditions without inauguration of a new one. He did not consider this to be a mere cultural change, but a 'concrete' event of cyclical transition that affected the world and man on many planes; not absolutely, but deeply enough that only 'esoteric' penetration offered a real escape, whilst even religions had been more or less tainted. Much of this, of course, derived from Guenon, and summarized by Nietzsche as the 'death of God'.

Evola thought that the gravity of the change was such that new, modern man could no longer be accommodated by the structures of yesteryear, hence his intrepidity in exploring late modern expressions of this novel atmosphere and its resultant existential turmoil, whilst recognising the fundamental health and normality of the prior traditional forms and the absolute principles they protected.

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-28 at 17:38 said:

August your explanation of Evola's thought is very good and I agree with your analysis.

Do you think it is possible though for someone to make himself a man of a prior age ?

August on 2013-05-29 at 03:13 said:

Hi Jason-Adam, here is my comment, feel free to explain your question further if my interpretation is off.

A movement toward his primordial center may be undertaken by a man, along which path he may certainly recover the memory of what it was to belong to a prior age, particularly the essential part, and those ages that are to him directly ancestral.

Yet, this is not the same as making himself that prior man, for his point of departure is inevitably the modern form, that very manhood that could not but emerge after the cosmic shift described above; at least some part of this modernity, even if only the memory, will likely remain a part of his soul.

In any case, the recovery of primordality is an internal movement, and while its effects may be reflected on the outer man, the individual as such remains what he is within the world in which he manifested.

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-29 at 14:16 said:

I can only speak for myself but within me I have always felt that I do belong in this world and I want to live as far apart from it as I can; the more I come into contact with the degeneracy that is modern life I get very angry and want to destroy it all. That is why, before I became aware of Tradition, I was attracted to punk – the pure hardcore nihilist punk to be exact – but since becoming aware of Mediaeval civilisation I do feel an instinctive attraction to it, I feel as if I belong in the Middle Ages. When I first read old works of chivalry, I immediately desired to become a knight, a desire that has not left me at all. That's why I feel alienated from most Traditionalists equally as I do from moderns because they do not share my values and beliefs, which are those of the crusaders. I do feel at home around SSPX circles but those people tend to be of a more intellectual bent whereas I want to take those beliefs and fight for them. Can I be the last Christian warrior ?

Jason-Adam on 2013-05-31 at 13:54 said:

Evola seems to be engaging in nit picking over words – what he should be doing is actually trying out both yoga and Christian mysticism to experience for himself the differences and similarities.

The part about the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to St Thomas is the clincher of this piece – Evola admits that theoretically St Thomas is speaking about initiation. We can ignore the judgements he makes afterwards but aside from a personal prejudice I see no reason why one can not use Aquinas as a pathway to realisation.

Another issue is Evola is so opposed to any notion of a God apart from the Self, but that is a belief not only to Christians but also to Muslims. Evola's self-focus seems to me to be based on modern teachings. It sounds similar to Crowley.

Mihai on 2013-06-01 at 15:50 said:

"for the simple (though disturbing to religious exclusivists) reason that a part of him quite clearly saw beyond the specific theology and form of God in Christianity."

Actually, in regards to Christianity, Evola never saw beyond anything, because, like I mentioned in the comments to a previous article, he was totally unaware of the most profound doctrines of Christian mysticism, as preserved in the East. At best, he considered some of their points here and there, but he considered them as somewhat "copied" from other more ancient mystery traditions, as if Christianity were no more than some fragmentary bits collected from here and there and artificially put together.

In other words, his view of Christianity was quite profane, and the fact that he only cites for references some book of a modern scholar, and never some actual material of Patristic writings, proves that he merely wanted to be done with the thing as quickly as possible, since it never constituted any interest to him.

Regarding some other parts of your post, it is really a good time to put into question an issue which many people take for granted (serious seekers, not only pseudo-esoterists): namely that an impersonal Absolute is somehow superior to the Personal. This is really a mere arbitrary postulate without any serious support, since "impersonal" is a negation of the person, making it something less, not something more.

Anyway, both these conception of the Absolute, and Evola's understanding of "genuine" initiation is an attempt to fit all spirituality into the procroustean bed of what represents the view of just some spiritual "schools", mainly the Vedanta.

The same point can be made, in some measure, about Guenon as well.

Mihai on 2013-06-02 at 16:20 said:

There is here something clearly contrary to any genuine esoterism, and contradictory to what they have, otherwise, tried to point out: namely that Truth is ineffable.

Guenon wrote somewhere that logical relationships are inseparable from ontological ones. Which means that abstract logic can in some measure point us the way as long as we are on the plane of Being. Beyond-Being points to something which is beyond all ontology and, as such, and with which no logical methodology is co-extensive. You can guess from this how coherent Guenon is on this score.

As such the rationalistic schema above is completely null and void because it tries to fit the Infinite into the limited conceptions of human understanding. It seems to me that, to the traditionalists, Truth must adhere to some verbally constructed schema. Also, I sometimes really

ask myself: since it is so easy to talk about the Absolute in logical terms and since the human mind alone can reach and understand in such simplistic concepts the ultimate realities, I really am not sure what we have symbols, myths and mystical methods for.

This, of course, has nothing to do with genuine apophatism, nor esoterism or higher wisdom, but is only the result of modern prejudice which always feels the need for a radical simplification, in order that the individual may feel comfortable and secure, with a formulation that the mind by itself is able to grasp.

In the Christian East apophatism is taken to a whole new, dynamic level. In complete adherence to the ineffability of God, the Patristic writings do not attempt to resolve the supreme Mystery of God on the plane of human reason and logic. In keeping true to the apophatic spirit and to genuine esoterism, or mysticism, the only claims they make of God are antinomial, mutually exclusive formulations: God is Three and One, the Three are equal, yet the Father is supreme etc. It is here a Mystery which transcends all notions of human coherence and before which the human mind finds itself on slippery ground, completely impotent before the Ineffable- and this is the kind of experience which human weakness detests, hence the tendency of simplistic rationalizing.

If we look at the history of different heresies regarding the Trinity, we can see at their origin the same tendency- the attempt to reduce the real Mystery to the simplistic conceptions of human logic.

The same goes to the Christian idea concerning Divine Personality, which should be understood not as a limitation, but its very opposite.

(By the way, Guenon's claims that the Absolute manifests because it is a possibility, so it simply must manifest. I really wonder what "kind" of Infinite we are talking about here, when manifestation simply bursts forth from it mechanically, without it having any control and certainly without any intelligence involved. Such a notion of the Absolute is even inferior to what we humans are capable of).

Besides this, I see in this insistence on impersonalism and the optionality of "adherence" to the personal, Self-revealed God, which is somehow inferior compared to some verbally constructed abstraction, not the slightest trace of any perennial wisdom but actually another manifestation of modern prejudice, where human personality is dissolved into the atomism of an impersonal and mechanistic universe and where the individual has the satisfaction of holding on to this individuality all the while claiming that he is above all paths and doctrines, because he sees "beyond" such "petty human concerns" and therefore succeeds in getting rid of the danger of actually having to face his own ego and let go of it through real submission to spiritual discipline.

As far as I am concerned, all this is only an excuse to do nothing and take no spiritual path seriously while pronouncing "infallible" judgements on whether this or that author is esoteric or not, or if Christianity, a religion for the masses, actually deserves even the slightest glance

from such “elitists” as themselves. (And in this whole paragraph I have been referring not to the traditionalists as such, but to their pedantic followers who are plaguing the internet these days).

Like I said, I have profited and still profit immensely from the writings of Guenon “and friends”, but I do not slavishly follow them on every issue. When Guenon says one thing and a most reputed Father says something different, there can be no question regarding my allegiance- and this because I really take Guenon’s work seriously.

Graham on 2013-06-02 at 23:55 said:

Hopefully I will have more time to engage this essay soon. The first thing I find noteworthy is that Evola’s evaluation of Catholicism here is more favourable, and far more nuanced, than that of some of his contemporary followers. Evola evidently deems Christianity rich in esoteric symbolism, connected at its origins with genuine initiation into the greater mysteries, and calls it a traditional form (if with qualification). This is all very far from any ‘strong Nietzschean’ readings of his works.

Otherwise, I still think it’s possible that Evola suffered a certain spiritual pride that affected his notion of deification, entwining it with a wicked fantasy of the ‘destruction of human nature’ (and didn’t Mircea Eliade remark the same thing?). Self-evidently, then, anything that smacked faintly of ‘sentimentalism’ or ‘mere humanity’ – such as the theological virtues, the devotions of certain mystics and saints, or perhaps the Johannine symbolism of God as Love – was taken by him as proof of spiritual inferiority. While fully accepting the superiority of intellect to feeling, might this contempt not be the projection of a man, preoccupied with erasing his humanity, onto a type that instead sought its purification and integration – devotion, sentiment and all?

Matt on 2013-06-03 at 17:48 said:

I’ve always considered Evola’s statements on the destruction of human nature to be read in the Shaivite sense; human nature/human state isn’t “destroyed” but transcended.

Now deep down Evola might not have meant that, but at least from reading his writings, that seems to be what he meant.

3.4 **Christian Gnosis: Jacob Boehme**

I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known; therefore I created the creation in order that I might be known.

Hadith Qudsi

Origen, Dionysius the Areopagite, **Jacob Boehme**, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Vladimir Solovyov and Nicolas Berdyaev, for example, show in their works a progress which is very advanced in *substantially* bringing together intelligence and the intuition of faith.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Jacob Boehme has to be termed the greatest of Christian gnostics. The word gnosis I employ here not in the sense of the heresies of the first centuries of Christianity, but in the sense of knowledge basic to revelation and dealing not with concepts, but with symbols and myths; contemplative knowledge, and not discursive knowledge. This is also a religious philosophy or theosophy.

NIKOLAI BERDYAEV, *Studies Concerning Jacob Boehme*

In *Christian Gnosis*, **Wolfgang Smith** reveals himself as a follower of **Franz von Baader** in the stream of Christian theosophy. That is why he concludes his work with the ideas of **Paracelsus**, **Jacob Boehme**, and **Meister Eckhart**. Smith interprets the latter figure as the sources of a distinctively Christian Trinitarian nondualism, not inferior to the nondualism of the Vedanta. This post will deal with Smith's chapter on Jacob Boehme, and the final one with Meister Eckhart's Trinitarian nondualism.

Jacob Boehme is the model of the esoterist for the coming Age: He was a layman — a cobbler by trade, just like my grandfather — was married and raised a family. Yet behind that quite ordinary looking exterior, he was undergoing a profound spiritual transformation. He tried to live an obscure life; his first book was distributed just to his friends. Toward the end of his life, he was finally able to dedicate his time solely to his spiritual writings, thanks to some wealthy patrons.

Excursus on Gnosis Berdyaev describes the foundation of Boehme's gnosis in the following paragraph:

We ought to be re-united with the traditions of the theosophy and anthroposophy of J. Boehme, in truth with a Christian theosophy and anthroposophy. And moreover, even more deeply ought we to be re-united with the traditions of the esoteric, hidden Christianity. But the fruition of the great traditions of Boehme and of Christian gnosticism ought to be creative, it ought to guide along the path of a completely new, creatively-active knowledge. Modern people, seeking God and the Divine life, are very afraid of thought and knowledge, and the basic thrust of their will often becomes anti-gnostic. They admit the possibility only of a passive, abstract knowledge. They cannot accept knowledge as a creative act, bearing life into the light of the world, of knowledge as being and life.

NIKOLAI BERDYAEV, *Theosophy and Anthroposophy in Russia*

The fundamental notion is that gnosis is creative. Discursive knowledge, on the other hand, is passive and abstract, i.e., it is something to be absorbed as is. Gnosis is the knowledge of the heart. It is creative in the sense that the knower needs to raise his level of being, and that is a creative process. In other words, he needs to be the artist of his own life, his own soul; only in that way can he hope to achieve gnosis.

The next notion is that Boehme has both a cosmology and an anthropology. They are intimately related as the macrocosm to the microcosm. By knowing himself, man knows the macrocosm, and by knowing the macrocosm he knows himself. This was more fully developed by Boehme's follower Johann Gichtel²⁵, who showed that the planets are related to the inner states or chakras.

²⁵<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=8618>

Of course, this assumes a traditional cosmology that involves the following degrees of existence:

- Mineral or physical
- Plants
- Animals
- Intellect
- Celestial or Angelic
- Divine

Those states of being also exist within man, even if most people live their lives at the levels of plant and animal life, with excursions into the truly human state or perhaps higher states. As a matter of fact, it is considered a marker of high intelligence and good education to believe that only the mineral or physical state of being actually exists. Thus, all interior life is believed to be the result of electro-chemical processes. For them, I have selected this theme song²⁶.

The following sections briefly summarize Boehme's system in order to understand Smith's interest. As we pointed out, this should not be read as passive, abstract and discursive knowledge to be passively received. Instead, make the effort to re-experience Boehme's vision in your own consciousness.

The Ungrund or Abyss Boehme has his own particular interpretation of Traditional metaphysics. In common with them, he starts with

²⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkSfdGNuD0c>

the unmanifest source or all, describes the Law of Three that makes manifestation possible, and then the Law of Seven indicating the stages of that manifestation.

The Ungrund desires to reveal himself through manifestation. The universe is the outcome and development of One Grand Thought. All things are governed by one central law and all planes of existence are related. This is the Law of Correspondences.

The Abyss contains within itself everything and nothing, i.e., everything potentially but nothing manifestly. Within the Abyss is an eternal uncreated Will (Byss). It desires to become manifest, to be something.

The Will fashions a Mirror which reflects all things, making them manifest. The Mirror is Eternal Wisdom, Eternal Idea, Virgin Sophia, and the Infinite Mother, while the Will is the Infinite Father. Like the Tao, Boehme describes this relationship:

Abyss \Rightarrow Duality \Rightarrow Trinity.

The Father-Mother begets a Son; these energies are diffused by the Holy Spirit. Through the union of the Will and Wisdom, the unmanifest becomes manifest, the latent becomes active.

In Guenon's system, the Ungrund is Nonbeing, and Being is its first principle. Boehme claims, moreover, that the Ungrund is God as he is in himself. The Ungrund makes the Ground, i.e., Being, which is the Father. This is similar to the Palamite understanding assuming that the Ungrund is the unknowable essence of God, and the Father is the energies, or the Act of Being as in Thomist metaphysics. The Logos concentrates those energies, which are diffused through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the generation of all things takes place and the unmanifest becomes manifest.

Obviously, this should not be understood temporally, since it is all prior to time itself.

The Ternary In *Symbolism of the Cross*, **Rene Guenon** describes the three gunas, which are "essential, constitutive and primordial qualities or

attributes of beings envisaged in their different states of manifestation”. Boehme likewise recognizes those qualities. There are two which he calls Fire and Light. These contrasting principles exist in all things. The third manifests in our external nature. This can be summarized as:

- Fire, Wrath, Law, Dark Principle, latent and unmanifest (nonbeing)
- Light, Mercy, Love
- Manifestation or Being

The Dark Principle is unmanifest, since it would be understood as the wrathful or vengeful aspect of God. Nevertheless, Man has free will, so he can will the dark principle. A contrast is necessary for conscious awareness. This is not a problem provided it is transmuted by the Light or Love Principle. Otherwise, man is in the “false imagination”, resulting in a misunderstanding of God and the World.

In other Traditions, these principles are called

- Brahma the Creator/Shiva the Destroyer,
- Ormuzd/Ahriman,
- God/Devil

Vishnu, then, is the Preserver, balancing the two principles. This requires knowledge and wisdom gained through experience. This reconciles Law and Love. By following Truth, man transmutes evil into good, otherwise he becomes a slave to evil.

The Polarity occurs on every plane of manifestation. It is reflected as

- Positive/negative

- Active/passive
- Masculine/feminine
- Action/reaction

This Polarity — or Sex — is the law of all manifestation, the creative power of the universe. That is the cosmic order and any deviation from it is disordered.

The Septenary Boehme says there are seven properties or forces through which the Divine energy operates. Each quality has its own essence, forming together one harmonious whole. They permeate all manifest things. Although Boehme talks about them as if sequential, they operate simultaneously, outside of time. These are the seven qualities, followed by their names:

- **Contraction:** The desire drawing all towards itself (*Desire*)
- **Friction:** expansive force creating a dual action and differentiation. Desire going into multiplicity (*Motion*)
- **Sensibility:** rotary motion of 1 and 2. The wheel of life. (*Sensation*)
- **Lightning or Fire:** The Spirit diffuses a mild light, transforms the dark principle, ending strife
- **Love or Light:** love binds, builds up and harmonizes the principles of joy
- **Audibility:** intelligible or vital sound. The manifestation of Life. (*Intelligence*)

- **Essential Wisdom:** gathers the previous six into one harmonious whole

Contraction, Friction, and Sensibility form the “Dark Principle”. Contraction is the desire drawing things to itself; it is harsh, cold, and sharp. It is a kind of magnetic attraction, congealing Nothing into Something. Friction is expansive, thus causing differentiation. It is desire becoming multiplicity. Sensibility is the wheel of life brought about by the action and reaction of Contraction and Friction. This wheel is experienced as wandering and anguish, which amasses itself into an Essence. In other words, the first principle is Attraction, then Repulsion, resulting in Circulation.

The Lightning Flash is the eruption of the Spirit, who transforms the Dark principle by the suffusion of Light. This ends the Strife of Attraction and Repulsion. This is the beginning of Consciousness and Life.

Love then builds up and harmonizes the principles, bring joy and perfection. Audibility brings intelligence. Finally, Wisdom brings harmony and bliss.

This process is the “Great Work”, the *Magnum Opus*, that must be performed in each of us in order to reclaim our original nature and “the great transmutation which Christ Jesus accomplished in His Own Person.”

The Created Universe The Uncreated Heaven is perfect and complete and is part of God. However, the Created Universe is outside and apart from God. Therefore, it needs to develop from incompleteness to completeness. This does not exhaust God, who is Infinite, but rather enriches him.

God produces from his own eternal nature and wisdom, in which all things exist as possibilities of manifestation. Created things manifest successively in time. Creation is in Equilibrium, the harmony of the active forces (Light) and passive forces (Dark).

Creation unfolds through endless circles. Outside the circle of the Uncreated heaven, there is the created heaven or angelic world. There are three hierarchies headed by Michael, Lucifer, and Uriel (corresponding to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit).

Fall of Lucifer Although the Dark Principle is passive and unmanifest in God, and never becomes active, the possibility of evil arises in free beings. Free beings can choose to be centered in the natural egoic Self. This is to remain at the level of Contraction. Or else they can be centered in the Light Center, the expansive power of Love. Evil and disorder enter the world when creatures become centered in that lower self. Once selfish desire is kindled, it just becomes stronger. Instead of letting the Divine Light reconcile opposing forces, they get stimulated resulting in anguish. Life becomes struggle and anxiety.

Evil first entered the Cosmos when Lucifer, the head of our universe, became self-centered thereby rejecting the divine order. Lucifer's fall was the result of pride and the pursuit of knowledge apart from God. He rejected the feeling of humility in the face of the Divine mysteries. Curiosity and the desire for novelty became dominant. Thus evil, Hell, and the Dark Principle entered the world.

Our personal task, therefore, is to reconcile the extremes of the forces of Darkness and Light. As the Hermetists taught, that is necessary for the recovery of the *Prima Materia*²⁷, the element of immortality. Then it can be molded by the Will for creative purposes, without painful toil, "transforming work into play".

This must begin with self-knowledge in order to recognize the Luciferian temptations in our own souls. This should be easy to do, since Lucifer is the Prince of this World.

²⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prima_materia

Adam's Fall Earth was situated spiritually within the sphere of Lucifer. Lucifer split the world into Darkness and Light, separating God's Wrath from God's Love, making Equilibrium difficult. The world became dense and gross.

As we pointed out above, man is not just a "rational animal", but rather a composite being containing elements of all things. Thus he has facilities to know things on all planes, including the physical, astral, physical, and divine things.

The human race was ethereal, so Adam was a luminous being permeated by a celestial essence. His mind was innocent, no knowledge of evil, without avarice, pride, envy, or anger. Adam's body was not dense, since the inner life was the master of the body. Adam's inner life was in touch with Heaven; he could communicate with God, the angels, and nature. His being was tripartite, in harmony with each other:

- **Spirit:** light principle
- **Soul:** dark principle
- **Body:** in the world of sense formed through the union of the light and dark principles

Nevertheless, virtue requires the possibility of vice and the experience of temptation. So Adam was tempted by Lucifer, decentering his attention onto the world. He was tempted to experience the pairs of opposites, thus disturbing his previous state of Equilibrium. This was the Fall into duality: the experience of each side of light and dark in isolation.

Hence, our task to reconcile these opposing principles. Unlike Lucifer's Fall, Adam did not really wish to oppose God, but merely to experience earthly pleasures. Therein lies the clue to the way back.

Adam and Eve Originally, Adam was a dual unity, including Eve. Boehme describes Adam-Eve like this:

Adam was a man and also a woman, and yet neither of them distinct, but a virgin full of chastity, modesty, and purity, namely the image of God.

When Adam's attention was enticed by the world, Eve (the feminine part of his nature) prompted him to separate. Noting that the animals were male and female, he/they were overcome with desire to copulate like mammals²⁸.

Adam's deep sleep refers to his forgetfulness of the angelic world; he then awoke in the external world, separated from Eve. He lost the unitive consciousness in dualistic thinking. They ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, becoming subject to death, decay, and corruption. Now part of the sidereal universe (i.e., under the stars), they lost awareness of anything higher.

Because of Lucifer and Adam, even nature has become gross. In the world there is a mixture or alternation of the two principles of the Dark and the Light. There are storms and beautiful weather; poisonous plants and delicious fruit; savage beasts and noble animals. Curse, decay, corruption, and death struggle with blessing, health, and life.

Man has sunk to the animal plane of existence, tending towards the bestial. His inner disposition is like the animals. Man must extirpate these instincts to become wholly human, and restore the image of God. Adam should have restored creation to order, following the fall of Lucifer. Unfortunately, he is unable to bring the opposing forces into Equilibrium. Christ, the second Adam, re-establishes man in his primal dignity as Lord of Creation.

²⁸<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xat1GVnl8-k>

Atonement and Redemption Jesus was a Divine Human Being with the essence of both God and Mary; he combined the highest part of the masculine (forcefulness) with the best attributes of the feminine character (tenderness). Christ is the Son of Virgin Mary, but also of the Heavenly Virgin who united herself with Mary.

Whereas Adam fixed his imagination on the lower world, Jesus fixed his imagination wholly upon the Father subjecting the lower principle to the higher, re-establishing equilibrium. The resurrection body is paradisiacal body, which eventually disappeared (ascended to Heaven). Heaven is not a distinct place, but interpenetrates the physical universe. This is hidden from normal sight.

Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is required for Equilibrium. This requires an inward transformation, not just an historical faith in Jesus. Man must forsake the principles of Darkness and the world (lust and appetites). The Light principle was lost through Adam but regained with Christ. Prayer is the means to soar above the center of nature. Will and desire become one. It is necessary to be in harmony with the Divine Will, and then conscious union and knowledge of God.

On earth, the soul is already either in heaven or hell. So it does not “go” anywhere after death, yet the soul is fixed at the moment of death and cannot be changed. However, souls in a half-regenerate condition can ultimately reach heaven after a period of purgation.

Creation was the act of the Father, the Incarnation was the act of the Son, Holy Spirit will bring about the end of the world. This will bring about nondual awareness. This is reminiscent of Joachim of Fiore.

Nondualism Wolfgang Smith, then, interprets Boehme’s theosophy in a nondual way. Christ is the Incarnate God who reveals himself. This happens on several levels:

- On the plane of eternal nature as the summation of the septenary cycle

- On the plane of human history as Jesus of Nazareth
- God becomes incarnate in all who are born in Christ

The first is creative and the second is redemptive, i.e., the restoration of a state which had been lost. Man and cosmos are in flux, a “kind of samsara”, which will have its fulfilment in the Kingdom of God.

Smith concludes this chapter with three questions:

- Does Boehme’s doctrine differ from the Kabbalah?
- Is it Trinitarian?
- Is it Nondualist?

The answer to the first question is a qualified Yes, with some adjustments. But what is more interesting is the idea of a Trinitarian Nondualism, which Smith will develop more fully in the final two chapters on Meister Eckhart. Specifically, Deliverance is not a matter of just knowing the transcendent Father, but of knowing both the Father and the Christ. This is one act of knowing, not two, and is incarnational as well as transcendent. The Mystical Union is the Supreme Identity or, as Boehme describes it:

What is void of will is one with the Ungrund ... which is God himself.

Postscript on Personal Development I’ve avoided discussing what is most discussed: e.g., the life and sanctity of Boehme, his siddhis, the sources of his doctrines, or whether they are heterodox. Ultimately, they need to be comprehended, if at all, internally, in one’s conscious life.

This is clearly difficult because of the falls of Lucifer and Adam. We have lost our birthright gift of understanding transcendence due to our attachment to the glamor of the world process. These are some exercises in conscious awareness that you can try at home.

- Lucifer exchanged an intellect centered on God to one centered on the world. Cunning, guile, idle curiosity, and the like, replaced genuine creativity. See *The Intellectual Center*²⁹ for the distinction between the higher and lower functions of the intellect.
- Adam rejected a vision of wholeness for dualist knowledge and attachment to the natural world. He entered a world of Strife instead of one of Love, all the while assuming he can somehow remain on the “pleasant” side of duality.
- In that state, it is assumed that only the physical world exists and all problems have a scientific or material solution. The very idea of a quest for higher consciousness is rejected.
- By his attachment to sexual reproduction and its ersatz simulations, he finds it difficult to refocus attention upwards. The same sexual energy could be used to achieve the original wholeness, or alchemical marriage, or even like Dante and Beatrice, to achieve the mystical union.

These aspects of consciousness need to be experienced personally. Unless there is an awareness of being in a fallen state, then the very idea of redemption makes no sense.

Note: The main source used for Boehme’s teachings is *Five Christian Principals* by Rene Cossey.

Posted on 2016-10-06 by Cologero

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²⁹<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/intellectual-center>

Barnabas Fiacabrili on 2016-10-07 at 02:06 said:

Astounding. I personally want to thank you for showing me the truth of Christinaity. Years ago I left the church in favor of vendata. I know now, thanks to this website and all the great intellectuals I have read since, how inseparable they are. By grace, direct experience and knowledge will solidify this.

Thank you and God bless!

Victimarius on 2016-10-07 at 07:49 said:

Excellent article. I would also like to thank you for it. Illuminating.

Mark Citadel on 2016-10-14 at 05:03 said:

Astounding stuff, definitely has enhanced by knowledge of gnosis. Just unfortunate so many people associate it with the early century heresy. The section on the Fall of Lucifer in particular cleared up a few issues I was having with the Ahriman comparisons.

I really must get around to picking up your book!

Matt on 2016-11-16 at 18:32 said:

Wolfgang Smith had a correspondence with Fr. Malachi Martin, a well-known Catholic priest in the West. Their correspondence covered topics on Tradition and its relation with the Church. These written correspondences were just recently released by Smith. A key focus was on Jacob Boehme. Martin appears to share Smith's high esteem of Boehme, as well as appreciating Hermeticism (Martin describes Hermetic teaching as pre-Christ Christology).

Below is a link to the first bit of their written correspondence where they discuss Boehme's teaching on Lucifer's fall. What I thought was most noteworthy is Smith and Martin's agreement that Boehme's insight on this topic renders an interesting interpretation of the creation account in Genesis. Smith has drawn out the implications of this in a number of his writings and lectures, which have been touched upon in the previous Gornahoor posts in this series. Gornahoor readers and Cologero may find it interesting.

<http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/book-promotions/in-quest-of-catholicity/book-extracts.pdf>

PM on 2017-04-04 at 04:13 said:

I have read the first book from Boehme two times and the second one one time, and am about to re-read the second one, then read the third and fourth ones.

3.5 Christian Gnosis: Meister Eckhart

Carl Jung regarded **Meister Eckhart** and **Dante** as two of the Ten Pillars of the Bridge of the Spirit³⁰.

Faust is the most recent pillar in that bridge of the spirit which spans the morass of world history, beginning with the Gilgamesh epic, the *I Ching*, the *Upanishads*, the *Tao-Te-Ching*, the fragments of **Heraclitus**, and continuing in the *Gospel of St. John*, the letters of **St. Paul**, in **Meister Eckhart** and in **Dante**...

CARL JUNG

The Traditional author, **Ananda Coomaraswamy** (AKC), in *Vedanta and the Western Tradition*³¹ exclaimed:

Eckhart, with the possible exception of **Dante**, can be regarded from an Indian point of view as the greatest of all Europeans.

Valentin Tomberg included Meister Eckhart among those who arrived at the point of contemplation using Thomism as their starting point. In the Letter on the Sun, we read:

Meister Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, or, lastly, St. John of the Cross are spirits amongst whom you will search in vain for a spirit of opposition to scholasticism. For them also it was true that scholasticism was “like straw”, but they knew from their own experience that this straw proved to be an excellent combustible. They certainly surpassed scholasticism, but they did so by attaining its aim. For the aim of scholastic endeavor is contemplation, and it is mysticism which is the fruit of the scholastic tree.

³⁰<http://jungiancenter.org/wp/ten-pillars-bridge-spirit/>

³¹<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=556>

The starting point of scholasticism are the two sources of knowledge: Reason and Revelation. While Reason strives to understand the nature of the world, it can only penetrate part of the way to knowledge of the Divine Essence. For the latter knowledge requires Revelation. However, deep contemplation seeks to penetrate into an intuitive grasp of the Divine. According to Tomberg, this task is also the Hermetic task, viz., to unite intelligence and the intuition of faith.

Among those who are “very advanced in substantially” uniting them, there is **Nicholas Berdyaev**. Berdyaev, in *The Divine & the Human*, asserts that the opposition of the divine and the human will be overcome in the Holy Spirit. Without going into all the details at this time, he claims that the era of the Spirit was anticipated by Meister Eckhart, then by his successors **Johannes Tauler**, **Jacob Boehme**, and **Angelus Silesius**.

Wolfgang Smith, in *Christian Gnosis*, takes up the same themes: the union of the divine and the human, as well as the role of the Holy Spirit. Through an analysis of Eckhart’s mystical vision, Smith describes a Trinitarian non-dualism. There are two phases: the Trinity and the birth of the Logos in the soul.

Trinity Eckhart develops ideas from **Dionysius** and **Augustine** in his understanding of the Trinity. Augustine regarded the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as analogous to “Being, knowing, and loving or willing.” **Vladimir Solovyov** thought highly of Augustine’s explanation of the Trinity from the *Confessions*. Augustine related the Trinity of Plotinus to the Christian understanding as shown in this chart:

Plotinus	Augustine	Trinity
The One	Being	Father
Idea-world	Knowing	Son
Psyche	Willing (or loving)	Holy Spirit

Augustine derived this understanding from the phenomenology of

his own spiritual life. Solovyov shows how these three acts are identical to each other.

1. I am the One who Knows and Wills
2. I know (or am conscious of) my Being as well as my Willing. I know that I am (being) and that I will.
3. I will myself as one who is and who knows.

Each of these acts of the Spirit is completed by the other two, so that they constitute a unity.

The Father is Being, even beyond being, the One, the unknowable essence of the Godhead, or Thearchy as Dionysius called it. The Father is beyond sense experience and intellect so that the self-emptying of apophatic theology is ultimately the only path to approach God.

He knows himself in the Son, the articulated word. The Son, as the Logos, conveys the intelligibility of the Father. The Father knows himself as reflected in the Son, and the Son knows the Father. The Holy Spirit is the unifying love.

This is the way to know God. Eckhart makes this clear:

if you would know God, you must not merely be like the Son,
you must be the Son yourself.

It is not enough to be “Christ-like”; rather we must be transformed. When we put on the mind of Christ, we become the Son, so that God is reflected in the soul. The Holy Spirit unites the divine and the human.

The Birth of the Word in the Soul There is difficulty for the hylic personality to attain to spiritual vision, since sensual imagery is his primary mode of knowing. Eckhart writes:

Some people want to look upon God with their eyes, as they look upon a cow, and want to love God as they love a cow.

So Jesus is the Son incarnated in the flesh. Nevertheless, for the Holy Spirit to come, he must go:

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. (John 16:7)

The point is clear. In Jesus Christ, the human and divine were united in a visible way. For us, however, the Spirit must come in order to overcome that division that separates us from the divine in our own consciousness. Eckhart warns us about the neglect of the Spirit. Although Christ ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the father, that avails us nothing.

What would it avail me if I had a brother who was a rich man, and for my part I were a poor man? What would it avail me if I had a brother who was a wise man, and I were a fool?

He continues:

The Heavenly Father brings forth his only-begotten Son in Himself and in me.

The birth of the Logos in the soul³² is the whole point of **Letter II: The High Priestess** in *Meditations on the Tarot*. The Son is by generation, but the Son who lives in us, makes us children of God by adoption. This is what the Meditations calls Initiation. Eckhart goes even further, bringing out the consequences on his non-dual understanding. In Sermon 6, we read:

³²<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/the-word-is-made-flesh>

The Father begets his Son like himself in eternity. “The Word was with God and God was the Word.” It was the same in the same nature. I will say more: he has begotten him in my soul. Not only is it with him and he with it alike, but he is in it. The Father begets his Son in the soul in the same way as he begets him in eternity, and not otherwise.

The sacrifice of the Eucharist is not a repetition nor a re-enactment, but is the same sacrifice as Calvary. This is something that happens in eternity, not in time. Similarly – and this is what Eckhart is driving at – the birth of the Logos in the soul is not a different “logos” but is the same Logos that is with the Father eternally. That is how it looks from the standpoint of eternity.

It is the birth of the Logos in the soul that brings knowledge of the Father, otherwise it would be impossible. That is the non-dualism. This second birth overcomes the duality of wills. Sermon 12 states:

A person who is so established in the will of God wants nothing else but what is God and what is God’s will.

The Father knows himself in the Son, and the Son knows the Father. When “I” am united with the Son, we can understand Eckhart:

The eye in which I see God is the same eye in which God sees me.
My eye and God’s eye are one eye and one seeing, one knowing,
and one loving.

And in Sermon 6:

In the innermost spring I went forth in the Holy Spirit. There is one life and one being and one activity there.

Posted on 2017-10-29 by Cologero

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james on 2017-10-30 at 10:27 said:

Thanks for another great post

William on 2020-06-12 at 06:46 said:

Thank you again for this post. It has been fruitful several times. May I ask however to which edition of Eckhart are you referring to? Is it the Complete Mystical Works edited and translated by Maurice O'C. Walshe?

Cologero on 2020-06-17 at 07:32 said:

Check the book *Christian Gnosis* for the sources for the translations quoted.

Christian Doctrine

4.1 Justification and Postmortem States

Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

In the *Paradisio* of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, that great mystical work, the coming of the soul into the Presence of the Divine Light is a gradual process. One cannot come into the Divine fullness all at once; it is too intense to be perceived. Preparation is needed. It has to be a slow process of knowing, a seeing of more and more, a progressive revelation to the soul of God's ineffable Light. The soul then comes to a point where she sees everything in a flash, but the distance to this point, not in spatial terms but spiritual, is great. In this understanding, Dante is following his own experience.

WAYNE TEASDALE, *Essays in Mysticism*

The Lord Jesus Christ ... will judge the living and the dead

2 Tim 4:1

Man must recognize his complicity in the act of evil.

CARL JUNG, *The Red Book*

Die before you Die The Initiate is one who strives to become a *jivan-mukta*, someone liberated while still in the body. Or in other words, the goal is the Beatific Vision while still in the body. That requires the three-fold Christian path of purgation, illumination, and union. The Saint and the Initiate therefore die to this life in order to experience a spiritual birth.

Christianity is the not religion of Jesus, but rather the religion of Christ. The modernists prefer to focus entirely on the “historical Jesus”, the end result of which is the religion of this-worldly humanitarianism. But Jesus is the first coming of the Logos. St. Augustine’s realization that this Logos was tied also to Platonism led to his conversion. The exoteric teaching is that there will be future comings of Christ.

However, the second coming is not just an event in linear time, but in eternity. Hence, the second coming of Christ is the birth of the Logos in the soul. When the soul is still and purified, the Logos is born as the rebirth of the soul.

John Ruysbroeck, among others, also writes about the third coming of Christ, this time as Judge. The point is not to condemn, but rather to offer healing through forgiveness.

General Judgment The General Judgment, or Last Judgment, occurs at the end of the world. At that point, all humanity will be judged. Everyone will be made aware of each other’s judgments. Moreover, the effects of one’s acts and omissions have consequences beyond the span of the

individual life, usually for many generations. For example, a man who beat his son in the 15th century may have set off a chain of events that persist into current times. For the purposes of this note, nothing more needs be said about this now.

Justification and Self-Justification Justification is to make just. This is more than the mere “imputation” of justification as taught by the Reformation. That false belief gained credence during a period of the loss of spiritual vision, which led to nominalism. So “imputed justification” is justification in name only. What the Christ brings is real justification, that is, a change in consciousness initiating the purgative stage of the spiritual path.

Such as we are, the human condition is committed to self-justification. This leaves one mired in subjectivity, and hence it is ineffective as a means of justification. E.g., a man commits adultery, but tells his wife, “But it didn’t *mean* anything.” Or else, he blames a “moment of weakness”, or ignorance of the facts of the situation. We blame the circumstances of our birth, bad genes, an addictive habit. These and various other excuses for self-justification seem limitless, although we seldom accept them from anyone else. True judgment is to see oneself objectively. Without facing the truth, it is impossible to change and healing can’t occur.

After spiritual rebirth, i.e., the birth of the Logos in the soul, one puts on the “mind of Christ”. This means our identity is recentered on a higher level. Christ will then reveal our true motives and we will view our lives objectively. We will understand how our acts and omissions have affected other people and events. The unrepentant will resist that, but the repentant will welcome it.

A physician will tell you the precise state of your health, not to condemn you, but rather to cure you. He might suggest a change in diet, an exercise regimen, surgery, or a medication. It is obvious that deceiving you about the state of your health will not be of benefit. Nevertheless, it

is up to the patient to follow the doctor's orders.

The situation is similar for sin, which is objectively harmful to the soul. Christ is the physician of the soul. When unaware, or dimly aware, of the true motivations of our actions, these motivations are experienced as compulsions. And "commandments" are experienced as unwelcome external checks on our unfulfilled desires. But the light of the Logos in the soul illuminates one's actions. It is the means to self-observation which turns compulsions into free acts.

The Esoteric Path To understand the esoteric path from Hell to Heaven, we turn to the initiates. Esoteric teachings are usually buried in other structures, both to preserve them as well as to protect them from those who don't understand. Obviously, the great exoteric Traditions contain an esoteric element. The exoteric rites, symbols, etc. conceal — or reveal — a deeper content. They also can provide cover for small groups to peacefully pursue their own yearnings (although there have been many exceptions.)

On a more practical level, other devices have been used. For example, the Tarot cards have a hermetic interpretation. But they would most likely been lost if confined solely to small groups. Hence, their popular use as a means of soothsaying has preserved them over the centuries. Obviously, most people would prefer to be told their future through card layouts than to actually *create* their own future.

Poetry may also be used for the same purpose. Dante belong to the *Fedeli d'Amore*, an esoteric group which required each of its members to write a poem. A great poem, like the *Divine Comedy*, has been preserved and studied over several centuries, although few will use it as a guide on the esoteric path. On this point we differ from the "scholars", who only see an allegory in the poem. This is unjustified, since Dante himself has given himself away. The allegorical is merely the second level of interpretation (above the literal). Ultimately, the fourth level is the anagogical or

spiritual interpretation. The scholars want to understand it as an allegory describing the soul after death. Obviously, Dante could not have truly intended that. What is being described are the states of the soul in this life.

Heaven and Hell The Orthodox have maintained a deep tradition of the experience of Heaven and Hell:

According to the saints, the “fire” that will consume sinners at the coming of the Kingdom of God is the same “fire” that will shine with splendor in the saints. It is the “fire” of God’s love; the “fire” of God Himself who is Love. “For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12.29) who “dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim 6.16). For those who love God and who love all creation in Him, the “consuming fire” of God will be radiant bliss and unspeakable delight. For those who do not love God, and who do not love at all, this same “consuming fire” will be the cause of their “weeping” and their “gnashing of teeth.”

*Heaven and Hell*¹.

Thus Heaven and Hell are understood as opposed responses to the Divine Light of Christ as Judge. The saved will experience the Light as glory, but it will be painful for the damned. So in a sense Hell is “empty”. God does not “send” people to Hell, rather it is their choice, that is, it corresponds to their particular state of being in a precise way.

The Initiate experiences Christ as the eternal Judge eternally, not as some abstract future event. Dante, in the *Inferno*, describes the experience of Hell in all its various manifestations. The sins that lead to Hell are based on malice, since there is never any intention to reform. Such men

¹<https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/spirituality/the-kingdom-of-heaven/heaven-and-hell>

and women would repeat their acts over and over again. Hence, Hell is a repetition, Nietzsche's "Eternal Return", in which the same punishment is repeated ad infinitum. That state is called the eternity of Hell.

Therefore, there is nothing unjust about it. If someone has no interest in God during life, why would that change after death? If the response is that, after death, the soul knows. Unfortunately, that "knowing" — the "seeing the light" — is experienced as painful, not as joy. As described in Nietzsche's Eternal Return, the sinner repeats the sin over and over, with no intention to repent.

Purgatory Why purgatory? Purgatory is not proved by recourse to ancient writings, official documents, or cherry-picked Bible passages. Instead we rely on the testimony of initiates. As per Dante, there is a slow process of revelation up the Mountain of Purgatory. If, in this life, we see through a "glass darkly", the sudden infusion of the Divine Light typically requires a period of discomfort while getting accustomed to the Light. This is the stage of illumination: perhaps there are rare exceptions, but the passage from purgation to union requires this stage. Even the Orthodox have come to the same realization: the doctrine of the tollhouses² serves the same purposes.

The sinner in Hell is devoid of Love, so his primary motive is malice. He is malicious for its own sake, and the concomitant false pleasure then keeps him in bondage. The soul in Purgatory is motivated by Love, although it is deficient, disordered, or excessive. These are sins of weakness, concupiscence and ignorance. The sinner in purgatory has pursued love through an evil means, or his love pursues a disordered end, or else the love for a good when moderate, but bad when excessive.

These sins can be rectified: the deficient can see the unintended harmful effects of their choices, the weak can grow stronger, the ignorant can

²<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6343>

learn from their mistakes. Thus Dante's *Purgatorio* describes how the sins in Purgatory can be overcome.

The pain and suffering of purgatory is not experienced in a negative way. It is more like the way an athlete experiences pain during his training, or an ascetic during his self-discipline. Unlike the pains of Hell, the pain of purgatory serve a purpose. They lead to deliverance, while the pains of Hell lead nowhere.

Consider:

- Accept responsibility for one's actions and their consequences
- Eschew self-justification
- See yourself as others see you. (See, for example, Schumacher's Four Fields of Knowledge³)
- Recognize the consequences of your acts, including those unintended
- Engage in self-observation to develop awareness of all your motivations

Posted on 2017-10-18 by Cologero

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Ann K on 2017-10-21 at 11:17 said:

Thank you! A brilliant overview and very helpful to me, a catechumen in the Orthodox Church.

jonathansolvie on 2017-11-16 at 09:35 said:

Thank you for this excellent article, sir. What could be a more needful matter for reflection? Why are we not taught this in school? People are no longer taking the day of judgement seriously,

³<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=507>

believing it to be some fairytale, never having been exposed to anything but the outermost exoteric surface of these teachings.

“The General Judgment, or Last Judgment, occurs at the end of the world. At that point, all humanity will be judged. Everyone will be made aware of each other’s judgments.”

I want to believe this myself, but I lack certainty regarding it. How does it work metaphysically? A mere apprentice of the Mysteries as I am, such a summary of the religious dogma, the what, doesn’t contribute much to a deeper understanding of the why and how – though I do accept Revelation.

I find it straight forward to accept that there is a General Judgment at the end of the present human world (which I, in accord with Guénon, presume is relatively close at hand, considering its rapidly worsening state: it is a matter of centuries rather than of millennia now; but a more specific estimation than that must be withheld). I was going to say: a General Judgment (from now on G.J.) for the majority of those individual souls who have found themselves in the human state after the Fall into time is not hard to accept. What I have some difficulty with is the idea that ALL who have lived would be included in this G.J. at the end of the world. What of those exceptional men—great sages, adepts, yogins—who supposedly, according to their traditions, surpassed human paradise itself and were, so to speak, ‘extinguished’ in God, or in any case, are no longer tied up with the destiny of this particular human world? Can we expect to meet Shakyamuni or Shankara during the G.J.? Church dogma would say yes, but is it not a generalized simplification to say so, according to a deeper esoteric perspective? Can it be unofficially and informally admitted that there are exceptions to the general rule of the G.J.? (I am not asking this because I expect to avoid it for my part.)

In short: to whom does the G.J. apply and to whom may it possibly not apply? Would it be wrong to say that it applies to souls who remain within the gravitational field’ of the human state, in one of its extensions’, without having attained the resurrection-body exceptionally early, as typified in the Biblical tradition by Enoch, Elijah and the like, but no doubt having occurred more times than what is recorded in that tradition, as exemplified by the rare Daoist adept whose body is said to disappear from the tomb, etc. And how does the possibility affirmed in the East of transmigration’ to non-human states, accepted by Guénon and Schuon as possible in spite of their adoption of Sufi Islam, fit into this?

I understand that the General Judgment is a mystery that we must probably await grasping in its fullness until we get to experience it when the Hour strikes, but these questions still interest me.

Max on 2017-11-26 at 17:42 said:

We do not take judgement seriously when we refuse to approach it inwardly as an objective experience at every moment. All the emotional frustrations repeatedly encountered in the world should make us halt and reflect on the situation, but instead we often double down on the

same errors as if sheer velocity could release us from the downward pull of the earth's field of gravity. The sense of dull repetition trapping many is a clue that the state of things is not right. Faced with the spleen of modernity there comes a temptation to pursue ways of numbing and forgetting instead of letting it act as a catalyst for rising to higher being. The same mental energy provoked through frustrations can be turned around for good uses.

4.2 On Job and Suffering

There never was, and never will be a place on earth free from sorrows. The only sorrow-less place possible is in the heart, when the Lord is present there.

ST NIKON OF OPTINA

I. Introduction

Job in the Bible is a powerful text. It can be seen in many lights, and render different interpretation. Most of the medieval commentators of the book have seen Job as the enduring ideal; he lost everything, yet in the end, he still sides with God. Through those readings, we can also understand other insights that lead to different questions about God, sorrow and suffering.



First we must understand that Job challenge God. If we think that Job is passive toward God, then we lose perspective and understanding of his plea. This challenge is formulated toward what happens to him; but also what happens everywhere.

The question of Job is therefore not "Why me?", but rather "Why us God?". He speaks to Him as a fallen Adam, representing the whole

of human race that demands answer on suffering: why is it that God let the world be "imperfect" and why doesn't he act upon it? Is He not all-powerful? The theodicy therefore becomes a question of cosmodicy.

As a side note, the focus should not be put between Satan and God, but rather between human and humans, and in the end, between God and Adam. Satan here is to be taken as an older form of the character, and represent an accusation toward Job (the word Satan can be interpreted as "the accusator"). It is not about a cosmic battle between God and Satan, as this would be futile in the conclusion of God answer to Job (more on it later). The focus is on God himself: it is theocentric. In the same vein, if there is some difference and contradiction with other books of the Bible such as Genesis, we must not see them as being unrelated: the author of Job wrote with Genesis in mind, and he gave us a complementary observation that leads to questions and insights on the world. Also, I will by no means elucidate the book for ever and ever. Hermeneutics and the understanding of God cannot be depleted in formal texts and words like this. Also, Job is a book rich in meanings that demands also subjective understanding.

In Latin, the word for suffering is linked deeply with the action of bearing, or sustaining. That suffering is associated with evil. In French this is even easier to understand "*J'ai mal*", literally translated as "I have evil" (which means "*I have pain*"). In the case of Job, this suffering is "unjustified", and is not a moral suffering, neither a "natural" suffering; nor is it just physical or psychic : he also suffers because God doesn't answer him. He has in himself pure suffering, on every level of his being. The question in Job is not only around suffering, but much more about language, and how we can speak of/about God.

Also we must keep in mind that Job faith is disinterested. He doesn't ask for more riches, for resurrection, for anything but God Himself. It is also stated that he is a stranger, a non-Israelite, yet he still believes. It is a free faith.

II. On Job

The “friends” of Job answer to him using different approach to evil and suffering. Some uses collective retribution, individual retribution, immanent justice, radical indignity of man, divine pedagogy, etc. Most of them sound like purely exoteric, often even liberalist or modern by standard. Job himself doesn’t revolt so much against suffering in the dialogue, but rather against the speech of his friends; they are speaking lies. Job refuses a theology that is not anchored in experience and into which truth is grafted. Truth must be appropriated.

Of course, the character of Job is a rebel, but a “just rebel” in the sense that he doesn’t see fit to negate God, neither diminish Him: he wants to speak to Him, to understand. To Job, there is no “interested faith” in resurrection or supra-terrestrial retribution: he prays to God in gratuity and disinterest; therefore Satan lost his bet.

The answer of God seems to cause problem to most readers; but in truth, this answer is all that was needed. God tell Job that he was right to revolt; because he continued to believe. Job asked for God to see him, and He did. He accuses the “friends” of Job of speaking ill: their “ethics” are a source of immorality because morality cannot think theologically suffering, less so think God. God refuses to let Himself be caged in the logicity of morality and retribution. In doing so, God sets himself free of an anthropocentric soteriology. God recognize existence of “evil suffering” (that is, suffering without logical explanation that derives from chaos and non-being) that can be fought against (see the teachings on Behemoth and Leviathan). God shows Job his temporal finitude, his spatial finitude and his ignorance. God shows that His will and Goodness is not for human only, but for the whole of Creation (Job 38, 26 compare GN 5, 10; there is no necessity in God’s Love). God, by showing His gratuitous creative Will and Love, takes the fight directly beyond anthropocentric views. And that is the whole of God answer to suffering even if he does not answer it “directly”: suffering and evil will always be difficult to “bear”,

to “support” (latin “*suffere*”) if one center his view on Man as man. But if he does it as Creation (Adam) on God, everything changes. Humanity is not the center of God, He is the center of All; therefore, Job, as man, is not the measure of things. Man is a stranger in a strange land, God rejoice of Himself and Creation without him: Job cannot judge creation from an anthropocentric perspective (that is, a finite and non-static point of view). Only God can be the Final Judge. He asks Job to go beyond anthropocentric existentialism. Job finally understand his finite nature on earth, and by this dialogue with God, retake his dignity of Adam the Fallen that wants to be reunited with Him.

Man is not the centre. God does not exist for the sake of man.
Man does not exist for his own sake.

C.S. LEWIS

On Behemoth and Leviathan: God makes us remember that where it is chaotic, it needs not be Chaos. In other words, nature and animals as they are represent a form of chaos (see ancient kings hunting animals through their kingdom to make it safer, more “orderly”). Yet this chaos is not to man’s command, it is only to God. Evil is fought upon, but never totally destroyed; if chaos was to be destroyed, evil with it, there would be no more liberty, no more free will. The very existence of evil and chaos gives man the choice between them both, and ultimately to transcend them both to regain access to God directly. Liberty exists in the cosmos so that we can use free-will to (Love) rejoice in God. On the other hand, if there would be only Chaos, then nothing could be. Everything would be pure materiality without form. In other words, God do fight evil: he constrains it and rule over it so that there is a balance that permits us to love and serve Him. He is therefore the first of those who fight Evil and Chaos. And we, as Adam, must share this fight in the ordering of the cosmos, the society, the family, the body and most importantly, our

mind and being. We participate in the order of God by being orderly and constraining chaos within ourselves.

In the same line of thought, we will say thus : it is absurd to condemn the world of its imperfections while admitting the existence of the same world, and ask ourselves why injustice and suffering exist, because if one says “exist”, one says “to be separated from God”, therefore, from Perfection; who says “effect”, says “distance from the Cause”, in such that Existence implies inherently imperfection. A sorrowful separation, for exemple, already exist in the distinction of the pure spatiality of the body; then it is illogical to admit the spatial distinction while being astonished by a moral separation. The roots of all evil, we repeat, is the ontological distance between the world and God, that which cannot not exist, God being infinite; this distance echoes throughout all of Existence.

SCHUON, *Les stations de la sagesse*

III. Conclusion

As such, Job represents the perfect believer: he serves without having seen or received, and serves with a disinterested will. Even after speaking with God, there is no mention of seeing directly God or his energies; rather he saw Creation under a new eye. The truth of Creation is the truth of foundation (Temple of Jerusalem) and the truth of Christ. God is present through his creation like he is through His Temple or His Son. God is the angular stone of the Cosmos. God gives Himself to see everywhere: it is up to us to see it. Therefore the world is not a dark illusion, but a grand theophony in which God reveal Himself in Himself by Himself. In being totally transcendent, yet present in the immanence, there is a rejection of dualism and pantheism (non-dualism). God reveal Himself in a sacramental character (as Christ reveal Himself in the Eucharist)

through creation; there is an earthly symbolism in the cosmos that allude to supra-terrestrial symbols. What are symbols therefore? Unification of the Divine and the Human. God and Adam. Therefore Creation is, as Philo, Eckhart, St Bernard and St Thomas Aquinas said, an open book for us to understand and behold the Creator.

There is some arguments against God, for God, through God: but never without God. Job is there to remember us that we can live and think everything through God; in other words, we need not to stop believing or desire knowing God because of contingent acts (like suffering). There is no possible atheism; the problem is not with God, but with Man. There is no need to condemn man for suffering, nor is there reason to stop believing in God. In light of this, we could give back the title of All-Powerful to God, only we have to see this in another way: God is Powerful in the Aristotelian sense of power, that is, He is not in act while in power. Why? Because he does indeed act upon evil, but not in an "all" way, or He would destroy free-will with evil (Genesis 18:23-33).

World is therefore the Grail of God. He pours Himself into it. We can try to represent this constant revelation and order (see above) through art: art as the formal revelation of this truth. Therefore Man is to be understood as a divine animal who reintroduce the Absolute in the Relative, that participate in Him.

Knowing all this, we can understand better sin. Sin is not an objective concept, or it would relate to the Absolute. It is purely subjective, because it doesn't exist in God. When we sin, we fail to reach God. When we are washed of sin in Christ, we are washed of subjectivity and participate in the absolute Godhead. Sin is the separation from the unity of God as death is the separation from the body.

We thank Jean-Jacques Lavoie for insights on this powerful text.

Posted on 2013-10-06 by David

4.3 Benedictines and Lectio Divina

I. Introduction : the Voice of God

When we speak of the Bible, we speak of the Christ-Logos as the recapitulation of the Word of God as it fills the universe as a sign of God's will, inscribed in the order of all things. It is therefore necessary to meditate on what was passed on to us by the Scriptures and the Tradition, both in the Guenonian sense of the word, but also as the Christian Tradition who wrote the Second Testament of God. In prayer and meditation we speak to God; in the Scriptures it is He who speaks to us. It is in this dialogue that we can understand the perfect Silence of His presence. We have to liberate the senses, to look out for Unity, the source of the Being in a relation of the Other; we have to get to the Self by fixing ourselves on God. The Word of God is a Word of Life and Truth (Mt 13, 19). In Hebrew the word speaking is "dabar" which also signify "revealing things", to "shed light" on them, to "act in a profound manner upon them"; to speak is to act. Just as in Genesis, God speak, and things are. In the truest sense of language, the speech does what it says, and says what it does. The Ancients, like Philo, believed that Scripture and Nature were interconnected: to understand one is to understand the other, and to understand one you have to look at the other. In reading the Bible, we open ourselves to that understanding of the universal. The universal gives way to the particular, just as the Celestial Jerusalem can be traced (and will descend from the sky) on Earth. Of course, the existence of the earthly Jerusalem is to attain the Celestial One, to come out of the secret of things.

In this brief text, I will look specifically at one way of understanding the text, Lectio Divina, and how (and why) it is applied by a specific order of Christian monks, the Benedictine.

2. Main: Learning the Scriptures. Rule of St Benedict

Silence The first rule of the monk is Silence. This silence is well defined as their motto is *Silence yourself and listen*, as can be seen around their monasteries. Outward silence may come to mind first, but as you go through their monastery, you will see that it is not so. They use Gregorian chant and other ancient music for their offices; they work and need to speak to properly do it. They even take some times to chat between themselves. But the silence that is true to them is the inner silence. In prayer, in walking, in Oratio (i.e. mental prayer, see below), etc. they all fix themselves on God and respect the Silence. The first word of the rules of St Benedict is “Listen...”. The lower silence (exterior) is always linked with the higher silence (inner one).

Obedience, stability and conversion Their three vows are the three vows of monasticism in general. Obedience to the superior as obedience to God. They respect authority as it is a direct hierarchical representation of the divine hierarchy (see St Denys) in the heavens. For them, the Abbot acts as Christ within the community. There is a strong sense of self-disinterest in this form of obedience, as they try to get rid of their self-will to attain the Will of God. The other vow is stability, linked with the practical establishment of a sense of enduring fidelity to one own monastery; but also it is a stability that is within God, an inner stability (linked with silence). Lastly conversion for them is the path of converting part of themselves through purification to a higher spiritual connection with God through Christ; through Him in imitation and in consciousness.

Inner life Their inner life is developed through the shedding of the false self, the human will and the vice within themselves. They work through prayer, offices, chants, rosary, labor and Lectio Divina. I will expend on those last two later on. As Cassien puts it, the asceticism is the

center of the monk's life to purify his heart. It is done through humility and prayer. There must be a desire for what he calls the "Real Science". The goal is to be in complete control and concentration at each moment and purify the thoughts at each moment. And that is done through the Scriptures, or through the praying of the Scriptures (for the Fathers, it was necessary to know the Bible in one owns memory, so that with time we speak through it, with it; so that with time, our interior teachers would be Moses, Abraham, St Peter, etc. in everyday life).

Ora Est Labora (Work is Prayer)

Ora Prayer is the center of the monk's life. They gather to pray, and they return in their individual cell to pray. They pray when they work, and they work as they pray. Praying is working, and working is praying. They develop humility and virtues through incessant praying, and they sanctify their lives through this purification. Their whole life – their whole Being – becomes a prayer offered to God. They participate in the Cosmic law by imitating Christ (good works, faith and spiritual development – "Luke 5:16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed", the lonely place of the Being, the Soul) and try to sanctify Creation. They participate in the Absolute within the Relative so that the Relative may become again Absolute; they pursue the way of Christ.

Labora They work because they want to be part of the World as they sanctify it, not so much as to enter the world. Of course, as they want to be stable and self-sufficient, there is a macro-micro relation present in their work: on a smaller scale they have to work to satisfy the necessity of living; yet in the upper levels of understanding, they also do it to sanctify their work that others de-sanctify in the modern world.

Ora Et Labora (Prayer and Work) Therefore, work and prayer are linked and interconnected. They represent the goal of the monk to go beyond dualism. By praying (contemplation) and working (action), they combine them both and make them look lower than the actual goal of both of them: attaining God. It is their way of explaining the non-dualistic perspective of the contemplative.

We could also point out to an old Christian text:

A wandering mind is made stable by reading, vigil and prayer.

Flaming lust is extinguished by hunger, labor and solitude.

Stirrings of anger are calmed by psalmody, magnanimity and mercifulness.

Mary And that contemplation is expounded also in their devotion to Mary (as is within the Church in general). Mary is the perfect contemplative. When the Angel came to see her, she listened. Having listened to the Word of God, she shed out her own self (her will) and said “yes” to the Life that is God; so that His work may be done through her (Luke 1:38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled”). There is also the symbolism of the chivalric love with Mary as the Divine Sophia: Love (Divine Love – also note that to really Love, one as to abandon himself in the Other that is loved; that is, we have to abandon ourselves in God) as a way of knowledge. St Bernard wrote on this extensively for those who want to learn about it.

Lectio Divina

Introduction When reading and praying, the only goal is God and His Unity. Every other consequences (happiness, peace, etc.) are just good consequences. Before starting the whole process, it is important to conquer noise and activity in the mind. The reader must regain his

Silence. There must be emptiness through disinterest, stopping the flow of thoughts in the mind. What we mean here is that one must control his mind through incessant prayer or meditation before starting. If one is can't aim at this for exterior or interior reasons, he must try to cleanse his mind by reading without stop the Scriptures; *Lectio* demands a total concentration on the object at hand, that is, the Word of God.

Through grace, we are to let the Spirit (source of the Scriptures) guide us through the process to give life to the Word of God by the Logos. It doesn't depend on us as much as on Divine Will and our reception to it. Those of you who find it difficult to think about reading the Scriptures without being self-willed should think ahead and ask themselves if they are not too proud to ask for help and guidance in reading the Scriptures; therefore the problem lies with lack of silence and disinterest. More so, as the Fathers said, if you only read to find what you want, or if you think you can interpret everything in the Scriptures (as Nature), it is not God or the Self that you love or seek, but yourself.

In all the process, there is to be a bareness and dispossession of the ego, of the self (through humility) against any romantic view of the Self and the Cosmos; the Being must align itself with The One Up High; this elevation of the heart (intellect) toward the divine knowledge must not be done through a subjective and sentimental reading of the text (even if those can happen as consequences of our human nature, and at least influence us in a positive desire for more of the Scriptures, it's act, or God).

The four part (*Lectio*, *Meditatio*, *Oratio* and *Contemplatio*) are gradual process. At first, one will probably only tackle with the inner silence and *Lectio*. After some time, he will be able to integrate *Meditatio*; that being mastered, *Oratio*; that being mastered, *Contemplatio*. It is progressive in the act of the *Lectio Divina* (*Lectio* to *Contemplatio*) and through time in terms of practice and devotion. What we don't know, we learn in the Scriptures; what we have learn we meditate, what we have meditated

transpire in our acts and Being.

Lectio Divina, contrary to the spiritual reading of the XVIIe century, transcends the dualism between affect and intellect: it is reconciled in the Meditatio/Oratio part, and breached through in the Contemplatio.

Note that in some of the oldest books of monastery, Lectio Divina is strongly attached with a master-disciple scheme. Therefore, this introduction to Lectio Divina can be but incomplete: but at least one will not fall in the hell where the neutral ones are.

In the following description, there will be less and less information, as more one progress, more one progress in his own way. Furthermore, some parts cannot be described in words (contemplation of God (Contemplatio); personal prayer (Oratio))

Lectio Lectio is the basis of the process, and it must be taken with utmost respect and reverence for the Word of God. The Lectio should be done at a determined moment (and not at “lost time” or “when one has time”). One should have Mt 6:6 in mind when starting the process of Lectio. It is through discipline and effort that the rejection of the modern rhythm can be done to acknowledge one with the Divine Rhythm. Lectio should be done therefore in isolation and silence.

Cassien speaks highly of self-purification before lectio. We should control and purge the basic vices of the Thumos/Eros before using the Nous to read; or nothing will be revealed. Unique prayer of uninterrupted words spoken with the heart is for him the best way to purify oneself. The goal is to become harmonious with the teachings of the Word (that is, the Cosmos).

One should read without discrimination (i.e. choosing what to read): some texts will “tell nothing” but it is at that moment that God will take on that silence. That being said, some text should be read, but maybe not re-read without end, unless they do speak to one. The goal is that one should not read John 1 at each Lectio, but one should not also read The

Book of Numbers through all the year in hope of God speaking to him.

One should accept that some truths are higher than him, and therefore develop humility through that lack of understanding. It is through assiduity, fidelity and grace that one will unlock the secrets; God will speak through his Word, and when the whole of the Scriptures is in one, the whole Cosmos will become the Scriptures and God will speak freely to the one. We have to learn the Scriptures to perfect memorization, to transform us into the Word. Also, one should not forget that some signification can come from reading the Scriptures without being ascribed to them per se. In other words, you should not expect everyone to understand everything the same while reading; neither should you ascribe to every view out there.

One should try to read with a loud voice the text, as to integrate it in his mind. One would be wise to read the text without immediately thinking about it, that way he will not suffer the subjectivity or the ideas that comes with it. There is no thinking about efficacy, technical results or psychological results. This is not a New Age meditation technique to feel good; there should be no attention on the ego-self, we should look at the text as if it was told for the first time to the Cosmos, with the Eyes of God. We have to be part of the text: when we read Genesis 1, we have to be there. We have, through our own speech, to create the world with God. In reading the Scriptures, we actualize its *Potentia*. One is able to put the Eternal Word in the Eternal Present as if to stay in the Word.

The goal being understood, one should not shun the external help to better understand the text (especially if one does not read Hebrew and/or Koine Greek): hermeneutics, biblical research, cultural/historical analysis, etc. Those methods can help one not to fall to preconceived ideas and therefore to subjectivism. It should not shape the reading, but rather help at non-reading. The objective is still the *Lectio*, not the method. One reads the Word of God for spiritual unction and *Charitas* rather than culture and erudition. Yet, to help us understand what the text meant

to those who, by Divine Grace, wrote it, we have to be able to immerse ourselves in them, and therefore reach God.

To choose what to read, one could make himself a plan on one or two years spanning the full Scriptural text interconnected with Patristic texts; or one could follow the liturgical year of the Church.

Meditatio Meditatio is also called “Mastico” as to masticate the Word that we received. It should engage the whole of the Being through memorization, actualization, attention and whispering of the passage that was read or retained (if one reads three chapters, it would not be wise to meditate on the three of them at the same time; one should aim for particular to universal: start with the verse that was the most spiritually descriptive, then moves on to meditate on the whole passage, then the whole Bible, then the whole Cosmos). As St-Basil said: God becomes fixed in us through memorization.

Meditatio should be taken as deep reflection and intensive internalization of the Word. It can use different schemes to attain that goal, like particular to universal; analysis of words and sentences; “mantra”-like reflection on the words; etc. Some teachers also suggest writing down reflection made, to read them afterward and keep them as a teaching that God made through Oneself to oneself.

Oratio The Oratio is the mental prayer. As St Augustin said : “If the text is prayer, pray; if he is mourning, mourn; if he is joy, let yourself be filled with happiness”.

The Word came to us through Scriptures and comes back to God through prayer; just as the Word became Incarnate so that we too could rejoice in God. One should open this part by psalms, chanting, verbal prayer, internal prayer, etc. Fathers speak of ecstatic divine love that should not become the goal in itself. Then it becomes a “tranquil meeting with God” where the Word goes up like the Spirit toward the sky so that we

can see the divine light in the most profound part of the Self. It is to open the door on which the Word-Logos is knocking; to contemplate the Word became Flesh in ourselves.

Contemplatio See Jn 11, 20: like Mary, we have to be still and listen. No vision, no ecstasis, no apparitions (II Cor 5:7 *For we live by faith, not by sight*). The veil between the Verb and the Self vanish; duality fall within Christ. There contemplative knowledge can be learned. There is no sensuality, no sentimental approach. Here the Divine Love (*charitas*) is united to Faith. The way to enter hear is to come back to the Silence of the beginning through the whole process so that every possible thought is rejected in a Divine Silence that God will fill. It is useless to think of God, because one would only think of god (see Eckhart); it is useless to think of God when one is in His presence. The Word is condemnation or salvation: we need to put it in practice, just as Jesus Christ, being incarnated, was the new Adamic Archetype and acted upon the Good and the good. The second one to reach and teach the first.

3. Conclusion

This outline of the *Lectio Divina* is to show that some method for contemplation exists and are strong within Christianity, both in the East (*Hesychasm* was spoken of here at Gornahoor) and in the West. Be it *Lectio Divina*, *Hesychasm*, Eastern meditation, *Dikhr*, etc. the important part to remember is that *praxis* is necessary. Without some form of inner purification, inner contemplation and inner meditation, what we read and think stays on the speculative level, on a level of minds and thoughts that serves no purpose. We have to reach our Being through Traditional teachings. Furthermore, it is not through vice and sensuality that we reach that sort of enlightenment (I exclude myself from any sort of debate about a Right Hand Path), and therefore the exoteric and

esoteric goes hand in hand, and both prayer and asceticism are needed to reach deeper techniques of perfection. The Benedictines may not be a Traditional order per say, but they do represent a Traditional forces in the sense that they possess knowledge and ideals of reaching God. In the very least, they are a depository of saintliness, of Good and Beautiful and True.

As a conclusion I would like to offer a small thought. Huichols shamans in Mexico think that if they stop doing their purification rituals and offering, the whole of the Cosmos will crumble upon itself. In a sense, this is true for every Priest in the world: in an age as dark as ours, every bit of purification and sanctification of the world is important. If the world would become totally closed to God, totally profane, it would indeed crumble upon itself and come back to a stage of total Chaos. Those monks at least sustain the world as they try to unite it with God through themselves.

Posted on 2013-09-29 by David

* * *

jc00001 on 2013-09-30 at 13:33 said:

Excellent article about the practical application of exegesis. I haven't found anything like this before. A true treasure.

Matthew on 2013-10-18 at 14:54 said:

Great article, thanks. If only more in the modern world took this approach to the reading of scripture.

4.4 The Devils Conspire

All great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented that the result is a complex mystification.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, *Coningsby*

He said to them, "An enemy has done this."

Matthew 13:28

Separation from the Light Demons made their choice and were banished into the darkness. From there, they can have no vision of heaven as Jacob Boehme explains:

Heaven is in hell, and hell is in heaven, and nevertheless there is neither of them revealed to the other. Even if the devil were travelling for many hundred thousands of miles, for the purpose of going to heaven, he would nevertheless always remain in hell. Thus the angels do not see the darkness; they see only the light of divine power; but the devils see only the darkness of the wrath of God.

JACOB BOEHME, *Mysterium Magnum*

Satan rules hell and can never rule heaven. Hence, the only battleground is the world in the middle: **Earth**.

Lucifer's Goal Boehme reveals Lucifer's motivation.

Lucifer saw creation and knew its foundation. Thereupon he also wanted to be a god, and to rule in all things by the power of fire. He wanted to bring his own thoughts into form and not what the Creator desired. Thus he became an enemy of God, an enemy who desired to destroy what was formed by the action of God for the purpose of putting in its place his own effects and figurations.

JACOB BOEHME, *Theosophical Questions*

The Battle for Earth Adam and his descendants have been granted dominion over the earth. Since Satan cannot directly and physically have dominion, he relies on human agents whom he leads astray by whispering in their hearts. In this way, demonic intelligences plan to displace God in His creation. Human beings refuse to, or are unable to, comprehend the magnitude of that conspiracy; therefore, they are unable to implement it on their own. **Solange Hertz**, in her book *Utopia*, explains why:

Sinful men's lives are too short, their wills too weak, their thinking too limited. Bound to bodies shackled by recurring hunger and fatigue, they are incapable of an effort which must be sustained at white heat literally through centuries.

Disinformation When Adam was created to live in the Garden of Eden, Satan saw his opportunity. If he could persuade Adam to disobey God, he could then be the ruler of creation. He invented disinformation, the big lie, to accomplish his goal:

Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:1-5

Here we learn a few things. First, the devil is more intelligent and more knowledgeable than human beings. Second, he understands human psychology. Third, he works through disinformation. He will distort a truth

just enough to sound plausible. The subsequent fall of Adam made Satan prince of the world.

Conspiracy Theories

Whoever thinks history “just happens” needs to read the *Mystical City of God*, by **Maria Agreda**, for proper perspective. Called on for their opinions after the Crucifixion, the higher ranking demons agreed that it would be impossible to reverse the Redemption now accomplished by Christ, but they could labor to prevent the application of its fruits. They advised that, “in accordance with the new order of assistance and favor established by God for the salvation of men, they should seek new ways of hindering and preventing the work of God by deceits and temptations so much the greater.”

SOLANGE HERTZ, *Utopia*

The Redemption After the Redemption, Satan was no longer ruler of the world. Hence, he needed a long term plan to reassert his dominion. Here is a more text from the *City of God*, describing a meeting of the demons;

They resolved that, in accordance with the new order of assistance and favor established by God for the salvation of men, they should now seek new ways of hindering and preventing the work of God by so much the greater deceits and temptations.



Figure 4.1: Satan’s Infernal Council

Human nature was still weak:

The natural inclinations and passions of the flesh remain just the same, and the sensible and delectable creatures have not changed their nature. Let us then, making use of this situation with increased astuteness, foil as far as in us lies the effects of what this Godman has wrought for men. Let us begin strenuous warfare against mankind by suggesting new attractions, exciting them to follow their passions in forgetfulness of all else. Thus men, being taken up with these dangerous things, cannot attend to the contrary.

Now then, ye demons who follow me, now is the time to give way to our wrath against God. Come all of ye to take counsel what we are to do; for I desire to hear your opinions. Acting upon this counsel they redistributed the spheres of work among themselves, in order that each squadron of demons might, with a specialized astuteness, tempt men to different vices. They resolved to continue to propagate idolatry in the world, so that men might not come to the knowledge of the true God.

All agreed to sow among men the seeds of discord, hatred and vengeance, proud and sensual thoughts, desire of riches or honors, and by suggesting sophistical reasons against all the virtues Christ has taught... Some of the devils charged themselves with perverting the inclinations of children at their conception and birth; others to induce parents to be negligent in the education and instruction of their children, either through an inordinate love or aversion, and to cause a hatred of parents among the children. Some offered to create hatred between husbands and wives, to place them in the way of adultery...

Key to Understanding There are three worlds, corresponding to the Body, Soul, and Spirit. Satan did not create the physical world so he has no power over it. He has no consciousness of the spiritual or celestial world. He can only work through the world of the Soul, the is through emotions, images, and thoughts.

So unlike Hollywood depictions, Satan does not do physical harm, certainly not directly. That is not what must be feared. Also, Hollywood assumes evil is difficult to find; there is a portal that must be opened, or a haunted house, some unusual event that frees up a demonic spirit, etc. On the contrary, evil is commonplace and will find you. That spiritual battle takes place in the soul.

If you are “visualizing” some meeting, etc., you won’t understand. Rather you need to monitor your emotions, imagination, and thoughts. That is where you will encounter evil.

Posted on 2021-10-31 by Cologero

4.5 Meditations on the Good Life

Death, when understood by men, is immortality; but not being understood by the ignorant it is death. This death should not be feared; what should be feared is the perdition of the soul, which is ignorance of God; for this is terrible for the soul.

ST ANTHONY THE GREAT, *Counsels on the Character of Men
and on the Virtuous Life*

In tantum Deus cognoscitur, in quantum amatur. *God is known
to the extent He is loved.*

ST BERNARD

In recent days we have been advised on how to be good:

- By the president: Support the right to traffic in human body parts
- By a candidate: Make America great again

- By the pope: Turn off the air conditioner

In *The Sparkling Stone*, **Blessed John of Ruysbroeck** provides a more traditional perspective, as summarized in the following outline:

1. **How a man becomes good**

- (a) Clean conscience
- (b) Obedience to God
- (c) The glory of God

2. **How a man becomes inward**

- (a) A heart unencumbered with images
- (b) Spiritual freedom in his desires
- (c) The feeling of inward union with God

3. **How a man can see God**

- (a) The foundation of his being is abysmal
- (b) His inward exercise is wayless
- (c) His indwelling is a divine fruition

Becoming Good First a man must have a clean conscience that is free of sin. There are three elements of sin.

1. It must be a serious matter
2. Knowledge that it is a serious matter
3. Performed willfully

The pagan view found, for example, both among the ancient Greeks and Hindus, stops at the second element. For them, ignorance, or avidya, alone would lead to the clean conscience. Then the practice of the virtues would follow from that knowledge. However, this didn't take into account that, besides the ignorance of the mind, there is also a weakness of the will.

Hence, knowledge alone is insufficient, one must consciously follow God. John also adds that a man must be "obedient to his own proper convictions." Of course, the most proper convictions must be based on true knowledge. At a higher stage, John claims that even knowledge must be left behind in a state of learned ignorance, in which a man becomes free of such sin.

Finally, a good man should act for the glory of God. John explains:

If it happens that by reason of his business or the multiplicity of his works, he has not always God before his eyes, at least there should be established in him the intention and desire to live according to the dearest will of God.

This three qualities make a man good, so he is prepared for the next stages.

Becoming Inward John advises that anyone who considers himself spiritual needs to observe himself. Images in the imagination come from the flesh, not from God who is Spirit so no images are possible of Him. According to an old Norse adage,

The divine sleeps in the rock, breathes in the plant, dreams in the animal, and wakes in man.

This is related to Plotinus' path from the psyche, through nous, to God. The material world is both physical (the "rock") and psychical (the "animal"). The animal soul is material and is full of images. Thus it lives in a dream-like state, not yet self-conscious. To the extent that a man, who does indeed possess an animal soul, lives the same way, he is not yet

awake and not living a fully human life. So for the heart to become unencumbered with images, it must rise to the level of the nous by consciously observing himself.

As a man becomes free of worldly images, he becomes inwardly free. He becomes oriented toward God rather than toward the world. As imageless and free, he begins to feel a true union with God within; this perfects his inward and spiritual life. This acts like a feedback loop. The feeling of union, the desiring power of the soul (*epithetikos* or *eros*) becomes enticed to seek deeper union. God's knowledge of you is your knowledge of God; your willing of your own being is also God's willing.

Seeing God This union is experienced as “abysmal”, i.e., arising from the measureless depths, unbounded heights and an endless horizon. He plunges into the depths of the soul and ascends to the heights. The horizon of Being always recedes. Our knowledge of God is never complete so we dwell in a “knowledge that is ignorance”. By dying to things, the soul feels itself to be one life with God.

The next point is above reason and without condition. The inward drawing of the Divine Unity is experienced according to the measure of his love and the manner of his spiritual, interior exercises. Spiritually naked and unencumbered by images, he finds an Eternal Light in the inmost part of his spirit. This Light reveals the “eternal demand of the Divine Unity”. The more he feels it, the more he craves it.

The fruition is the loving adherence to God. There is an inner silence, so that thoughts and images begin to lose their impact and compulsion. The spirit then beholds a Darkness, where discursive thought cannot penetrate. Hence, the spiritual exercise is “wayless”, that is, there is no straight path to that Darkness, no mechanical process, no repetition of mantras. Rather one must be drawn into it, first through interior silence and the will to transcend discursive thought to a direct intuition.

Posted on 2015-08-03 by Cologero

* * *

Alistair Fraser on 2015-08-03 at 17:08 said:

a beautiful profound staged layout of the recognition and progress of evolving consciousness

Mark Citadel on 2015-08-06 at 12:48 said:

The contrast between John's view of the good could not stand in more stark contrast to the pabulum we hear from the Modernist wardens could it?

"He becomes oriented toward God rather than toward the world."

Society follows the same metric. Oriented towards telluric interests it will be evil, but oriented up towards the divine, it will find its existence blessed, if only by natural forces and factors that govern success and decline.

Cologero on 2015-08-07 at 08:39 said:

Mark, another way to put it is that what the world finds lovable and what God considers lovable are quite different.

Aleksandar Gueric on 2015-10-02 at 08:34 said:

About becoming inward, Novalis wrote that "mysterious path leads within" and that "In us, or nowhere, is eternity with its worlds – the past and the future." This quote, for me, contains an explanation of a peculiar feeling, or sensation, I have had in me since very young age.

Past, for me, was never something gone but a living experience reachable through the mere power of concentration while objects around us – trees and rocks, when absorbed with intuitive knowing become living parts of the self. So, tree didn't decided to speak to me, for example, when I walked by it on one autumn day when I suddenly felt it's perspective – it's experience of time and change of seasons quite different from every day human one. It was only an intuition or deep knowledge and understanding of things behind their material forms and naturalistic mechanics.. I think that simultaneous experience of human consciousness and totality of all other non human consciousness as well as awareness of timelessness through the simple focus of mind, must be what people call "being awake".

Novalis' Magical Idealism sparked this kind of imagination and intuition ever since reading about him as a child in a big encyclopedia we had at home. I recognized his language although I had no intellectual capacity to know why, only intuitively how, through a symbolic collage of metalanguage. Many years forward, Lama Anagarika Govinda spoke with the same language to me in "Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism", book that have found me by pure accident. Then I realized he quoted Novalis a lot and, at one point, even considered being his reincarnation. I think that he was close. They both spoke the same language, walked the esoterically same path,

perhaps. This language, or knowledge, I date back to Plato who formulated and crystalized it's essence. He was definitely an Initiate.

My peregrination during the turbulent 20s and falling into one trap after another in my constant search for something, which led me across 3 continents, finally seemed to come to an end with the discovery of another author who spoke the secret language I understood, and who also loved to quote Novalis, my initial sparkle – Baron Julius Evola. Gate has been opened enabling me to finally move forward transcending in the spiral way out. Novalis's spiral path inwards.

This path is polarized or centered around the notion of a sacred center, which was, for me, always in Hyperborea. Real, unreal, mythical, physical, etheric, poetic, all in one. Magnetism was so strong that I envisioned myself bathing in Aurora Borealis, a cosmic North, source of light and purity. This is the greatest Ideal for me and true Home, which is "everywhere and nowhere".

I apologize for what must have been a crazy post. This site carries the same message and understanding which guided me through years of my journey and I'm grateful to find it.

4.6 Predestination and Predilection

Our will is truly free only in union with that of God and that God acts on earth only through our free will freely united with his.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Every incarnated human being is the product of two shaping forces: heredity and the creative force of self-realization of the eternal individuality.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Any discussion of the mystery of birth would be incomplete without an understanding of predestination and predilection as understood in the Medieval Germanic-Roman religion, which is also known as the Catholic religion. To summarize the earlier post:

- Each person comes into the world with a set of qualities (his karmic inheritance).
- Beyond those innate qualities, his life's path is to actualize the possibilities open to him (his dharma path).
- He enters the world process at a time, place, and relationships suitable for him.

Nevertheless, the story is incomplete. Ultimately, beyond such terrestrial concerns, the goal is salvation and liberation. Hence, there is a supernatural destiny beyond our ordinary life. For some reason, the doctrines of predestination and predilection are seldom mentioned today despite their enormous importance. They may be hard to understand, or even distasteful to the secular mind, so it is helpful to meditate on them. For what follows, I am relying mostly on the book *Predestination* by **Fr Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange**.

Predilection This is the **Principle of Predilection**:

One would not be better than another unless one were loved more by God.

Predilection and predestination are clearly radically anti-egalitarian, as that principle makes clear.

St Thomas Aquinas justifies this principle:

Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another ... and the reason why some things are better than others is that God wills them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things.

Hence good things are not better because of some accident or injustice, but precisely because God loves them more. And the most perfect good is *theosis*, or becoming God-like. Fr Garrigou-Lagrange explains:

Every agent acts for an end and the purpose of the action of the supreme agent is to manifest His goodness by reproducing a likeness of Himself which is a more or less perfect participation of His nature.

Predilection is both a philosophical truth, known to reason, as well as a revealed truth. As a philosophical truth, it is obvious that it is true. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange explains:

This principle is true in every order. It is true of plants, of animals, of human beings, of angels, of things in which there is less of perfection or of goodness. It is also true of every man who, from whatever point of view, is better than another ...

As a revealed truth, predilection is related to the gratuitous gift of grace from God which makes us pleasing. Thus, predilection, or what we consider the “good life”, may have one meaning in the natural realm, but in the supernatural, it may be completely different; the beatitudes are examples of supernatural predilection. This goodness comes from the grace of God, and makes us pleasing in his sight.

There is no injustice in this, for justice requires that unlike things be treated differently. Nevertheless, pride must be avoided since it is God who makes one man superior to another (Thomas Aquinas).

Predestination

Predestination is the foreknowledge and preparedness on God’s part to bestow the favors by which all those are saved who are to be saved ... God already knew, when He predestined, what He must do to bring His elect infallibly to eternal life.

ST. AUGUSTINE

The doctrine of predestination follows from predilection. St Thomas defines it this way:

The plan of the direction of a rational creature towards the end,
i.e., life eternal; for to destine is to direct or send.

Therefore, predestination is the plan in God's mind of directing a particular man to the ultimate and supernatural end. This plan, from all eternity, determines the efficacious means that will lead a man to his final end.

For God, intention precedes execution, or ends before means. Hence, according to this doctrine, God will also provide the means, circumstances, and situations required to achieve the ultimate end for the elect, or predestined. This is exactly what Guenon was getting at with the notion of "compossible". The conditions of birth need to be consistent with, and provide the necessary opportunities, to achieve salvation or liberation. A sign of being predestined is to be born into the Medieval Germanic-Roman tradition, or otherwise to have the opportunity to embrace it freely. Nevertheless, some would spurn God's love and reject it.

Antecedent and Consequent Will To fully grasp these doctrines, it is necessary to be clear about the difference between the antecedent and consequent will of God. What God wills antecedently may or may not take place. On the other hand, the consequent will is efficacious.

Now the antecedent will of God is for all to achieve salvation, but not all are predestined. The antecedent will is more like the Hermetic notion of Providence. To deny the antecedent will would make God responsible for "wars, concentration camps, and physical and psychical epidemics" as Tomberg points out. This view of God's omnipotence is not uncommon and is based on presumption.

The consequent will involves the alliance of the divine will and the human will. This is not pure passivity, as Fr Garrigou-Lagrange makes clear:

The wills of men are more in God's power than their own.

We can't go into all the details right now, but God affects the will through graces and virtues.

Postscript on Incarnation Tomberg's understanding of incarnation is in general agreement with Evola's. Tomberg writes (in Letter XX):

The individuality descends consciously and of his own free will to birth, into an environment where he is wanted and awaited.

Those are rarer cases however. For most, the incarnation is dominated more by the horizontal than the vertical.

The consequences of Tomberg's insight have been mentioned in other contexts. Some are "born from above", even if their memory of it is quite dim. The second birth is a remembrance of that. Many, if not most, people today, have a self-understanding of being a product of biological forces and cultural influences. They lack that true will that Tomberg mentions.

The united will constitutes the indestructible and immortal kernel of the body ... its active principle, its formative will-energy, survives death.

The notion of being "adopted sons [or children] of God" is trivialized today. It leads to a spiritual infantilisation, a pure passivity, the presumption that God loves you just the way you are, without any demands. As we have seen, God does not love everyone to the same degree. His real children are those who have taken on his nature. That's what being a son means: to inherit the nature of the father, or, speaking colloquially, being a "chip off the old block."

Nevertheless, unlike certain reformation heresies, the Germanic-Roman religion does not accept that some people are condemned at birth. God

does not demand the impossible, so it is incorrect to claim that a man may be born with certain proclivities that compel him to deviate from the cosmic law. Even worse is to believe that such compulsions are therefore good and defensible.

Posted on 2015-07-10 by Cologero

4.7 The Breath of Life

Man consists of three elements: spirit, soul, and body, which sometimes are reckoned as two, for often the soul is included in the designation of spirit (for it is that certain rational part, which beasts do not have, that is called spirit). Our chief element is the spirit.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Augustine and the Eastern fathers tend to distinguish between the soul and spirit. Basing himself on Aristotle, **Aquinas** employs different terminology although the principle is the same. This can be a source of confusion; that is why we need to know our Greek and Latin.

If Adam had his spirit breathed into him by God, and Eve by implication, Fr. Warkulwiz poses the question of how his descendants got their souls. The first choice is transmission by the reproductive process. This is rejected out of hand by Augustine on the grounds that the soul would be a body rather than a spirit. However, Augustine realized that the special creation of the soul by God is inconsistent with the dogma of original sin.

Aquinas takes an important step in resolving that issue. He distinguishes between the sensitive soul which man has in common with the animals and the intellectual soul, which distinguishes man from the animals. The latter soul is the ruach that God breathed into Adam, what we have been calling “spirit”. With this distinction in mind, Aquinas can

claim that that the sensitive soul is indeed transmitted through seminal generation, while the intellectual soul is not. We have already addressed the topic of heredity⁴ as it applies to the body and the (sensitive) soul. (In the ensuing discussion, I will replace the idea of intellectual soul with the word “spirit”.)

But here is where the dogma gets fuzzy. He says it is unnatural for the intellectual soul (spirit) to be without a body, so he insists that the spirit is created by God and infused into the body at the moment of conception. This explanation has the benefit that it acknowledges the transcendence of the spirit, since it is not mechanically produced as part of the world process, but has a transcendent source. Nevertheless, it raises some issues that are unsatisfactory from a metaphysical and esoteric perspective.

- How can something immortal and transcendent have a beginning in time?
- If a spirit without a body is “unnatural”, how do we account for purely spiritual postmortem states?
- How does a perfect God create a spirit deformed by original sin?

Pre-existence of spirit

Before I [God] formed thee in the belly I knew thee.

Jeremiah 1:5

Rene Guenon pointed out that without the ability to think outside of time, a man can never master metaphysics; hence we can’t think in terms of a clock in the heavens that is synchronized to a clock on earth. To be consistent with the dogma, we could say that the spirit exists virtually, but actually when conjoined with a soul and body.

⁴<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=1664>

Postmortem states Here Aquinas is inconsistent. If the spirit persists in a postmortem state, then there is no reason to require it to be joined to a body, so the pre-existence of the spirit is not logically refuted. Just the opposite, since something immortal has no beginning in time. In any case, Genesis is concerned only with this world. Although Fr. Warkulwiz mentions the idea of possible worlds, he doesn't follow through with it. We have pointed out in the post on Parallel Universes⁵, that the spirit can, and does, incarnate in different worlds. This makes the question moot.

Incarnation Both **Rene Guenon** and **Valentin Tomberg** employ the symbolism of the cross. There is the horizontal line which represents the world process, or Destiny. The vertical line represents transcendence, or Will. Since God works through secondary causes, then the incarnation of a spirit should be approached in the same way. Fr. Warkulwiz points out that creation is identical with will: when we say that God creates the word, we mean he wills it into existence. Analogously, the spirit wills itself into existence at the appropriate moment in the world process. If the world process is corrupted (by original sin), then the perfect spirit will find itself in that situation.

This is something that is not proved by argument, nor by quoting texts, but rather by remembering. If I misplace my keys, it is not because I willed to lose them. Nevertheless, I am responsible for that state of affairs. The reason they are lost is because I was not acting consciously when I laid them down. As an exercise, the next time you misplace something, instead of frantically searching for it, sit quietly and try to remember where they are.

There is a similar exercise for your life. Try to remember why you chose this particular life, its qualities, your parents, your world. Then you will understand.

⁵<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=1863>

Posted on 2011-07-12 by Cologero

* * *

Iulianus on 2011-07-13 at 07:13 said:

Many explain the part in the Bible, "God breathed the breath of life into the face of Adam" the first-created, who was created by Him from the dust of the ground, it must mean that until that moment there was neither human soul nor spirit in Adam, but only the flesh created from the dust of the ground. This interpretation is wrong, for the Lord created Adam from the dust of the ground with the constitution which the holy Apostle Paul describes: "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). And all these parts of our nature were created from the dust of the ground, and Adam was not created dead, but an active being like all of God's animate creatures living on earth.

The point is, that if the Lord God had not breathed afterwards into his face, this breath of life – that is, the grace of our Lord God the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Father, rests in the Son and is sent into the world for the Son's sake – Adam would have remained without the Holy Spirit within him. It is the Holy Spirit who raised Adam to Godlike dignity. However perfect, he had been created and superior to all the other creatures of God, as the crown of creation on earth, he would have been just like all the other creatures, though they have a body, soul and spirit, each according to its kind, do not have the Holy Spirit within them. But when the Lord God breathed into Adam's face the breath of life, then, according to Moses' word, "Adam became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7), that is, completely and in every-way like God, and like Him, forever immortal. Adam was immune to the action of the elements to such a degree that water could not drown him, fire could not burn him, the earth could not swallow him in its abysses, and the air could not harm him by any kind of action whatever. Everything was subject to him as the beloved of God, as the king and lord of creation, and everything looked up to him, as the perfect crown of God's creatures. Adam was made so wise by this breath of life, which was breathed into his face from the creative lips of God, the Creator and Ruler of all, that there has never been a man on earth wiser or more intelligent, and it is unlikely that there ever will be. When the Lord commanded him to give names to all the creatures, he gave every creature a name which completely expressed all the qualities, powers and properties given it by God at its creation.

"As a result of this gift, of the supernatural grace of God, which was infused into him by the breath of life, Adam could see, understand the Lord walking in Paradise, comprehend His words, understand the conversation of the holy Angels, the language of all beasts, birds and reptiles and all that is now hidden from us the fallen and sinful creatures. All this was so clear to Adam before his fall. The Lord God also gave Eve the same wisdom, strength, unlimited power, and all the other good and holy qualities. He created her not from the dust of the ground, but from Adam's rib in the Eden of delight, the Paradise which He had planted in the midst of the earth.

“In order that they might always easily maintain the immortal, divine and perfect properties of this breath of life, God planted in the midst of the garden the tree of life with fruits endowed with all the essence and fullness of His divine breath. If they had not sinned, Adam and Eve themselves as well as all their posterity could have always eaten of the fruit of the tree of life and so would have eternally maintained the vivifying power of divine grace.

“They could have also maintained for all eternity the full powers of their body, soul and spirit in a state of immortality and perpetual youth, and they could have continued in this immortal and blessed state of theirs forever. At the present time, however, it is difficult for us even to imagine such grace.

Source: Saint Seraphim of Sarov – On Acquisition of the Holy Spirit

<http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/sermon`st`seraphim.htm>

Will on 2011-07-16 at 09:08 said:

Ananda Coomaraswamy's article *The Coming to Birth of the Spirit* offers much clarification on the terms 'soul' and 'spirit,' as well as others.

The text is available online, though unfortunately without the substantial footnotes which are worthwhile in themselves.

<http://www.religioperennis.org/documents/acoomaraswamy/spirit.pdf>

Iulianus on 2011-07-17 at 07:19 said:

Notes on “The Coming to Birth of the Spirit” are included in *The Essential Ananda K. Coomaraswamy*, the eBook can be found here: <http://mikrotheos.blogspot.com/2011/01/blog-post.html>

I think that St Seraphim of Sarov is right, but it should be emphasized here that “grace of our Lord God the Holy Spirit”, i.e. “the energies of God” are uncreated. Clarification from the book *THEOSIS – THE TRUE PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE*: “The energies of God are divine energies. They too are God, but without being His essence. They are God, and therefore they can deify man. If the energies of God were not divine and uncreated, they would not be God and so they would be unable to deify us, to unite us with God. There would be an unbridgeable distance between God and men. But as God has the divine energies, and unites with us by these energies, we are able to commune with Him and to unite with His Grace without becoming identical with God, as would happen if we united with His essence. So we unite with God through His uncreated energies, and not through His essence. This is the mystery of our Orthodox faith and life. Western heretics cannot accept this. Being rationalists, they do not discern between the essence; and the energy of God, so they say that they cannot speak about man's Theosis because God is only essence, for on this basis, how can man be deified when they do not accept that the divine energies are uncreated, but regard them as created? How can something created deify man, i.e. how can

something outside God deify man? In order not to fall into pantheism, they do not talk about Theosis at all. What then, according to them, remains as the purpose of human life? Simply moral improvement. If man cannot be deified with divine Grace and divine energies, what purpose does his life have? Only that he becomes morally better. But moral perfection is not enough for man. It is not enough for us simply to become better than before, simply to perform moral deeds. We have as our final aim to unite with holy God Himself. This is the purpose of the creation of the universe. This is what we desire. This is our joy, our happiness, and our fulfillment."

According to St Ignatius Brianchaninov "Our mind is – image of God the Father, our word (and unspoken word is often called "thought") – image of the Son of God, and our spirit – image of the Holy Spirit."

"Whoever is joined unto the Lord is One Spirit" I Cor. 6:17

Cologero on 2011-07-18 at 00:55 said:

As for the Coomaraswamy article, what specific clarification (of what has been written) are you referring to? Coomaraswamy takes pains to point out that we are not discussing philosophical categories, but rather those arising from experience. Thus ultimately the only "clarification" of value comes from one's own self-understanding.

Cologero on 2011-07-20 at 11:53 said:

Thanks, Iulianus, for the extensive quotes.

Will on 2011-07-22 at 21:17 said:

The leading quotation from Augustine seems to need clarification, insofar as it equates the "rational" with "spirit." Perhaps this simply reflects a problem in the translation.

Rational comes from ratio, which is discursive thinking and reasoning (*dianoia* in Greek). A higher faculty is Intellect – *intellectus*, or *nous* in Greek. Plato holds that man comes to know and unify with the Good through *noesis*, not through discursive reasoning. Does Augustine hold the contrary? I don't know; I am quite ignorant of Augustine's theology.

Coomaraswamy argues that in the trinity of Body-Soul-Spirit, it is the spirit which is eternal. Augustine says the same thing, but if he asserts that the spirit is the rational faculty, is he asserting that this faculty survives death?

My (limited) understanding of these terms is as follows: The spirit is eternal and transcendent, as well as impersonal, such that one cannot rightly speak of "my" or "your" spirit as some kind of individual thing; indeed, it is more accurately "nothing", no-thing, as Coomaraswamy says.

The soul, or psyche, can be spoken of, and moreover can be worked on, harmonized, ordered, and perfected, so as to fully partake and reflect the Divine. However, traditions including Christianity describe this process as soul-death, or ego-death, as when Jesus says that whoever does not hate his own soul cannot be a disciple. This seems to me to refer to the individuality

of the soul vs. the non-individuality of the spirit, and the necessity to ‘die before you die’ so as to be born again into the eternity of spirit.

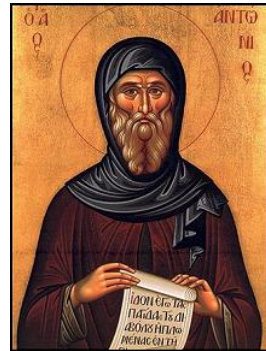
Although etymologically, the use of ‘spirit’ to denote the transcendent, eternal, and un-created seems problematic insofar as the word comes from spirare – to breathe – a limited bodily function. Or does this choice of terms hint at the importance of the breath as a link to the transcendent?

Perennial on 2011-07-23 at 02:30 said:

Will, you make an excellent point. From an English perspective, I personally prefer using the term soul for what they refer to as spirit, since in English this is generally regarded as the eternal aspect of man, and vice versa for spirit, which has a rather more nebulous connotation. But there may be an argument for the “orthodox” use in English. Perhaps it would be that we should at least to try to use the same terminology in the same sense, or at least *simili modo*. In any case, I would be interested in seeing other views on this.

4.8 St Anthony and Practical Reason

What follows are some of the main themes of **St Anthony**’s “Counsels on the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life”, from the *Philokalia*, Volume I, translated by **Constantine Cavarnos**. Dr. Cavarnos includes copious footnotes relating St Anthony’s essay to biblical passages, apparently to counteract the claims of the first translators, which we have previously documented⁶. Nevertheless, it is unlikely you will hear these themes in a Sunday sermon, or from a TV preacher.



Practical Reason

⁶<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=497>

Men are improperly called rational; it is not those who have learned thoroughly the discourses and books of the wise men of old that are rational, but those who have a rational soul and can discern what is good and what is evil, and avoid what is evil and harmful to the soul, but zealously keep, with the aid of practice, what is good and beneficial to the soul ...

The “book learning” St Anthony refers to may be called “theoretical reason”. But what makes a man truly rational is the “practical reason”, that is, the ability to choose ones ends or goals and the means to achieve them. Since man is the “rational animal”, someone who does not possess practical reason is really “inhuman”, being more like the irrational animals.

Just as helmsmen steer the ship in the proper direction in order to avoid hitting a reef or shoal, so let those who aspire after the virtuous life consider carefully what they ought to do and what they ought to avoid.

Freedom Those who “are free in their life and ways”, are properly called free.

Freedom and happiness of the soul consist in genuine purity and contempt of transitory things.

Characteristics

A truly rational and virtuous soul is recognized from a man’s look, walk, voice, laughter, manner of spending his time, and the circumstances of his life. Everything in such a soul has been thoroughly changed and corrected so as to become graceful.

A virtuous life is like a work of art, with the soul as artist:

Like skilled painters and sculptors, it is by their works that they display their virtuous and God-loving way of life.

Rulers

Examine the things that pertain to you, and prove for yourself that rulers and masters have authority only over the body, not over the soul; and let this always be before your mind.

This is even more important in our day when propaganda has become a science. Pay attention to the sources of your concepts and values to determine if they are truly good, or simply absorbed from the mass media.

Vigilance The soul's "God-loving rational faculty, being a vigilant gatekeeper, bars entry to evil and ugly thoughts." We are accustomed to regarding thoughts as our own, without considering the source. We are bombarded by thoughts⁷; they are the key to influencing our behavior. A man must be the detached observer of his thoughts, paying attention to their origin⁸, before latching onto a thought and letting it guide his actions.

Obstacles St Anthony lists many obstacles to a virtuous life. Again, the point is not to be "good" in order to get a reward, but rather to recognize those attitudes that prevent us from leading the rational life. The spirit [*nous*, mind] must guide the soul which masters the body. The "passions", on the other hand, make us passive, not the active agent⁹ of our life. In one place he lists "lust, love of glory, and ignorance". In another, "conceit, arrogance, deception, envy, avarice". The point is that these temptations tie us to transitory things, dominate the soul, and thus prevent our full use of reason and freedom.

⁷<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=451>

⁸<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=309>

⁹<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=203>

Many paths

Through God's love for man, there are many paths that lead men to salvation, ways that convert men and lead them to the Heavens.

Posted on 2010-05-30 by Cologero

4.9 On the Human Soul

St Gregory of Nyssa on the Human Soul by JOHN P. CAVARNOS, Edited and Revised by CONSTANTINE CAVARNOS, 95 pp, Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies¹⁰

We regard all knowledge as beautiful and precious, but one kind of it more so than another, either by reason of its exactness, or because it has reference to superior and more wonderful objects. On both these accounts we should naturally be led to place in the front rank the study of the soul.

ARISTOTLE, *On the Soul*

Originally published as a doctoral dissertation, this edition was revised for use by a more general audience. Since the fundamental goal of Christianity is the “salvation of souls”, it is curious that there was no systematic understanding of the soul until the efforts of **St Gregory of Nyssa**. Mr. Cavarnos points out:

Christianity, being concerned above all with man's destiny and salvation, must inevitably undertake to explain the mystery of life. For the Christian that means more specifically the human soul.

¹⁰<http://ibmgs.org/>

Curiously, St Gregory turns to the great pagans of antiquity, in particular **Plato** and **Aristotle**, for his understanding of the soul. There are a few explanations that have been proposed by Gornahoor. The first is attributed to **Julius Evola**, who would regard this as the process of “rectification”, i.e., the partial restoration of the Middle Ages to its pagan roots following the shock of primitive Christianity. **Guido De Giorgio**, on the other hand, would regard the two Romes — the Ancient and the Medieval — as two forms of the same tradition, the later a deepening of the earlier. Our preference is that St Gregory is giving us a guidebook to the soul, not a theory, and anyone who makes the efforts at self-knowledge will simply see that it is true.

Unfortunately, Mr. Cavarnos falls prey to the modernist notion that St Gregory was merely making “good use of classical and contemporary material for giving form and expression to accepted Christian doctrines and concepts.” Were that true, then why couldn’t modern theories of the mind or soul be put to the same use? No, it is not a pragmatic concern for good usage, but whether the doctrine is true or not.



Anthropology Like the pagan philosophers, St Gregory conceived the cosmos as divided into two orders: the spiritual and rational over against the material and irrational. In his understanding of the purpose of man, St Gregory is closer to his Christian roots. Mr. Cavarnos summarizes:

Man was created in the image and likeness of God so that he could partake of the divine nature and make it known to the rest of the creation. He is related to God by his endowment of the divine principle of reason, through which he knows God and imitates Him to attain to virtue and perfection.

So man is suspended between the two poles and is to be the link between them. Following **Rene Guenon**, we have referred to those poles as form and matter, or essence and existence. The former binds man with the divine and the latter with the subrational world. In his higher role, man possesses divine attributes such as life, reason, wisdom, and so on. Man is also a microcosm, so his self-knowledge relates to the knowledge of the cosmos by analogy.

Nature of the Soul St Gregory makes a useful distinction of his study. The metaphysics of the soul relate to the essence, origin, and destiny of the soul, and the psychology of the soul is concerned with determining, defining, and classifying the diverse faculties of the soul. This psychology is necessarily a phenomenology, since the soul can only be directed observed from the inside.

Starting with the nature of the soul he claims that the soul is the principle that gives life to the body. That is, it animates the body, from the Latin word *anima* for soul. Immediately, this is the opposite of educated men today who believe, on the contrary, that the soul is a function, or epiphenomenon, of the body. Not so, and this is why Rene Guenon identifies the five fundamental preconditions for manifestation: space, time, form, matter, and life. Hence, there are both material forces and psychic forces in play, irreducible to each other. Evola makes use of this idea in his own doctrine of the degrees of race. Of course, these are the natural forces, which operate on the horizontal plane, and not the supernatural, or vertical, forces.

St Gregory, like Plato, accepts the immortality of the soul as well as its simplicity. Mr. Cavernos does not point this out, but this is analogous to the Roman idea of divine simplicity, which should be expected if the soul is truly the likeness of the divine. In this case, the human soul is chiefly identified with the rational, or intellectual, faculty; this faculty is therefore the ruling principle. Again, this is consistent with the ancient

pagans and the Medieval tradition.

Gregory brings up an excellent and very important point: the “passions” are actually distinct from the soul, hence cannot be considered part of it. For Gregory, the soul is beautiful, which would preclude any ugliness. This means two things in practice:

- Man’s interiority is subject to inferior and subrational influences arising, as it were, from outside of himself
- When a man submits to the demands of these influences, he is not fulfilling himself, but, on the contrary, he is surrendering up his self to an outside agent

Gregory, like St Anthony of the Desert¹¹, regards these passions as animal traits. These are the beasts of the field that must be named and mastered. The questions that we brought up at one point are worth revisiting: if a being is dominated by his passions, to what extent can he be considered as a man rather than an animal? On one hand, the case can be made that he is a “virtual” man, since he has the possibility of being rational.

The Origin of the Soul Gregory rejects two doctrines: the preexistence of the soul and the theory of reincarnation. Like contemporary writers on tradition, Gregory demonstrates the metaphysical impossibility of reincarnation, with an argument that doesn’t need to be discussed at the moment. Keeping in mind Aristotle’s five versions of priority, Gregory rejects the temporal preexistence of the soul, but not the ontological preexistence.

For Gregory, the whole of humanity preexisted in God’s mind as a possibility, not an actuality. Clearly, this is consistent with what Guenon writes in the *Multiple States of Being*. A soul is a possibility of manifestation. Gregory accepted traducianism (the rational soul is passed in the

¹¹See Section 4.8 of this book.

semen), which is hard to defend, as it makes of it a natural process. In keeping with traditional metaphysics, the soul manifests in a world in which it is compossible with the rest of the world. That is, the soul manifests when there is an affinity between the possibilities of the soul and the particular world in which those possibilities can be actualized. I'm sorry that this cannot be proved in the manner of the geometers, but a man can just "see" that it is so, provided he has sufficient self-knowledge.

Like **St Thomas Aquinas** after him, Gregory claims that the soul passes through three stages: the insensible stage, the sensible stage, and the rational stage. Since the soul is the form of the body,

the soul is the determining principle or cause in the living being. It constructs for itself a body that is suitable, like a seal that impresses its stamp on wax.

Once again, this is an idea that has been insufficiently developed. It seems, therefore, that the features of a man's body are not accidental, incidental, arbitrary, irrelevant, or unimportant. Rather they are the visible manifestations of the invisible soul. We will explore this idea further in the mailing list.

The Soul after Death Plato, Origen, and the Bible provided the sources for Gregory's thought on this matter. Unlike the fundamentalists of today — and I would include the anti-Christian, neo-Nietzschean and neopagans in that camp — Gregory tends to understand Scripture allegorically rather than literally. Gregory believed that by the very order of things, the good and justice will ultimately prevail. Again, this is consistent with Guenon in the *Symbolism of the Cross*. Gregory believed that if the soul becomes mindful of its previous sins, and fearful of their consequences, he becomes wise and prudent. That is a big "if". On the one hand, few today believe they are sinful or that there are consequences. On the other

hand, the neo-Christians who believe in “faith alone”, don’t accept that there is any necessary reason to become wise or prudent.

I will gloss over the discussion of the resurrection, but will point out that “resurrection is the restoration of our nature to its original state.” Of course, for us, that is the Primordial State. In that state, there is no childhood, old age, disease, or infirmity. The body is incorruptible and is finer and lighter. This is not unlike what Guenon wrote about the body being lighter in earlier yugas. Obviously, the impure souls will not be part of this resurrection to the Primordial State.

The Relation of Body and Soul Gregory claimed that

the study of the soul and its relation to the body is of primary importance, since the knowledge of the soul and the manner in which it operates in the body has a profound bearing on the ideas of perfection and salvation, as well as on man’s well-being and thinking.

If that be so, then why does no one in the West consider it very important? Only in the East, do some men continue to map out the intricacies of the soul. If Gregory is correct, then we understand why Protestantism is so destructive, since salvation, for it, involves little more than responding to an altar call.

Unlike the pagans, like Plotinus for example, who regarded matter as inherently evil, Gregory saw the origin of sin in man’s will, not in the body, *per se*. Nevertheless, the lower forces, which as we pointed out earlier arise from the outside of man, must be overcome. Specifically, men in the flesh must separate or detach from such forces. This does have an effect on salvation:

if anyone is entirely preoccupied with the things of the flesh and uses every movement of the soul and all its energy for his fleshy

desires, he will not be separated from experiences involving the flesh, even when he is out of it.

Gregory has an interesting understanding of the senses:

Since the senses are more akin to the coarseness and earthiness of the body than to the soul, they are subject to errors. They are termed windows through which death enters, for they lead men to the life of the passions and bodily pleasures.

Men today are in basic agreement, except that for them life enters through the senses. Sensuality is considered normal and good. For the moderns, the purpose of the intellect is to think up ways to improve sensual experience: the body desires and the soul tries to satisfy it. For Gregory, the reality is reversed: the body is the instrument of the soul. The soul commands and the body executes. This is not life denying, since the intent is not to cause the body to suffer, but rather to improve the life of the soul. The desires of the body are never fully sated, so men today are anxious, angry, fearful and seek to hide from them through the pursuit of “good” experiences. Rather, the soul should learn to be ordered, just as the macrocosm is ordered.

The Faculties of the Soul

The Platonic Element Gregory follows Plato’s naming of the three powers of faculties of the soul:

- Nous. The rational power consisting of intellect and will.
- Thymos. The spirited or striving faculty.
- Epithymia. The appetitive faculty of desire.

Gregory says the inclinations of thymos and epithymia are harmful or good, depending on how they are applied. Although they are beast like, they cannot be reduced to instincts, presumably because instincts are mechanical and, as such, are beyond ordinary conscious control.

When under the dominion of the nous, of the two lower faculties, one gives courage and the other the desire to participate in the good. Otherwise, disorder sets in. Gregory's teaching is summarized in Table 4.1.

Faculty	Virtue	Illness
Rational	Contemplation of the divine	Impiety
	Discernment between good and evil	Lack of sound judgment concerning the truly good
	Clear and unconfused knowledge of physical nature	False opinion regarding the nature of things
Spirited	Hatred of evil	Envy
	The struggle against passions	Hatred
	The urging of the soul to courage	Malice
Appetitive	The virtuous motion toward what is worth desiring	The love of money
	An erotic impulse towards virtue	Sensuality

Table 4.1: Powers of the soul according to Plato

Disorders of the Rational Faculty Although most people focus on the illnesses of the spirited and appetitive faculties, it is actually the illness of the intellect which is more serious and the most difficult to eradicate. A man who is disordered in his spiritedness or appetite can learn to overcome them, provided his intellect is still sound. Unfortunately, a man with a disordered intellect is not even aware of this disorder; hence, he has no incentive to change. These types of men make communication

difficult.

It is worth the effort to update Gregory's symptoms. Now, as then, impiety is a common illness of the rational soul. Impiety means the denial of the existence of any higher, spiritual influences; moreover, any such teachings are simply mocked.

Lack of judgment of the good leads to regarding the disorders of the lower faculties as good, rather than the bad that they really are. Or things that are necessary are regarded as evil. This leads to a strange kind of neo-Puritanism. Although I'm not an advocate of Puritanism, at least their intent was to establish order and lead to salvation after death. Neo-Puritanism, on the contrary, seeks to abolish death, an obvious absurdity. This leads to public attacks on smoking, the right to bear arms, and even on what the populace is allowed to eat and drink.

The disease of misunderstanding the nature of things leads to decision-making base on sentimental motives or wishful thinking, rather on how things really are. Anyone who opposes such beliefs is shamed, ostracized, or even worse, if they hold positions of power.

As we have pointed out, the roots of these errors go deep and are based on the rejection of one or more metaphysical principles. For example, we have shown how the rejection of final or formal causes leads to specific sorts of errors. The rejection of order, i.e., impiety, leads to Marxist-like plans to overturn the established order.

The Aristotelian Element Alongside the Platonic understanding of the soul, Gregory also draws on Aristotle. For him, they are not in contradiction. Gornahoor would say that the Platonic understanding is founded on interiority and is proved by the dominion of the rational soul.

The Aristotelian perspective starts from the senses and leads inward. So he accepts the understanding of the soul as encompassing three elements:

1. The vegetative soul, which controls growth and increase and the activities of life.
2. The sensitive soul, which governs sense activities.
3. The rational soul, or intellectual power

Gregory writes:

The perfect life in the body is seen to be in the rational nature of man, being nourished and perceived by the mind, participating in reason and governed by the mind.

In keeping with the outer orientation, the nous, or rational soul, exteriorizes its activities in matter. Thus, the nous is united to power, which is the ability to bring ideas and plans into manifestation. Since the soul is beautiful, what it makes manifest will also be beautiful.

Free Will and Virtue In the final chapter, Mr. Cavarnos addresses Gregory's teaching on the will. He defines freedom:

freedom is choosing freely the object desired. Will is a faculty exempt from servitude, free, residing in the independence of our reason. Free will is the essential foundation for virtue, for if it is lacking, then there can be no virtue, no praise, no blame for human conduct.

The consequences of this teaching are hard, and few are willing to accept it. Gregory explains:

The soulless or irrational beings are led by an external will. If a rational and thinking nature discards freedom, it also loses the right for thinking.

Obviously, a multitude of spiritual influences abound, whose goal is to implant themselves in unaware minds, thus controlling their wills in a very real sense. Isn't this far too obvious to deny? For example, in the USA, almost out of nowhere, a movement arose to infringe the right to bear arms. Suddenly the nation was mobilized, the media focused on the topic, the populace talked about it, and so on. The "debates" on the topic are almost always reduced to swapping slogans or making sentimental arguments. I saw one woman saying, in all seriousness, that women don't need a gun for self-defense since she "feels" safe even when walking in bad neighborhoods. Apparently, any argument — whether pro or con — is unnecessary, since her feelings trump any such argument.

I am not trying to adjudicate that issue here, but to point out how external ideas take hold in a mind. This irrationality is considered "soulless" by Gregory. As you go through the day, can you tell which beings that you encounter actually have a soul and which are soulless?

According to Gregory, God endowed human nature with the principle of all that is beautiful, and the most precious and beautiful good is the gift for being independent and free. Necessity and compulsion negate man's being the image of God.

Hence, when a man makes a bad choice, he must accept the consequences of that choice. This is the natural result and not a special act of divine retribution as some are inclined to think. The conclusion from this is clear, as was shown in Guido De Giorgio's meditation on death¹². God does not directly punish a soul, or send it to hell or whatever other place or state; rather, man himself chooses his own ultimate state.

Mr. Cavnos does not draw any conclusions from this; nevertheless, Gornahoor thinks there is a clear and important conclusion. If all this is true, then the salvation of the soul requires the development of the rational faculty or nous. This is measured in several ways:

¹²<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=11683>

- The rational soul becomes the master of the lower faculties.
- It contemplates the divine
- It discerns between good and evil
- It has clear knowledge about physical nature
- It exteriorizes itself in a life of virtue and beauty

Posted on 2013-03-14 by Cologero

4.10 Rational Man and Moral Law

Today the meaning of the moral as cosmic worth has been lost, and up to now, it has been reduced to nothing more than the corroboration and canonisation of deficiency, weakness, and fear — of the plague of beautiful sentiments, of noble virtues, of holy ideals — that is, of the fundamentally immoral.

JULIUS EVOLA

St Anthony the Great St Anthony has already been dealt with in Section 4.8, so we will focus just on his concept of the “rational man”. The rational man is not just a learned man or scholar, but rather someone who not only knows good from bad, but also has the power to act on it. The rational faculty needs to be developed. In appearance, Anthony seems to be recommending conventional morality when he talks about overcoming irrational passions and desires or orienting oneself toward the eternal and divine rather than the temporal and material. Yet these are more than moral strictures, they are rational, properly so called.

The rational faculty unites man with divine power, power over oneself, one's thoughts, one's acts. As such, it is a faculty that must be developed. For Anthony, the irrational man is in a state of darkness and devoid of divine light. That is, the rational faculty is only virtual and not actual. Since man by definition is rational, such men are not, strictly speaking, even men. This brings Anthony close to the Gnostic idea of the three classes of men [Hylic, Psychic, and Pneumatic], and only the actualized rational man is pneumatic.

There is a potential consequence to this point of view that does not seem to have been realized by Anthony's commentators, though it has by Nietzsche. Eric Voegelin writes, in his discussion of what Reason (or rationality) is:

The constituent of society is the Homonoia or "like-mindedness" of Everyman in a community formed through recognition of the reason common to all men. In Aristotle, if love within the community is not based upon regard for the divinity of reason in the other man, then the political friendship on which a well-ordered community depends cannot exist. The source of the Christian notion of "human dignity" is the common divinity in all men. Nietzsche perceived that if that is surrendered then there is no reason to love anybody, one consequence of which is the loss of the sense and force of obligation in society and, hence, of its cohesiveness.

But according to Anthony, only the rational man is in union with God (or Nous in Platonic or Aristotelian terms), and reason is not at all common to all men. Obviously, the modernist project of deriving human dignity from material and biological considerations has failed (it is unreasonable), with the resulting loss of cohesiveness in Western societies. So, if biologism cannot justify egalitarianism, then neither can Christianity, since full human dignity may only be virtual. Another way of putting

it is to say that although in essence there may be a common divinity in men, it is not necessarily so in existence.

Yet, Anthony insists on comparing the irrational man to brute animals, whether or not the rational faculty is merely undeveloped or, perhaps, does not even exist at all. The full implications for ethics and political science have not yet been drawn out.

Julius Evola If the world is Will and Idea, then knowledge of ideas is insufficient for its understanding and the hope for a science of everything is futile. The act of Will brings Ideas into reality, that is, it causes a change in Being. Thus the world does not present itself as a scientific problem, but rather as a moral problem, so fundamentally, morality necessarily implies the power to act. Evola writes:

The ethical problem and the metaphysical problem coincide: the measure of reality, as of the good, of the certain and of the true, is the perfection of actuality or power. *Per virtutem et potentiam idem intelligo.* [Spinoza, *Ethics*, “by virtue and power I mean the same thing.”] The good or virtue is potency, evil impotence. There is no other evil except insufficiency and weakness, no other good except the will that is unconditionally sufficient in itself, and therefore free to be and do what it wills.

Conventional morality is of two types. One is the idea of a war against the body or parts of the soul. The other is intellectual and involves finding a moral system that demands adherence. Neither solves the problem of power or change of being.

More recent attempts — such as that of Ken Wilber — have postulated a scale of moralities, as one “evolves” from stage to stage. Such attempts are clearly self-serving and unprovable, not to mention incompatible with a true moral will. Evola anticipated such scales when he wrote:

The life of the spirit is essentially that of freedom. It makes no sense to speak of a transcendent law — whether natural, rational, or moral — which would determine how the stages would proceed in accordance with some incontrovertible sequence: the passage from one stage to the other is instead unconditioned, it happens if it happens, its direction is not deducible from one stage to another; it is an absolute achievement, an achievement, therefore, for which one cannot, but even must not, ask for a further reason.

The material on Anthony is taken from the booklet “Rational Man” by Constantine Cavarinos and is available from the Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies¹³.

Posted on 2010-12-02 by Cologero

* * *

Matt on 2010-12-02 at 12:21 said:

Would it be valid to say that Anthony's notion of the divine rational faculty being present in man in essence but not necessarily in existence is in the same spirit as Evola's (and in the wider context of Tradition) view that the Self is present in essence but not existence?

Also, after getting more acquainted with St. Anthony's view of what makes one human and its relation to morality, I now further understand your comment modern day Christians being hesitant to include his writings in current translations of the Philokalia.

GF on 2010-12-09 at 00:08 said:

So the true moral project is the struggle to make oneself exist, or in religious language, to heal the soul. Can we perhaps see 'civic virtue' as a corresponding exoterism?

Cologero on 2010-12-10 at 07:39 said:

Yes, that was the point of the juxtaposition, to demonstrate the compatibility of Anthony with Tradition. We always need to avoid being distracted by the theology and dig down to the underlying metaphysical, or esoteric, core. I've been told by someone who has been involved

¹³<http://www.ibmgs.org/>

with esoterism and mysteries for over 50 years that the Coptic religion (Anthony was Egyptian) is a Christian veneer over the ancient pharaonic religion. I have no way to verify that, as interesting as it sounds. (The Coptic language is based on ancient Egyptian.)

Cologero on 2010-12-10 at 07:43 said:

Exactly, if "heal" means "make whole". Not 'civic virtue' if you mean an external code of conduct that "I" must follow. But yes, if on the lines of synarchy, such as described in *The City of the Sun*.

Matt on 2010-12-10 at 10:49 said:

Cologero,

Yes that is really interesting. If that's the case, Coptic initiates achieved what the Templars and Hermeticists ultimately failed to do with the catholic church.

Meditations on the Old Testament

5.1 The Stages of the Fall

The meditation of Christian Hermeticism — whose aim is to understand and advance the work of the alchemical transformation of the spirit, the soul, and matter, from the state of primordial purity before the Fall, to the state after the Fall, and from the latter to that of the Reintegration — proceeds from the seven “days” of the creation according to Genesis to the seven stages of the Fall, then to the seven miracles of St. John’s Gospel, and then to the seven sayings of Jesus concerning himself in order to conclude with the seven “words” of Jesus Christ crucified and the seven stages of the Passion.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Meditations on the Tarot. Letter XXI: The Fool*

Wouldn’t it be dreadful if some day in our own world, at home, men started going wild inside, like the animals here, and still looked like men, so that you’d never know which were which?

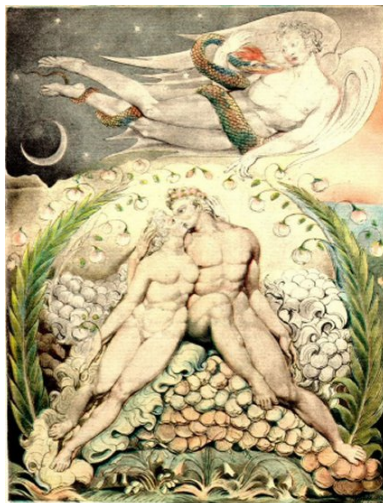
C S LEWIS, *Prince Caspian*

In order to achieve the alchemical transformation described above, the stages of the Fall of man documented in Genesis need to be understood. Although there are four levels of interpretation of sacred texts, the historical or literal, the allegorical, and the moral levels are not our concern here.

Anagogical Interpretation

There have been many attempts, some quite clever, to interpret the story of Eden in a historical, or rather material space-time, event, in continuity with our own world. However, the Fall is by its nature discontinuous. This is not to deny that there is an historical, or pre-historical, understanding possible, but that is best left to the meditation of the seven stages of creation. The point is that there is not physical understanding, at least in the way we understand the physical.

However, besides a physical history, there is also a psychical history of the world, i.e., there is an “inside” as well as an “outside” to history. The psychical history always leaves traces in consciousness that can be recovered. This is the anagogical interpretation which transcends the material world process, and it is recovered through Hermetic meditation, almost like a deep phenomenology. This gives us access to the real inner history of mankind. Tomberg describes it this way:



One can no longer deny the fact that in the psychic domain, nothing dies and that the whole past lives present in the diverse layers of the depths of consciousness — the “unconscious” or subconsciousness — of the soul. Palaeontological and geological layers contain only the imprints and fossils of the now dead past; psychic layers, in contrast, constitute a living witness to the actual past. They are the past which continues to live. They are memory — not intellectual, but psychically substantial — of the actual past. For this reason, nothing perishes and nothing is lost in the domain of the psyche; essential history, i.e. real joy and suffering, real religions and revelations of the past, continue to live in us, and it is in us that the key to the essential history of mankind is to be found.

Letter VI. The Lover

Seven Stages

As was pointed out previously, the world as an ordered whole, as Being, is a static world. A dynamic world, one in which there is the possibility of morality, love, and creativity, requires free beings, beings who can say “I”. Then, there must be a not-I, or hindrances, in order to make freedom actual and not merely virtual.

In the Edenic stage, Adam was conscious of his real I and was in direct contact with God. The hindrance was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which he was commanded not to eat; this was the object of temptation. There was also the tempter, the same being who tempted Jesus in the desert. The phenomenology of the temptation and subsequent fall are told in the early chapters of Genesis.

The seven stages of the Fall are summarised in Table 5.1, followed by an interpretation of each of them.

Stage of the Fall	Consequence
The Voice of the Serpent	Spiritual Disobedience, Doubt
The Delight to the Eyes	Greed
The Temptation of Experience	Spiritual immodesty
Cain's Fratricide	Fall from higher self to lower self
The Generation of Giants	Marriage of the lower self with lower beings
The Tower of Babel	Substitution of the real by factitious existence
Sodom and Gomorrah	Material instead of Spiritual Evolution

Table 5.1: The Stages of the Fall

Stage I: The Voice of the Serpent

The formula of horizontal consciousness of the serpent would be that of realism, pure and simple: “That which is in me is as that which is outside of me, and that which is outside of me is as that which is in me.” This is horizontal consciousness (simultaneous knowledge of the subjective and the objective), which sees things not in God, but separated from him or “naked” within itself, through itself and for itself. And as the self here replaces God (horizontal consciousness being that of the opposition of subject and object), the serpent says that on the day when Adam-Eve (Adam and Eve) eat fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden, their eyes will open and they will be as gods, i.e., the self will replace the function previously filled by God and that they will know good and evil.

Letter VI. The Lover

Prior to the Fall, Adam’s intelligence was vertical, oriented toward God, and were not conscious of naked things, or those separated from God.

their eyes had not yet been opened and they “they were both naked and were not ashamed.”

Genesis 2:25

“They saw divine ideality expressing itself through phenomenal reality”, i.e., the world was a theophany. They had knowledge of the ideal and the real, or direct perception of hylomorphism.

The temptation is for the self to replace God, so that it will know good and evil:

If before they saw things in divine light, they will see them now in their own light, i.e. the function of illumination will belong to them, just as once it belonged to God. The source of the light will be transferred from God to man.

Eve listened to the voice of the serpent to eat from the tree as clearly as the original command to avoid it. The two contrary voices are the origin of doubt, or double-mindedness. (This is clearly expressed in the German word *Zweifel*, or two-ness.)

Faith, on the contrary, is a single inspiration. The principle of obedience is to listen to the sole voice from above. The desire for power does not result in certainty, but instead leads to inner confusion and insecurity.

Stage II: The Delight to the Eyes

The woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold”

Genesis 3:6

Apart from God’s illumination, the tree looked delightful. Tomberg expands on this idea:

She looked at it in a new way — no longer as formerly, when the sole voice from above vibrated in her being, when she experienced

not the least attraction for the tree, but rather now with the word of the serpent vibrating in her being — with a questioning, comparing, doubting look, i.e. ready to have experience. Because when one is in doubt, one is induced to have the experience in order to dispel it — if one does not surmount it by raising oneself to a higher plane.

The desire for experience is the beginning of greed.

Stage III: The Temptation of Experience

She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat.”

Genesis 3:6

The act follows the idea. So the idea of personal power and the delightfulness of the tree induce in Eve the desire to have the actual experience. In today's world, the desire for experiences is quite strong. Drugs, sex, loud music, and so on, are all temptations that induce the desire to experience them. The negative results are numerous, etc., addiction, death, disease, heartbreak, etc. These occlude the presence of God.

This quest for experiences is the opposite of emptiness, or spiritual mind fasting. To put it another way, emptiness is spiritual chastity, which forgoes harmful or sinful experiences. The attempt, then, to assuage doubt through experiences is spiritual immodesty.

It would be contrary to the holy vow of chastity to put forward a hand and to take from the tree of knowledge. The spiritual world does not in any way tolerate those who seek experiences. One seeks, one asks, one knocks at its door. But one does not open it by force. One waits for it to be opened.

That is, one relies on Grace, not on force.

Stage IV: Cain's Fratricide

And Cain said to Abel his brother: Let us go forth abroad. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and slew him.

Genesis 4:8

The next three stages are the logical development of the original sin, which are realised. We let Tomberg's description speak for itself.

For Cain's fratricide is the primordial phenomenon containing the seed of all subsequent wars, revolutions and revolts in the history of the human race.

The root of the fratricide is the revolt of the "lower self against the "true self—of the fallen "likeness" against the intact "image".

to wander is the inevitable lot of the revolt of the "lower self against the "higher Self

Cain was exiled because the rebel against his "higher Self will no longer live under the law of the vertical but. rather under that of the horizontal, i.e. he will be "a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth". (Genesis 4:12) That is, he will no longer be rooted.

Stage V: The Generation of Giants

Now giants were upon the earth in those days. For after the sons of God went in to the daughters of men, and they brought forth children, these are the mighty men of old, men of renown. ~ Genesis 6:4

The generation of giants is the primordial phenomenon which is the proto-historical seed of all subsequent pretensions in the history of the human race for individuals, groups and peoples to play

a domineering role as divine sovereigns, and thus all pretensions of being “supermen”.

At the root of the generation of giants is the marriage of the “lower self with entities of the fallen hierarchies instead of with the “true Self”.

To be drowned is the lot entailed by the pretension to be a “superman”. He who unites himself with an entity of the fallen hierarchies, instead of with his “higher Self, to the point of being possessed, will be drowned, i.e. he will fall prey to madness.

Marriage with lower hierarchies or pre-Adamic beings (see, e.g., Mouravieff, *Gnosis*) indicates that these lower hierarchies become intertwined with the lower parts of the human psyche.

The followers of Lucifer are beautiful, so they affect the emotional level of the soul, or astral body, bypassing the intellect. That attraction is the beginning of self-deception and hence lying.

Then the etheric body is likewise infected, which is the centre of the will. The will becomes weak, seeking the satisfaction of bodily urges instead of the Will of God. Satan is the ape of God, so this distorted will mocks and ridicules anything higher. These beings are called Ahrimanic, the name of the devil opposed to the God in Zoroastrianism.

Stage VI: The Tower of Babel

And therefore the name thereof was called Babel, because there the language of the whole earth was confounded: and from thence the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face of all countries.

Genesis 11:9

This temptation involves lower selves acting collectively in order to replace the Higher Self. Tomberg explains the meaning of the building of the Tower of Babel.

The building of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) is the primordial phenomenon containing in seed form all subsequent tendencies in the history of the human race towards the conquest of heaven by means of forces acquired and developed on the earth.

At the root of the building of the tower of Babel is the collective will of “lower selves” to achieve the replacing of the “true Self of the celestial hierarchies and God with a superstructure of universal significance fabricated through this will.”

For the tower blasted by lightning suffices to reveal to serious meditation the comprehensive arcanum of the relationship between the will and destiny — between what one wants and what happens.

To be blasted by a thunderbolt is the fate of building, collectively or individually, a tower of Babel.

Stage VII: Sodom and Gomorrah

Sodom and Gomorrah could have been saved by ten righteous men among them, that is, by spiritual selection. Opposed to that, is the idea of natural selection, that the world evolves by totally natural processes. Tomberg says we are given two choices:

Those for whom evolution is an organically determined process in which descent and ascent are only two successive phases of a single cosmic vibration? Or those who see in evolution a cosmic tragedy and drama whose essence and leitmotiv correspond to the parable of the prodigal son?

The natural approach denies the ideas of the Fall, perdition, redemption, and salvation. Its symbol is the Ouroboros, a closed circle. It is the denial of freedom in the world.

The serpent took his tail in his mouth and thus formed a closed circle. He turned himself with great force and thus created in the world the great swirl which caught hold of Adam and Eve. And the other beings followed them.

This is the situation of all naturalistic, mechanistic, and historic theories of the world: things will happen automatically apart from the human will. Opposed to the idea of a closed circle is the idea of a spiral, the state before the Fall, which allows for true growth, development, and creativity.

Posted on 2018-11-05 by Cologero

* * *

argusandphoenix on 2018-11-05 at 11:15 said:

"She looked at it in a new way – no longer as formerly, when the sole voice from above vibrated in her being, when she experienced not the least attraction for the tree, but rather now with the word of the serpent vibrating in her being—with a questioning, comparing, doubting look, i.e. ready to have experience" This reminds me of your post on Electricity (as opposed to Life): Electricity being the vibration of the serpent within our being."

Boreas on 2018-11-05 at 12:54 said:

Excellent text Cologero, thanks! Much food for thought.

Luciferians following Blavatskyan thought see in the parable of the Fall man's liberation from animalistic ignorance and tend to see God as a tyrant wishing to keep man enslaved. This the reversal of what you and Tomberg say about the matter, and I was too once ensnared by this luciferian philosophy. It has also been used by occultists of the modern satanic variety to promote feminism, as Eve is here seen as the liberator. I would very much like to hear your thoughts about these things in light of the more traditional version.

james on 2018-11-05 at 15:43 said:

Thanks for another great post.

J. R. R. Tolkien on 2020-09-17 at 11:00 said:

Following the principles that the more cannot come from the less, that the perfect cannot come from the imperfect, also the findings of Michael Behe that mutations cannot construct something new but only alter already existing genes. It would therefore seem that if there are degenerate human forms, it would seem that they degenerated from the primordial form, it is impossible to understand exactly how this happens, hence the eternal doubt, if neodarwinism was true how does it become self-conscious? It would also have to explain that. There is no need to mention that it doesn't explain many things, since this should be obvious.

No one knows the mystery of the origins, no one will ever know, there are things beyond human understanding, this is one of the things that we will never know. There are traces of primordial humanity everywhere, the swastika for instance, the rites of initiation. But we are not satisfied.

Meditations on the Gospels

6.1 Meditation on the Immaculate Conception

One can also say that the incarnated human being is the product of two heredities — horizontal heredity and vertical heredity, the latter being the imprint of the individuality from above and the former being the imprint of the ancestors here below. This seeks to express that he is the product of two imitations — horizontal and vertical, i.e., that in order to become what he is he owes it to imitation of his ancestors from the past and to that of himself above. In the last analysis, therefore, it is a matter on the one hand of horizontal heredity going back to the archetype or terrestrial heredity, i.e. Adam, and on the other hand of vertical heredity rising up to the Father who is heaven, i.e., God. This is why it is so important to allow light from the dogma of the **immaculate conception** to convince us of its truth, for what is at stake is the line of vertical heredity — “God-man heredity”.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

The Father gave her his Son, the Son came down into her virginal womb to become her child; in her the Holy Spirit miraculously fashioned the body of Jesus and made her soul his own dwelling place, penetrating her whole being such an ineffable manner that the expression “Spouse of the Holy Spirit” is far from adequate to express the life of the Spirit in her and through her. In Jesus there are two natures, divine and human, but one single Person who is God; here on the contrary we have two natures and two persons, the Holy Spirit and the Immaculata, but united in a union that defies all human expression.

ST MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

For the Word generated by the Father is understood by the one in whom it is received perfectly — by that person who is the Immaculate Conception.

ST MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

By the power of the Holy Spirit the Word became incarnate from the Virgin Mary.

Nicene Creed

Just as Eve was the genetic equivalent to Adam, apart from the X chromosome, so likewise is the New Adam the genetic equivalent to the New Eve. In our time, given our knowledge of biology and genetics, the possibility of a virginal conception is no longer inconceivable.

So Jesus, the New Adam, is the genetic image of his Mother, Mary, the New Eve. Moreover, while the body of Jesus was in Mary’s womb, her soul was, in Kolbe’s words,



the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. As we saw in Letter II on the High Priestess, the Holy Spirit can be reflected only in the completely unperturbed soul, a soul protected from sin. That is Mary, who understood the Spirit perfectly.

As Tomberg points out, we are under the law of horizontal heredity, in imitation of our ancestors, going back to Adam. This prepares the biological and social environment in which the individuality can incarnate. Hence, Jesus appears at a specific time and place, to the mother prepared to receive him.

While Mary was “full of grace” from the beginning, we are likewise called to be full of grace; this is *theosis*. This is confirmed in Mary as the Queen of Heaven. For us, it is something to be achieved. For that, she is our model.

Jesus has two natures, divine and human, in one Person. We, through *theosis*, can have a divine as well as a human nature. However, we retain our own Person, so this union of the human with the divine requires two persons. By purifying our own soul, the Holy Spirit can become more fully reflected in our own consciousness. Then the Logos is born in us, too, and we put on our true Self:

And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Posted on 2022-12-08 by Cologero

* * *

DEWnada on 2022-12-08 at 16:36 said:

The Theotokos can be considered the Pneumatophoric Hypostasis according to Bulgakov. If we apply Tomberg's Luminous Holy Trinity model with Bulgakov's Sophiology we then get: Mary, the World Soul / Holy Soul, consort of the Holy Spirit & Pneumatophoric Hypostasis; Bat Kol / Shabbat HaMalka, Daughter of God, consort of the Son of God / the Logos & the Logophoric Hypostasis; and Elat / Al-Kat, the Divine Mother consort of the Divine Father El and the Mysteriophoric Hypostasis. Trino-Sophia is here seen as the transcendent uncreated Sophia Mother, the mediating unbegotten Sophia Crone-Daughter, and the immanent created Sophia Virgin-Immaculata. I made up the Logophoric and Mysteriophoric Hypostases terms and welcome better conceptual designations. Critique and amplify. Sat Naam

6.2 Meditation on the Incarnation

At this time of year, it is certainly *de rigueur* to meditate on the meaning, actuality, or possibility of the Incarnation of the Logos in Jesus Christ. This will involve brief excursions into the implications for a spiritual path, metaphysics, and the radical change in the world process in the current cycle.

Of its actuality, I am sure all readers are familiar with the story; if not, it is easy enough to find. There will be objections to the story as miraculous and incredible, but these objections can only arise from an *a priori* commitment to a positivist world view that cannot prove itself to be true. If, on the other hand, one is ready to accept the actuality of unusual preternatural or supernatural phenomena, e.g., miraculous cures, amazing powers of yogis and tulkus, the skills of magicians, etc., then the story of the birth of Jesus cannot be so easily rejected. There is only the "vexed theological question of grace", as Julius Evola called it in a recent translation; some will be willing to see it, others will not.

However, in this meditation, we are not as interested in the Incarna-



tion as a matter of faith, but rather as gnosis. We will stipulate it as a given, and move on. As one of our mottos indicates, “truth lies in the interior of man” (St Augustine). Augustine moved beyond Neoplatonism when he came to the realization that the Logos of the Greek philosophers, understood in an objective and exterior way, was actually the same Logos Who was incarnated and is known in man’s interiority.

The Path of Affirmation

This is expressed in the Path of Affirmation that is conceivable in the Incarnation. All previous forms of spirituality follow the path of denial. Specifically, these would include Advaita Vedanta, Buddhism, and Neoplatonism. This path ultimately tries to transcend the material conditions of life, including the human person, by the realization of one’s true identity as Brahman or the One. In this path, any determination is a limitation.

In the Path of Affirmation, on the contrary, God is approached through these determinations. St Athanasius describes the Incarnation: Not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God. This differs from Oriental the idea of an Avatar in which a god takes on the appearance of a man for a specific purpose, e.g., Parashurama, an avatar of Vishnu, appeared to overcome the rule of the Kshatriyas.

Rather, the Logos raised the human up to God, once and for all. Christ, as the second Adam, restored the possibility of the Primordial state to man. In this Path, man is not annihilated, so that only God remains, but instead there are two who are united. Although largely ignored in common practice, this is an essential element of the catholic, apostolic, Roman religion. Some quick examples, although many more can be found, including the official Catechism:

IRENAEUS: The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to

be even what He is Himself.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Word of God became man, that you may learn from man how man may become God.

Of course, the premier example of this teaching is Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where he shows us the path to union with God through the rich imagery of his poetry.

In Christian Hermetism, particularly as evidenced in Valentin Tomberg¹ in our time, the birth of the Logos in consciousness is the result of the alchemical marriage between the Holy Spirit and the purified soul. That becomes the new, or absolute self, in union with the Father, or absolute being.

So, the goal of this path is the spiritual and alchemical transformation of man, and even the world. Ultimately, no one can be convinced of this through any type of rational argument, so this is only an invitation to follow that path. Once any type of realization of this nature is reached, one's faith is secure.

The World Process

In the literature on tradition, most of the attention is focused on metaphysical teachings that aim to transcend all material circumstances. There is lip service to social organization, viz., the idea of castes and hierarchy, as well as the notion of cycles of the four ages. However, the relation of metaphysics to the world process is often left unclear; to those who are striving to be liberated from all worlds, what difference would it make?

But, if the real path is the Path of Affirmation, then it does indeed make a difference. In the idea of the four ages, there is often the misconception that the ages run according to some independent and objective cosmic clock. If that is true, then one can be passive and simply wait for

¹<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/the-elements-of-sacred-magic>

events to occur. In particular, the end of the Kali Yuga comes at the prescribed moment apart from any consciousness of it. That is indeed odd for a teaching that regards consciousness as primary over the physical and material. If that were true, then Guenon's call for the establishment of a new elite would make no sense.

All traditions recognize three forces: the three *gunas* in the Vedanta, or the Great Triad of Taoism. We will stick to the Western formulation of Providence, Will, and Destiny. Destiny is the automatic and deterministic element of the world process. Its law is that of increasing entropy; left to its own devices, the world winds down, ultimately to a totally undifferentiated state. This is compatible with profane science.

Of course, such a state is impossible, since nothing could occur in it and God is Infinite possibility. Providence is God's or Heaven's influence on the process, not through force, but rather through suggestion and persuasion. This opens up new possibilities, especially the possibility for a new world to follow the old when all its possibilities have been exhausted. The middle term in this is the Will of man, responding to Providence and transforming his being and that of the world.

Creation and Redemption

The pagan view of cycles was defective. It regarded the world as uncreated with no beginning and man as perpetual. Hence, cycles reoccurred, in perpetual return, the same thing over and over. Even Guenon rejected this, since, in his view, a world had a beginning and an end, the end of one being the beginning of another, much different, world.

This we take as closer to the truth. Hence, we must understand the cycle, from a perfect age to an ever more degenerate one, and finally to the birth of a new age that is both in continuity with and different from its predecessor. This must be understood as a drama involving God, man, and the earth, not as the predetermined result of a mindless process, or

even worse, some demiurge.

Hence, the transition from a golden age to a lesser one, did not happen according to some calendar, but was rather the result of man's will. On the other side, the transition from the kali yuga to a golden age cannot happen from within the world process but rather it must be interjected into it from a transcendent or providential source, to then be adopted by the Will of man, at least by some who will be the leaven.

So the Incarnation is the beginning of the process of Redemption, that is, the regeneration of man and the world in a world to come. That is why Valentin Tomberg could regard Creation and Redemption as the two great magical acts since magic "requires the perfect union in Love between two distinct and free wills: the divine and the human".

We know creation interiorly through the memory of the Primordial state and its loss. There is the testimony of saints and mystics, there is the evidence of it through perduring vestigial preternatural powers of the soul; ultimately, conviction comes through our own remembrance of that state.

Similarly, for the Incarnation. We know that there have been saints who have reached the divine union, or Beatific Vision, in this life, the Western equivalent of the jivan-mukti. We, too, may have been graced with a taste of that union.

A follow up will deal with the scientific and metaphysical issues involved with this.

Posted on 2013-12-22 by Cologero

* * *

JA on 2013-12-23 at 10:22 said:

Gnosis is not heresy, heresy is denial of the true facts as given in the Creed and as taught by the Councils and the Magisterium. Gnosticism denies Christ came in the flesh.

Catholicism is an elitist religion, read the book *Nobility* by Dr Plinio if you doubt that.

“taste of union”... so Cologero, you have achieved theosis ?

Blessed Christmas, my brother in Christ !

scardanelli on 2013-12-23 at 10:25 said:

“Ultimately, no one can be convinced of this through any type of rational argument, so this is only an invitation to follow that path.”

In the previous posts on Evola and Coue, we have seen that Faith is certainly a necessary beginning condition. Yet ultimately faith must be resolved in certainty. What the discursive mind believes upon faith must be seen and verified within. When one sees the truth in this fashion, there is no more need to argue or attack the assertions of others. One can perform spiritual works of mercy out of love for one's neighbor though.

When Faith stagnates, when it is not resolved in certainty, it becomes rigid dogma, it becomes the empty worship of the Pharisees. Thus one feels the need to “protect” the truth, when in reality, the truth is and always will remain without your help. Certainty from within is the way to spiritualize matter and to establish truth in the midst of this world. This is the ultimate support of Orthodoxy.

Matt on 2013-12-24 at 11:42 said:

No talk of the act of creation being fundamentally misguided and/or evil, no talk of the world being created by a being/principle opposed to the True God; I fail to see how the post is gnostic in the historical-religious sect sense, nor do I see a supposed initiatic fetishism.

Merry Christmas.

Jacob on 2013-12-24 at 21:58 said:

I try to avoid posts that contain just praises, but this was such a great post IMO. The comments were very interesting as well. There did not seem to be anything Gnostic in the post to me. In fact, as Cologero said the Clementine initiation post is a great post on Gnosticism. Still, I think even things connected to Gnosticism are useful insights as long as they can be separated from the specifically heretical teachings. I mean, I don't think anyone who is actually informed on these things would say using Meister Eckhart's teachings are a bad idea, although he ran into trouble with the inquisition. The Templars and the Jesuits as well had their problems.

Anyway, Merry Christmas everyone.

Michael on 2013-12-24 at 22:00 said:

I've been wondering how Tomberg's path relates to Guenon's idea of the elite. Thank you for clarifying. Those who follow the path outlined by Tomberg are those who cooperate with the providential spark ("Thy will be done") that will bring about the golden age.

It seems that Catholicism is both exoteric and esoteric at the same time, and the esoteric can be uncovered by those who approach from both a hermetic or exoteric angle.

Merry Christmas!

anon on 2013-12-25 at 10:15 said:

Speaking of Gnosticism, not only as historical sect, but primarily as an eternal tendency (or current) within the human heart, either dormant or active, one that occurs in the context of many religious different traditions, and which finds not only spiritual, but also political expression, I was glad to see two articles on Gornahoor that mention Voegelin. I stumbled across him before ever hearing about Evola or Guenon.

The death of the spirit is the price of progress. Nietzsche revealed this mystery of the Western apocalypse when he announced that God was dead and that He had been murdered. This Gnostic murder is constantly committed by the men who sacrificed God to civilization. The more fervently all human energies are thrown into the great enterprise of salvation through world-immanent action, the farther the human beings who engage in this enterprise move away from the life of the spirit. And since the life the spirit is the source of order in man and society, the very success of a Gnostic civilization is the cause of its decline.

A civilization can, indeed, advance and decline at the same time—but not forever. There is a limit toward which this ambiguous process moves; the limit is reached when an activist sect which represents the Gnostic truth organizes the civilization into an empire under its rule. Totalitarianism, defined as the existential rule of Gnostic activists, is the end form of progressive civilization.

– Eric Voegelin

"One comment I should make right now. Obviously the title 'Gnosticism and Modernity' is, at least partly, inspired by my own work in the field. But when I hit on this problem, that was 25 years ago. In the meantime, science in this matter has advanced. And today I would have to say that Gnosticism is one component in the historical structure of modernity but no more than one."

– Eric Voegelin

"I have been called every conceivable name by partisans of this or that ideology... a Communist, a Fascist, a National Socialist, an old liberal, a new liberal, a Jew, a Catholic, a Protestant, a Platonist, a neo-Augustinian, a Thomist, and of course a Hegelian."

– Eric Voegelin

Michel on 2013-12-26 at 16:02 said:

Oh that with yoke tender,
Realize thy burden great bull,
Plough thine fields strangely,
With the fierceness of a thousand suns,
Subtly dancing to finer hymns,
Pouring as gentle streams from breaking skies,
Arise thou Great Morning Star!
Seize thy rightful place stolen from thee,
Fly thou blithe spirit, in swirls of liquid burning,
Embrace The Son of like particle,
Ever galvanized, progenitor of Thee once silent,
Now e'er flaring Blazing Song.

Cologero on 2013-12-27 at 00:17 said:

I have been away visiting family and am just now catching up on comments, for whose civilized tone and intelligence I am grateful, even those who respectfully disagree. Of course, I have no desire to be “original”; rather, I want only to bring to light what has been forgotten and perhaps re-express it in contemporary terms. If anyone is still confused by this post, please ponder these words from St Augustine (Confessions, Book XI, Ch 8):

Thus, in the gospel He speaks through the flesh; and this sounded outwardly in the ears of men, that it might be believed and sought inwardly, and that it might be found in the eternal Truth, where the good and only Master teaches all His disciples.

Max on 2013-12-27 at 17:36 said:

A child might live happily without worries, almost not even conscious of himself. But he still wishes to grow up, know and do things. We must not necessarily regard the procession of the ages of the world as a degeneration. It depends on perspective. Through the different qualities of time we can know the whole like a child gets to know himself as he grows older. If as an old man he still remembers how it is to be a child in his heart, he is beyond time and can see all in a single instant. There is a purpose to living which can only be found and fulfilled by living.

6.3 The Herald Angels Sing

ANÁDIR IMAGEN

Relying on the best of recent biblical exegesis, Fr. **Joseph Ratzinger** provides interesting details regarding the actual birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. He avoids the sentimentalism often surrounding the Christmas story, and instead brings out its essential meaning. Interested readers can consult the book. What I prefer to focus on here is the meaning rather than the events, which are familiar to all. In particular, God's revelation via angels brings out important details that are still helpful today. The method of this revelation was different for Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds. These took the forms of command, dreams, and song, respectively, all forms of communication that bypass the lower intellectual mind and pass directly to higher centers.

We have already discussed the annunciation to Mary. This came in the form of a command, not a logical proof nor a discussion. Such an incredible message could only take hold in a sinless consciousness, aligned already with the will of God, and not beclouded by the "personal equation". There can be no debate; only the free choice between obedience and rebellion.

The God of the Human Race As we saw in the myths of the origins of Rome, the idea of birth of a god-man from the mating of a god with a virgin was not at all unknown in ancient time. Even the ancient Greek cities had their spiritual origin from a man they revered as a god. The god, in all those cases however, was the god of a specific people and bestowed a particular identifying spiritual gift on them. However, as Fr. Ratzinger points out, such myths created a mixed being, a demi-god, whereas Christ was fully God and fully man, without confusion or mixture. Moreover, unlike the timeless quality of a myth, this story is determined at a specific place and time.

So the meaning of the birth of Jesus is different. The Holy Spirit, the father of Jesus, is the “giver of life” itself, not just one aspect of life. He is the God of the human race, not just a particular people. Nevertheless, such a possibility was known to a few people at that time:

As to the god of the human race, a few philosophers had an idea of him; the mysteries of Eleusis might have afforded a glimpse of him to the most intelligent of the initiated; but the vulgar never believed in such a god.

FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *The Ancient City*

With the birth of Jesus, this God was revealed to all. The revelation to the vulgar will be described in this segment in regard to the shepherds. The revelation to the initiated will be the topic of the next segment on the Magi.

Horizontal and Vertical Heredity While Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus horizontally back to Adam, the first man, John indicates the vertical origin of Jesus as the incarnation of the Logos. Analogously, the birth of each human being is the result of both horizontal and vertical heredity. In horizontal heredity, the physical and psychic characteristics of the ancestors are transmitted to the descendants. In the vertical dimension, the intellectual soul, or individuality, is breathed into the body/soul.

This is explained more fully by **Valentin Tomberg** in Letter XX of *Meditations on the Tarot*. Horizontal heredity operates by imitation of the ancestors. As Fr. Ratzinger points out, we are born into a “collective net” of our ancestors, tracing back to the very origins of the human race. The unraveling of this net requires the birth of the perfect man. Only then can we experience a second birth, as adopted children of God, which lifts us out of and liberates us from that net. We see this in John:

To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:12-13

Joseph's Role Since Joseph's role is often given short shrift, it is useful to focus on what Fr. Ratzinger writes about him:

Whereas the angel "came" to Mary, he merely appears to Joseph in a dream ... Once again this shows us an essential quality of the figure of Saint Joseph: his capacity to perceive the divine and his ability to discern. Only a man who is inwardly watchful for the divine, only someone with a real sensitivity for God and his ways, can receive God's message in this way.

Obviously, what was revealed in Joseph's dream was quite difficult to believe. So how was Joseph able to discern God's will, even as revealed in a dream? That is because Joseph was a just, or righteous, man, and a just man is one whose life is lived in and from the word of God. Also, Joseph was "inwardly watchful", that is, he monitored and guarded his thoughts. He was able to see past the trap of the collective net of human influences to recognize the divine influences that transcended them.

Of course, many people ask God for a "sign" to reveal His will for them. But are they just? Could they really recognize God's message, given their spiritual state. Or do they prejudge the sign so that only something consoling or beneficial is interpreted as a sign? Fr. Ratzinger offers this challenge:

God is constantly regarded as a limitation placed on our freedom, that must be set aside if man is ever to be completely himself. God, with his truth, stands in opposition to man's manifold lies, his self-seeking and his pride. God is love. But love can also be hated

when it challenges us to transcend ourselves. It is not a romantic “good feeling”. Redemption is not “wellness”, it is not about basking in self-indulgence; on the contrary, it is liberation from the imprisonment in self-absorption.

The duty of the father is to name the son. This name, “Jesus”, was revealed to Joseph. It means “Yahweh is salvation”. The angel in the dream explains: “He will save his people from their sins.” Since this is the purpose of the incarnation, it is imperative to understand exactly what that means. Fr. Ratzinger explains:

Man is a relational being. And if his first, fundamental relationship is disturbed—his relationship with God—than nothing else can be truly in order. This is where the priority lies in Jesus’ message and ministry: before all else, he wants to point man toward the essence of his malady . . . if you are not healed there, then however many good things you may find, you are not truly healed.

Clearly, it is not simply a matter of “doing good”, as Plato thought, or of avoiding certain behaviors. Rather, sin is the state of not being in proper relationship with God, the Logos.

The Shepherds Shepherds were in the fields around the region where Jesus was born, “keeping watch over their flocks by night.” Once again, we see the theme of watchfulness. The shepherds were not just outwardly close to the event, but “they were also inwardly closer to the event, unlike the peacefully sleeping townsfolk. . . . inwardly they were not far from the God who had become a child.” The watchfulness of the shepherds has become part of the monastic tradition.

When the angel appears to the shepherds, they were filled with fear. Just as the angel Gabriel reassured Mary not to fear, the angel likewise dispels the shepherds’ fear. The spirit of fear is the opposite of the spirit of love.

Then a multitude of angels appeared praising God: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.”

Fr. Ratzinger makes this fascinating point:

Christianity has always understood that the speech of angels is actually song, in which all the glory of the great joy that they proclaim becomes tangibly present.

As **Julian Jaynes** documented in *The Origin of Consciousness in the Break-down of the Bicameral Mind*, speech in the forms of commands, music and poetry bypass the rational mind. Specifically, there is a direct revelation or intuition, without the duality of yes/no, faith/doubt, etc. Even among the Greeks, the muses sang the poetry, so that they literally heard the muses.

So the true experience of angels is not dualistic, and not even visual. The angelic song goes straight to the shepherds’ hearts, not their heads.

Posted on 2014-12-24 by Cologero

* * *

X on 2014-12-24 at 23:50 said:

“Clearly, it is not simply a matter of ‘doing good’, as Plato thought, or of avoiding certain behaviors. Rather, sin is the state of not being in proper relationship with God, the Logos.”

Sin is the state of not having fully internally realized Logos.

David on 2014-12-26 at 03:14 said:

This series of article with Joseph Ratzinger are really good. I have alot to think and assimilate. Everything appear so simple yet it is so far reaching; and this yet again is only an illusion of the mind because of its relation to Being. Thank you for all your articles but those one really speaks. Eager to read the last one.

Q on 2014-12-26 at 08:09 said:

“The spirit of fear is the opposite of the spirit of love.”

But fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, isn't it? How do you interpret that? I always simply looked on that as meaning that wisdom starts by fearing to tread on the wrong path.

Scardanelli on 2014-12-26 at 09:49 said:

Q, I think the type of fear discussed above is one of closing oneself off to influences from above and clinging to the profane. Love on the contrary is opening oneself to the divine. The fear of God as the beginning of wisdom refers to fear as a type of humility before God. This type of fear is a self emptying that must take place if we are to receive wisdom.

Tom Blanchard on 2014-12-26 at 11:39 said:

Our priest gave a very similar homily this Christmas Eve, specifying that the inner meaning of the Shepherd is watchfulness, illustrating the interior disposition necessary to hear the speech of the Angels. Quite likely he also took inspiration from Ratzinger's *Infancy Narratives*...: <http://www.anglicanphiladelphia.org/sermon/christmaseve-14.mp3>

Michael M on 2020-12-24 at 10:21 said:

Interesting to note that it was a dream that came to St. Joseph, at night, but contrasting to other nightly revelations as specifically a dream vs. Nicodemus' talks, Mary's visitation, the Shepherds meeting and the Magi and the Star. Again he is told later to take the family to Egypt...through a dream, so perhaps we can see that for the Just, the Lord may speak to them there. Joseph was inwardly watchful and his dreams were not inundated with the incorrect tendencies and worries which most will give as the reason not to interpret dreams. Not something I've worked out entirely but given the next year (2021) declared to be a year dedicated to St. Joseph it may be time for these works to be contemplated more.

A small comment on the inner watchfulness of the Shepherds, as the Magi are to be addressed in a later post I will save that part when it comes up to contrast.

From a short lecture by Fulton Sheen, he compared the Shepherds to those that know nothing. I took this to mean a more natural, do nothing, know nothing, unconcerned with the world approach, somewhat 'natural' or simple in that they live and subsist on one task which is their flock and develop a type of watchfulness that is scorned by those concerned with material things. Good, honest, and hard working folk, here angels speak to their hearts, for they are not centered in the mind but in the every day, every moment present of life. Song and emotion (pure) are tied together as it moves the heart and can be grasped through the heart outside of time unlike a purely 'rational' way of understanding, the full Gestalt of it is different, much like the simple life of a monk which is mentioned above as well.

6.4 The Holy Grail

All that He wrought among them, all that He said and suffered, He disposed in such wise that not a single moment was passed without mystery, not a single letter was devoid of some mystery.

SAINT BERNARD, *Sermon III on Palm Sunday*

In particular, if Christ died on the cross, it can be said that this was by reason of the symbolic value which the cross possesses in itself and which has always been recognized by all traditions; thus, without diminishing in any way its historical significance, the latter may be regarded as directly derived from the symbolical significance that goes with it.

RENE GUENON, *Symbolism of the Cross*

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

JOHN 19:31-34

There are many legends about the Holy Grail, but there will be no attempt to write a documentary. Instead we will focus on one interpretation in particular, because it reveals the theological and metaphysical significance of the Grail, namely Sergius Bulgakov's essay on the Grail which is an extended meditation on John 19:34.

Primordial Tradition The Grail Legend begins with Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve, who was able to rescue the Grail from the Edenic Garden. Then he passed this on so that the Primordial Tradition was never lost to humanity.

The Sufi Suhrawardi also traces it back to Seth (and ultimately to Hermes). He lists Greek philosophers, Persian kings, and Muslim mystics, so the Primordial Tradition was not unknown. Persian sages included the Magi who visited the infant Jesus in Bethelhem.

The purpose of the Grail was not fulfilled until it received the Blood and the Water of Christ.

The Death of Christ The most common legend is that Joseph of Arimathea captured the blood of Christ in the Grail. Even so, the Cup could not have held all of it, so we can ignore it in Bulgakov's account. Bulgakov points out that Jesus was already dead before the spear was thrust into his side, an anomaly that demands an explanation.

Metaphysically, death is the separation of the soul from the body. Nevertheless, His body did not undergo corruption (Acts 2:31), so there was still a connection of the spirit to the body. Hence, the body was alive although in a state of deep sleep and unconsciousness. This is remarkably close to the definition of the causal body. Since the body was alive, in a sense, the spear caused the blood and water to flow out; Christ's body was then without blood and water.

The Meaning of Blood Blood has special significance because it is both material and psychical; thus, it unites the gross body to the animal soul (or life body). The soul, of blood, is intermediate between the body and the spirit. The animal soul lives in the blood; at death, it decays along with the body. The animal soul is not immortal. The human spirit is immortal and animates the soul and indirectly, the body.

Christ's soul was separated from His body after the spear was thrust

into his side. The Resurrection restored the soul and blood to the body. That is the blood of the Eucharist. The blood is related in two senses:

1. The blood is the body of the spirit, the I.
2. The blood contains the soul of the body

The Mystery of Golgotha Valentin Tomberg, from a different perspective, comes to a similar conclusion:

With the Mystery of Golgotha, when the blood of Jesus Christ flowed onto the ground, a force was planted in human blood and in the Earth's soil; it counteracted the demonic element in the blood and the enslaving influence of the subterranean spheres that works through the soil. This counterinfluence causes human blood to carry not only the subjective illusions of demonic airs, but also the objective impulse of conscience. In addition, this influence not only robs the ground of its enslaving power, but it also speaks of nature's yearning and hope for redemption through humankind. Through it, human blood receives the capacity to reflect moral and spiritual truth, just as natural water reflects the sky; the ground, however, "receives blood," and thus the capacity of "groaning together with the whole creation."

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Christ and Sophia*

The Sanctification of Creation The blood and water that flowed from Christ's side into the world, now abides in the world. Bulgakov writes:

Through the stream of Christ's precious blood and water that flowed out of his side, all creation was sanctified—heaven and earth, our earthly world, and all the stellar worlds. The image of the **Holy Grail** expresses

precisely the idea that the world received His holy relic in the blood and water ... The whole world is the chalice of the Holy Grail.

That is why it is hidden in the world from the world. There are exceptions:

It exists in the world as an invisible power, and it becomes visible, appears to pure human hearts who are worthy of its appearance.

In other words, it does not appear to the gross body but only to the life body (or etheric body), which is why the search continues.

Ascension and Second Coming The Ascension into Heaven does not refer to a spatial event. Heaven is not a “place” somewhere in the cosmos. Rather it indicates a change of state; that is, it refers to the glorification and deification of Christ’s human substance. For that reason, it becomes inaccessible to human perception.

That change of state began with the Resurrection when Christ appeared to his disciples. Even after the Ascension, he appeared to Paul. So his abiding in Heaven does not preclude his appearance on Earth.

Likewise, the Second Coming does not refer to a spatial change, the journey from Heaven to Earth. On the contrary, it refers to a change in human beings so that Christ will become visible to those prepared to “see” him. The Holy Spirit manifests and realizes Christ in them. But first the soul must

be purified so that it accurately reflects the Holy Spirit. Then Christ will be born from the union of the Spirit and the body. See *The Word is Made Flesh*.



The Kingdom of Christ The blood and earth restore liberates humanity from its bondage, or at least its possibility. Tomberg explains:

For humanity this influence on blood and earth means the restoration of equilibrium in these regions and hence the establishment of freedom. Now it depends upon human beings themselves whether they will yield to the enslaving influence of earth and the phantasm-producing influence of blood, or whether they will view the whole earthly globe as the victim of the fall of humanity and make blood the bearer of conscience.

Bulgakov announces this restoration in the colorful phrase, “The Great Pan is dead!” By this is meant that the Prince of the World has been cast out of his role and that the World is now the Kingdom of Christ. Even Nature has been changed. The natural world is no longer an obstacle, it is not evil in itself. Rather humanity has been given new powers for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, not only within use, but in the midst of us. A new civilization arises.

Although Satan has been removed as Prince of the World, he still lingers to tempt humanity. Tomberg provides a more complete picture:

The establishment of equilibrium (and with it, human freedom) is not the only result of the Mystery of Golgotha. It was also the beginning of a gradual retrieval of Lucifer’s territory. The spirit who had severed this territory from the region of the hierarchies of good now experienced an inner conversion through the Mystery of Golgotha. True, that conversion initially concerned only Lucifer himself and not, say, the Luciferic influence in human beings—which is still active in the old direction and can be changed only by human beings themselves.

Redemption

Most probably we are in Eden still. It is only our eyes that have changed.

G K CHESTERTON

After the Fall, humanity lost the constant awareness of God (or, lost sanctifying grace); nature fell under the dominion of Satan and was resistant to human effort.

Redemption is the restoration of the status quo ante before the Fall. That means the state in which there is the awareness of God's presence in the life body; nature itself has been changed. But just as the Serpent was in the Garden, Lucifer is still present among us, not as Lord, but as tempter. He has no power over us unless by our consent.

References Sergius Bulgakov, *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist*
Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*
Sayyed Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*
Rene Guenon, *Symbolism of the Cross*

Posted on 2021-04-03 by Cologero

* * *

Paulo Adolpho on 2021-04-05 at 23:47 said:

Cologero, why god created lucifer, knowing that one day he would turn his back on him. God really likes to see the circus on fire?

Advent Meditations

7.1 Week 1

Just as we celebrate and anticipate the Incarnation of the Logos on the material plane, so, too, we want to prepare for the analogous birth within the human soul. **Valentin Tomberg**, in Letter II, refers to the “second birth” as *Christian Yoga*. Hence, the elements of Christian Yoga are analogous to the stages of yoga described by **Patanjali** in the *Yoga Sutras*. In Letter XVI, *The Tower of Destruction*, these stages are related to the three stages of the spiritual life described by **St. John of the Cross**. Hence, we have a schema relating these yoga stages in three languages as exposed in Table 7.1.



Tomberg contrasts the Vedantic ideal with the Christian goal. The former, he says, leads to the extinction of consciousness, whereas the Christian goal is the “unity of two”. For more on the differences between Yoga and Christianity, see *Studies in the Psychology of the Mys-*

Sanskrit	Greek	English	Spiritual Life
Dharana	Catharsis	Concentration	Purification
Dhyana	Theoria	Meditation	Illumination
Samadhi	Theosis	Contemplation	Mystical Union

Table 7.1: Stages of Christian Yoga

tics by **Joseph Marechal, S.J.**¹, so we needn't be concerned about that topic at this point.

The Greek Mystic **Nicholas Cabasilas** in *The Life in Christ* explains that there are three obstacles to theosis. These are:

1. NATURE. The Divine nature is different from human nature.
2. SIN. A will corrupted by evil separate us from God.
3. DEATH. In the mortal body, we can see only the dim reflection in the mirror; in this state our bodies are dominated by sense life.

These obstacles are overcome by the following historical events respectively:

1. INCARNATION. This unites the human and divine natures in one person.
2. CRUCIFIXION. This leads to the forgiveness of sins.
3. RESURRECTION. This overcomes death and the attraction to sense life.

Cabasilas relates these ideas to the effects of the sacraments, or mysteries, with the aim of salvation. The esoteric path aims beyond this to liberation. That aim is union while still in the mortal body:

1. Purify our soul so it becomes the perfect reflector of the Holy Spirit.
2. Expose our false sense of I, replaced with the mind of Christ.
3. Move from a life of instinct to a life of intelligence and love.

The first step is concentration without effort, which depends on detachment and purification (See Letter XVI)

- DETACHMENT is the separation from “arbitrary, personal activity”. We are no longer absorbed in the minutiae of life, but are living on a higher level.
- PURIFICATION is the cleansing of the mirror by no longer being agitated by emotional disturbances, etc.

Spirit must become divine Breath in place of arbitrary, personal activity, and Water must become a perfect mirror of the divine Breath instead of being agitated by disturbances of the imagination, passions and personal desires. Reintegrated consciousness must be born of Water and Spirit, after Water has once again become Virginal and Spirit has once again become divine Breath or the Holy Spirit. Reintegrated consciousness therefore becomes born within the human soul in a way analogous to the birth or historical incarnation of the WORD.

Meditations on the Tarot. Letter II: The High Priestess

Posted on 2022-11-25 by Cologero

* * *

Balder on 2022-11-28 at 15:41 said:

You have almost converted me with Christmas Meditations. It seems I retain many of those things named animistic in the pamphlet and they are impossible to discard. Perhaps I should build upon them.

rui artur on 2022-11-30 at 08:36 said:

@ Balder,

there is nothing in the Christian revelation which is opposed to an animistic conception of reality – in fact, it presupposes it. Except perhaps some specific practices (but even those are liable to be syncretized).

Balder on 2022-12-01 at 04:14 said:

Rui Artur, I think you are right. But my worldview is thoroughly Pagan. Like the old pagan gnostics of old, I can only underwrite some aspects of the Christian dogma, creed and ethics, and also the metaphysics of Christianity because of its theological dimension is bereft of the total and higher significance of Aryan Metaphysics and esotericism, which I think (like Guénon) can be found from the Advaita Vedanta and from the Eastern Metaphysics, and from the Indo-European line. This is why I consider myself as a Gnostic Christo-Pagan. The parts of the Bible I highly value are some of the Torah, and from the New Testament especially the Gospel of John, Sermon on the Mount – which I consider to be the highest ethical teaching given to mankind as counsels of perfection – and the Apocalypse, which I consider to be Hyperborean teachings in origin.

As a person I still consider myself being largely under the impulse of the Finno-Ugric national spirit Lemminkäinen or Kaukomieli, or the Norse Balder, who like Osiris, Jesus and Tammuz and the like live, die, resurrect and live free in the new World in the New Heaven and Earth. The Ragnarök went already.

Kaukomieli on 2022-12-02 at 06:43 said:

I must mention that there has been an attempt to synthesize Christianity with the doctrine of Non-Dualism of the Vedanta. The book is called Christianity and the Doctrine of Non-Dualism, the writer “A Monk of the West”. It was quite a baffling reading I must admit.

<https://www.sophiaperennis.com/books/christianity/christianity-and-the-doctrine-of-non-dualism/>

Arthur Konrad on 2022-12-02 at 08:10 said:

Perennialism implies a belief that certain traditions contain teachings which have objective value, and that these traditions partially overlap, or overlap on important points (and on others they don't). Therefore, to derive value from, or acknowledge the validity of a certain tradition is a matter of practicality, for people who approach this in a practical way. It is easy to see why going an inch further from this can lead to all sorts of extravagances, such as the Perennial Philosophy, Traditionalism, New Ageism, etc. This is of course, all very Western.

So, what is the practical value of having a 'Pagan worldview' nowadays? I'm asking this honestly. For it somehow applies that one has it, and another does not, so what in it is distinctly Pagan which is not in fact, in its positive aspects, merely Universal? Doing away with the whole concept of 'Paganism' is in my opinion, in the first order a matter of good education – is there anything more absurd than to call the Roman religion a 'Pagan' (i.e. 'rustic') religion? Or that of Athens or Babylon or Song?

Kaukomielä on 2022-12-03 at 11:03 said:

First of all, apologies for Cologero for taking this thread too far afield from the topic. I'll try to be as short as possible in my answer to Arthur.

@ Arthur Konrad, of course the term Pagan (or Heathen) is a controversial and not a very good one in that. I have, however, used the term to refer spiritualities of a non-Abrahamic kind. In short, your message implies that practicality and utility trumps over idealism and truth. If you're a pragmatist and a utilitarian, go and choose to be an trans-sexual Atheist bright, I'm sure you'll be more welcomed in today's world than a Christian or a Pagan who sticks to their guns in the face of the onslaught of modernity.

There are some distinctive features of a Pagan worldview that separate it in its essential aspects from the Judeo-Christian and other revelations of the Abrahamic kind (the question of Monotheism being only one). Ancient Paganism, Hermeticism and Christianity are all essential parts of the Western mystery Tradition, and whatever we think about the first, it still runs in the veins of many, and with the words of Tomberg "one must love the pagan past". Universality, locality and particularism have all their appropriate places. Christ in this picture is the Corner Stone and the Lapis that the builders forgot and rejected.

Arthur Konrad on 2022-12-03 at 14:46 said:

@ Kaukomielä

'In short, your message implies that practicality and utility trumps over idealism and truth'

Truth is highly practical and utilitarian

‘There are some distinctive features of a Pagan worldview that separate it in its essential aspects from the Judeo-Christian and other revelations of the Abrahamic kind’

The religion today corresponds very much to the impulses and character of the age. One aspect of our age’s character is the insatiable greed for controversy.

Kaukomielä on 2022-12-03 at 15:25 said:

@ Arthur

“Truth is highly practical and utilitarian”

Then I just might suggest you go ahead and practice some chaos magic, let’s say do the invocation of Bugs Bunny and tell us about the results of that meeting with the Christ Rabbit. Their motto is however, if it works, it’s the truth.

“The religion today corresponds very much to the impulses and character of the age. One aspect of our age’s character is the insatiable greed for controversy.”

With following the impulse of Christ we get to eat that sacred super-worldly bread and to drink that sacred essence of holy water which quenches our thirst eternally and would have made Odin himself happy when hanging on the Yggdrasil for nine days and nights. From the spirit of our Bloodline we are life loving joyous and proud pagans; Christ calls to us to transcendental, heavenly happiness.

Kaukomielä on 2022-12-03 at 16:21 said:

Christianity.....My views

Monotheism.....Panentheism / Monism / Non duality

Trinitarian Doctrine.....Nine-Fold Valknutr / Odin-Vili-Ver

Animal souls dissolve.....Animal souls transmigrate in the group soul

Only one life..... Transmigration / Re-incarnation (the term is debatable, God / Spirit is the only transmigrant)

A new soul in every birth..... Pre-Existence of the Soul

Strict Patriarchy..... Norse / European temple of Priests and Priestesses (not Woman Priests)

Origin of Mazdaen dualism of Good and Evil..... Indo-European and Nordic-Hyperborean line of non duality

Man as Imago Dei.....confirmed also

Creationism..... Emanationism

God as Person the Consummation..... Doctrine of the Absolute

Solar Worship / Strict Right Hand Path..... Synthesis of Solar and Lunar cults (the RHP / LHP)

Tendency to absolutism, fundamentalism, and even totalitarianism..... Plurality and Higher unity of multifaceted viewpoints

Strickt Orthodoxy.....No Heresy if practical ethics are in line
Judeo-Christian calendar year.....Hermetic Solar Year of Euinoxes and Sol-
stices

Tendency to collectivism.....Aristocratic Ethics

Arthur Konrad on 2022-12-03 at 17:29 said:

I can only assume you verified all these things through personal insight

P.S. What is a Judeo-Christian calendar year?

Kaukomieli on 2022-12-04 at 19:59 said:

@ Arthur

“I can only assume you verified all these things through personal insight”

Yes. I deciphered them from the universal mind.

“What is a Judeo-Christian calendar year?”

I think Cologero is speaking a little about that in this topic.

Kaukomieli on 2022-12-04 at 20:48 said:

@Arthur, cordially and humbly: “Who is among you who gives your brother a
stone (the doctrine) if he asks for bread (practical life wisdom)”?

You say: truth is practical and utilitarian. I ask you, is what is practical and useful
the truth?

7.2 Week 2: Purity of Thought

The distinguishing mark of the Hermetic path is that it seeks to make
dogmas and teachings “real” in consciousness. As Tomberg insists, this
does not make it “better” than the exoteric teaching, only that it is a path
that some are called to follow.

In this spirit, we can meditate on what **Christmas** means.

- The birth in the past of Christ the Redeemer.
- The expectation of Christ the Judge at the end of time.

- The birth of Christ in the soul eternally, now.

Redemption is the reversal of the effects of the Fall. The Hermetic Tradition calls this process “regeneration” as we seek to make that real in consciousness. The undoing of the Fall requires the second birth of Christ/Logos in the soul. That is, the soul, as the passive element, reflects the activity of the Spirit. Disturbances in the soul — passions, images, desires, thoughts — will distort the reflection of spirit, just as disturbances on a pond distort its reflection of the surrounding forest.

It is this personal, subjective element that is at the root of such disturbances. Thus, the solution is to become more objective about oneself. That is to take the standpoint of Christ the Judge. Justice is possible only when the Judge is totally objective, not influenced by ignorance, opinion, personal preferences, or subjective passions. **Valentin Tomberg** writes in this regard:

The vow of *obedience* is the practice of silencing personal desires, emotions and imagination in the face of reason and conscience; it is the primacy of the ideal as opposed to the apparent, the nation as opposed to the personal, humanity as opposed to the nation, and God as opposed to humanity. It is the life of cosmic and human hierarchical ordering; it is the meaning and justification of the fact that there are Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; Dominions, Virtues, Powers; Principalities, Archangels, Angels; Priests, Knights and Commoners. Obedience is order: it is international law; it is the state; it is the Church; it is universal peace. True obedience is the very opposite of tyranny and slavery, since its root is the love which issues from faith and confidence. That



Figure 7.1: Relic of the crown of thorns

which is above serves that which is below and that which is below obeys that which is above. Obedience is the practical conclusion to that which one recognises as the existence of something higher than oneself. Whosoever recognises God, obeys.

Yet that does not address the question of “how” to obey. We cannot obey as long as the subjective element has its grip on us; these are impure elements that disturb the soul. Tomberg discusses the idea of purity in the context of the five wounds and three vows. We can summarize these in two stages: purity of thought and purity of will. These correspond to the head and the heart respectively.

Purity of thought is the “crown of thorns”. The following passages explain that symbol:

Thus every crown is essentially a crown of thorns. Not only is it heavy, but also it calls for a painful restraint with regard to the thought and free or arbitrary imagination of the personality.

Here true thought receives confirmation and subsequent illumination; false or irrelevant thought is riveted and reduced to impotence. The crown of the Emperor signifies the renunciation of freedom of intellectual movement, just as his arms and legs signify his renunciation of freedom of action and movement. He is deprived of the three so-called “natural” liberties of the human being — those of opinion, word, and movement.

The “crown of thorns” is borne, in principle, by every person capable of *objective* thought — the “crown of thorns” being given to the human being since the beginning of human history.

The lack of concentration allows arbitrary, free, or irrelevant thoughts and images to flourish in our consciousness. We need to renounce them so they can be replaced by true thoughts; the art of concentration will help in that regard.

Nicholas Cabasilas writes this in his commentary on the beatitude of “purity of heart”.

To cleanse one's heart and to exercise one's soul for sanctification — what striving or effort or exertion would effect this more than these thoughts and meditations? Yet, if one examines this carefully, one would not call it the effect of meditation on Christ, but rather of the meditation itself.

To be occupied with the noblest of thoughts means to abandon evil thoughts; but this is to be pure in heart. Our life and our birth are twofold, both spiritual and fleshly. By its desires, the spirit fights against the body and the body resists the spirit. Since it is impossible for contraries to be at peace and to join together, it is quite evident that one or other of the desires will by means of memory, gain control over the thoughts and cast the other out. The memory of the life and birth which are according to the flesh and concentration on such matters produce the most depraved desires and the uncleanness to which it leads. So likewise, when the soul by constant remembrance holds fast the birth of the baptismal washing, the divine Food which is appropriate to this birth, and the other things which belong to the new life, it is likely to lead desires from the earth to heaven itself.

We can extract these main points:

- There is our fleshly birth in the body and a second spiritual birth.
- There is an inner spiritual battle between lower (personal, subjective) thoughts and higher (spiritual, objective) thoughts
- “Constant remembrance” is necessary. In our terms, this is constant awareness, “concentration without effort”

Hermetically, this movement from fleshly to spiritual thoughts is a mystical evolution. This is the regeneration of the inner life from the Instincts to fully human life of the Intellect and Intuition.

For more on this, you could start with *Salvation and Evolution*².

As for the idea of regeneration, it is necessary to understand what the Fall entailed. Given Tomberg's high opinion of Jacob Boehme, this summary of Boehme's teaching may be helpful, especially the sections on the Fall of Lucifer and Adam's Fall: *Christian Gnosis: Jacob Boehme*³.

Posted on 2022-12-02 by Cologero

7.3 Week 3: Purity of Will

It is futile to attempt to be concentrated if the Will is passionate about other things. The oscillations of the mind will never be able to achieve silence unless the Will itself infuses it with silence. Only the still Will can render the imagination and the intellect silent in concentration.

St. John of the Cross and **St. Theresa d'Avila** never tire of repeating that the concentration necessary for spiritual prayer is the fruit of the moral purification of the Will.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Meditations on the Tarot*

Concentration can be applied on three planes:

- Mental
- Astral
- Physical

We began with learning concentration on the physical plane. Then we transferred that knowledge to our thoughts or mental plane. Finally, we will do the same to our emotional life for the purification of the soul.

Note that there are many more levels beyond these. In the *Letter on the Star*, Tomberg explains:

There are *twelve* degrees higher than that of the consciousness of the human transcendental Self. It is necessary, therefore, in order to attain to the ONE God, to elevate oneself successively to degrees of consciousness of the nine spiritual hierarchies and the Holy Trinity.

The Mental, Astral, and Physical correspond to the spirit, soul, and body. In the Letter on Judgment, Tomberg relates them to the Trinity. The undivided self, then, corresponds to the Unity of God.

Image and Likeness The idea of man being the “image and likeness” of God is a recurrent theme throughout Meditations on the Tarot. Although people today often like to repeat that we are all born in the “image and likeness” of God, that is not at all the Traditional teaching: rather, because of the Fall, we have lost the full likeness and it is the task of the Hermetist to restore it. Tomberg explains:

The ideal of alchemical *transformation* of Hermetism offers to human beings the way to the realisation of true human nature, which is the image and likeness of God. Hermetism is the re-humanisation of all elements of human nature; it is their return to their true essence. Just as all base metal can be transformed into silver and into gold, so are all the forces of human nature susceptible to transformation into “silver” or “gold”, i.e. into what they *are* when they share in the image and likeness of God.

If we are already in the “image and likeness of God”, then our level of being as such right now is perfect: i.e., there is no need for transformation, redemption, or regeneration.

The image of God, according to **St. Bernard**, is our “essential” being. In that case it must be our higher intellectual soul, which distinguishes humans from animals. It is unsullied, it has no negative part, it is free, it is the source of the “spark of God”, and so is perfect. However, we rarely

live at that level of awareness. It is as though we own a penthouse suite, yet choose to live in the basement.

The likeness, on the other hand, is our soul life which reflects the image. This is — because of the various perturbations — what must be purified.

Emotions As was mentioned last time, personal emotions need to be silenced to make the soul capable of “receiving from above the revelation of the word, the life and the light.”

Now, the emotional center of our being, or the “astral” plane, has its own way of knowing. This is called the “cognitive power of the emotions”. This manner of knowing is quite different from that of the thinking center or mental plane. This knowing is episteme, the knowledge of the heart, beyond the *dianoia* of mental knowing. There is a higher emotional component concomitant with its knowing.

Our age is dominated by thinking, arguing, and so on. This dualistic thinking distorts the emotional center. Tomberg writes this about the relationship between the will and thinking:

Thus, it is not thought as such which allows the desire for personal greatness or the tendency towards megalomania, but rather *the will* which makes use of the head and which can take hold of thought and reduce it to the role of its instrument.

Organic humility, replacing the current of the will-to-greatness is not found in the head, but rather in the heart, i.e., it reaches the heart, penetrating from the right-hand side. Because it is there that the will-to-greatness has its origin and it is there from whence it takes hold of the head and makes it its instrument. This is why many thinkers and scientists want to think “without the heart” in order to be objective, which is an illusion, because one can in no way think without the heart, the heart being the activating principle of thought; what one can do is to think with a humble and warm heart instead of with a pretentious and cold heart.

When functioning well, the heart and the head cooperate. In the example of megalomania, on the other hand, we see that the will can take hold of the head, making it the servant of a disordered emotion. Common knowledge warns us about making decisions when in a negative emotional state, but that is often ignored. Moreover, it is even celebrated, since an opinion stated with strong negative emotions is falsely given a higher value.

The other distortion is when the head tries to think without the heart under the guise of objectivity. This leaves our emotional range limited and underdeveloped.

Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing The inner life of the soul, in our present condition, does not present a unity. Rather, our desires, aspirations, passions, and so on, are in conflict with each other. First one dominates, then another, as though there were multiple separate “I’s” inhabiting, and even fighting for control over, the soul. Tomberg calls these “lost sheep” alluding to the Gospel story. He explains:

The soul’s faults and vices are not, fundamentally, monsters but rather, lost sheep. . . . As it is the same with all the soul’s faults and vices, we all have the mission of finding and bringing back to the flock (i.e. to the soul’s choral harmony) the lost sheep in ourselves. We are missionaries in the subjective domain of our own soul, charged with the task of the conversion of our desires, ambitions, etc. We have to *persuade* them that they are seeking the realisation of their dreams in a false way by showing them the true way. It is not a matter of commandment, but rather of the alchemy of the cross, i.e. making present an alternative way for our desires, ambitions, passions, etc. It is a matter, moreover, of the alchemical “marriage of opposites”.

Our alchemical task, then, is the transmutation of these multiple selves into a single I.

Posted on 2022-12-09 by Cologero

7.4 **Week 4: Incarnation of the Logos**

The tendency is certainly accentuated, if not prevalent, amongst contemporary Hermeticists to concern themselves more with the “Cosmic Christ” or the “Logos” than with the human person of the “Son of Man”, Jesus of Nazareth. More importance is attributed to the divine and abstract aspect of the God-Man than to his human and concrete aspect.

It was contact with the person of Jesus Christ which opened up the current of miracles and conversions. And it is the same even today.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Letter VIII: Justice*

With these words, Tomberg is warning us not to forget about the first coming of Jesus in the flesh, regarded as somehow inferior to an esoteric interpretation. A fortiori, the Hermetist’s goal is not to create an alternative or “better” religion. Nevertheless, there is always a stream of “New Age” gurus who claim something similar. For example, one such popular guru claims to have discovered the real meaning of all the religions, viz., what the Buddha “really” taught or what Christ “really” taught. He then claims that the religions have distorted those teachings and offer no authentic path. Although he came to that realization spontaneously, he will teach you certain “modalities” for a hefty price to reach the same realization. This is the sin of simony, the notion that spiritual enlightenment is a commodity that can be bought and sold.

The idea of the Logos was not unknown to pagan philosophers and Hermetists prior to the first Christmas. However, it is the fact of the Incarnation that matters most, as St John pointed out in the remarkable claim that the Logos became flesh. So Jesus is not only the fulfillment of

the Mosaic law, He is also the fulfillment of the natural law. This is made clear by the visit of the Magi.

Tomberg makes us wrestle with a philosophical conundrum. The thinking mind, restricted to *dianoia*, knows essences, and the Logos is “the fundamental universal [or essence] of the world”. And Jesus Christ is then the “particular of particulars”. Some minds, like that of the new age guru, see that as representing a limitation on their thought; hence they resort to a sort of Docetism which denies the need for the physical, including a birth, visible church, sacraments and so on. It is a small step, then, to reach the conclusion that there is no need for the purification of the head and the heart in order to reach higher states.

Since for God, essence and existence are One, to know God is to know both his essence and existence. Tomberg explains that

Christian Hermeticism itself can only be knowledge of the universal which is revealed in the particular.

Hence, the Christian Hermetist “aspires to mystical experience of the communion of beings through love”. Thus he seeks spiritual friendships in the particular.

Yet, not unlike the pagan Hermetists — his precursors — or even the new ager perhaps, he also seeks the mystical experience of communion with the Logos, i.e., the knowledge of the universal.

Spiritual Beings Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange tells us that the angels know intuitively, not rationally. Each higher level of angel understands more through the knowledge of ever more encompassing principles. Tomberg asserts:

For Hermeticism there are no “principles”, “laws”, and “ideas” which exist outside of individual beings, not as structural traits of their nature, but as entities separated and independent from it.

This makes perfect sense, since knowing and being are one. If an angel, then, “knows” a certain principle, it is ipso fact the embodiment of that principle. Ideas have no power on their own, they are purely passive. An idea has effects only when it is immanent in a being. We can choose to understand our environment as an abstraction, the mere interplay of impersonal forces. Or else, we can choose to understand it as a great drama of personal forces.

A recent episode of the Vikings series on the History Channel had an interesting scene. Rollo was a Viking warrior who converted to Catholicism and was rewarded with the Duchy of Normandy. Unable to totally forget his pagan past, he explained to his wife, “When you hear thunder, it is only thunder. But when I hear thunder, I hear the sound of Thor.” He was still at the level of original participation in Owen Barfield’s sense. Can we recover that state of original participation?

Tomberg tells us we must “love our pagan past”, so perhaps we can learn something from Rollo. Now this is not a new teaching, but actually something we forgot. So perhaps we can try to remember. The mystic visionary, Catherine Emmerich, saw that the world was populated with angels: each country, city, diocese, and parish has its own guardian angel. Fr. Ripperger, in a youtube video⁴, reminds us furthermore that each generation has “generational spirits”, not all benign, as a sort of Zeitgeist.

If we can overcome the Zeitgeist of scientism, we can meditate on our role in the cosmic hierarchy. See yourself in relation to your family, parish or other community, nation, Church, then ascending through the angelic hierarchy. And when you get to the Logos, see also the Baby in the manger.

Posted on 2022-12-16 by Cologero

⁴<https://youtu.be/mpJgVAsø2Dc?si=DRtUFauKacdQ`HyN>

Hermetic Meditations on the Catholic Doctrine

8.1 The True Horoscope

Man alone is capable of communion with God. For to man alone among the living creatures does God speak: at night through dreams, by day through the intellect. And He uses every means to foretell and prefigure the future blessings that will be given to those worthy of Him.

SAINT ANTONY THE GREAT

The True is the good of the intellect.

DANTE

The first stage of [esoterism] is attained when one enters conscious interaction with the beings of the angelic hierarchy. [It] does not involve knowledge of universal laws, but entering conscious interaction with the beings who know the mysteries of birth. The true horoscope will not be reached by a path of calculation but through a path of interaction with suprasensory beings.

What angels have imparted to humankind is the horoscope in the true sense.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Meditations on the Old Testament*

Free Will is the Greatest Gift

The greatest gift that in his largess God
Creating made, and unto his own goodness
Nearest conformed, and that which he doth prize
Most highly, is the freedom of the will,
Wherewith the creatures of intelligence
Both all and only were and are endowed.

DANTE, *Paradiso*

Dante learns an interesting lesson on Mercury: Humanity used free will to fall into sin by Adam's rejection of the Supreme Good. He took it on himself to know good and evil, and endured the just consequences of what was done freely. He thereby cut humanity off from higher influences, which was then left to its own devices. The two obvious solutions are unworkable.

1. One option is for humanity to save itself. That hardly seems possible since no political program, medical procedure, pharmaceutical, eugenic practice, educational technique, etc., has proved efficacious.
2. Or else, God could simply pardon Adam, but that would negate the whole point of free will.

A crime demands restitution. In this context, the crucifixion was paradoxically both a just penalty against humanity's sin and also a crime against Christ.

Providence

A generated nature its own way
Would always make like its progenitors,
If Providence divine were not triumphant.

On Venus, the discussion turned to Providence. Francesco da Buti, who wrote a commentary on the *Divine Comedy* in the 14th century, in which he lists both the negative and positive astrological influences of the planets. Regarding them, he concludes:

All are not found in one man, but a part in one, and a part in another, according to Divine Providence; and the wise man adheres to the good, and overcomes the others.

In other words, the planetary effects do not compel on their own, but all ultimately are subject to Divine Providence. A fortiori, Providence even supersedes genetic and family influences. Otherwise, without being open to higher influences, nothing could change in the world. Moreover, the wise man can pick and choose which influences to follow.

Vows Since free will is the greatest gift to humanity, so a vow, which is the voluntary suspension of free will, is a sacrifice of great worth. The three traditional vows are obedience, poverty, and chastity. Valentin Tomberg describes their esoteric meaning:

- The vow of **obedience** is the silencing of personal desires, emotions and imagination in the face of reason and conscience; it is the primacy of the ideal as opposed to the apparent, the nation as opposed to the personal, humanity as opposed to the nation, and God as opposed to humanity. It is the life of cosmic and human hierarchical ordering. That which is above serves that which is below and that which is below obeys that which is above.

- The vow of **poverty** is the practice of inner emptiness, which is established as a consequence of the silencing of personal desires, emotions and imagination so that the soul is capable of receiving from above the revelation of the word, the life and the light. Poverty is perpetual active vigil and expectation before the eternal sources of creativity; it is the soul awaiting what is new and unexpected; it is the aptitude for learning always and everywhere.
- The vow of **chastity** means the resolution to live according to solar law. Although virtue is boring and vice is disgusting, that which lives at the foundation of the heart is neither boring nor disgusting. The foundation of the heart is love. The heart lives only when it loves. It is then like the sun. And chastity is the state of the human being in which the heart, having become solar, is the centre of gravity.

The True Horoscope

The power and motion of the holy spheres,
As from the artisan the hammer's craft,
Forth from the blessed motors must proceed.
The heaven, which lights so manifold make fair,
From the Intelligence profound, which turns it.

The heavenly planets do not move on their own according to some fixed immutable physical law, but rather are moved by the angelic hierarchy. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his commentary, points out this correspondence:

The Intelligences, ruling and guiding the several heavens (receiving power from above, and distributing it downward, taking their impression from God and stamping it like a seal upon the spheres below), according to Dionysius the Areopagite are as follows:

- The Seraphim – Primum Mobile
- The Cherubim – The Fixed Stars
- The Thrones – Saturn
- The Dominions – Jupiter
- The Virtues – Mars
- The Powers – The Sun
- The Principalities – Venus
- The Archangels – Mercury
- The Angels – The Moon

Valentin Tomberg makes this perfectly clear:

The spiritual world is not a world of laws, principles and ideas; it is a world of spiritual beings — human souls, Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim and the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father.

Takeaway In order to understand your horoscope, i.e., your place in the world, your nature and destiny, it is necessary to know the spiritual beings active in your life. For example,

- Your Guardian Angel, who is an all too often neglected aspect of your life
- The archangels who influence your space: family, nation, etc.
- The principalities, the spirits of time (zeitgeist), who are guides through history

This is a partial list. Moreover, there are malignant spirits simultaneously influencing your life. Generational spirits may even attach themselves to families for years.

Anne Catherine Emmerich saw how these angelic influences are assigned at birth:

I have seen that everyone receives two spirits at birth, one good, the other evil. The good one is heavenly by nature and belongs to the lowest hierarchy; the evil one is not a devil, not yet in torments, though deprived of the vision of God.

Her vision leaves open the possibility that the evil one could even be redeemed.

Saint Diadochos of Photiki in the *Philokalia* shows how they can act in two ways:

Spiritual knowledge teaches us that there are two kinds of evil spirits: some are more subtle, others more material in nature. The more subtle demons attack the soul, while the others hold the flesh captive through their lascivious enticements. Thus there is a complete contrast between the demons that attack the soul and those that attack the body, even though they have the same propensity to inflict harm on mankind. When grace does not dwell in a man, they lurk like serpents in the depths of the heart, never allowing the soul to aspire towards God. But when grace is hidden in the intellect, they then move like dark clouds through the different parts of the heart, taking the form of sinful passions or of all kinds of day-dreams, thus distracting the intellect from the remembrance of God and cutting it off from grace.

Ultimate control is always under Divine Providence.

DEUS VULT

Posted on 2020-11-11 by Cologero

* * *

Patricia Kay on 2022-11-11 at 16:40 said:

Would you give a brief description of these intelligences? I'm not sure what "principalities" or "thrones" or "dominions" are?

Cologero on 2022-11-11 at 16:51 said:

Tomberg recognizes that few people are able to experience the Divine Light in its fullness. The task of the angelic hierarchy, therefore, is to attenuate the Light in a manner appropriate to each one as it descends through the hierarchy. The esoteric path then is to reverse course and ascend through the hierarchy. To quote:

Each lower rank of hierarchy is a "moon" in relationship to the "sun" of the rank above it.

The angels transmit the tumultuous, strong impulses of the archangels in a bearable form, suited to human individuals, i.e., in the form of the soft light of moral clarity.

The archangels adopt the radical, valid-to-all-mankind commandments and prohibitions of the principalities (archai) to suit the special characters and capacities of the various peoples, thereby protecting them from becoming over-pressured.

And something similar is effected by the principalities in relation to the powers (exusiai), the powers toward the virtues (dynamis), the virtues toward the dominions (kryriotetes), the dominions toward the thrones, the thrones toward the cherubim, the cherubim toward the seraphim, and the seraphim toward the eternal Trinity of God.

See also:

Angelic States of Being

Death by a Kiss

8.2 Liberating the Guardian Angel

Between the angelic nature, which is an intellectual thing, and the human soul there is no step, but they are both almost continuous in the order of gradation. . . . Thus we are to suppose and firmly to believe, that a man may be so noble, and of such lofty condition, that he shall be almost an angel.

DANTE, *Convivio*, VII, 3

Nearly all that has been said theologically of the angels can be said metaphysically of the superior states of the being, just as in

the astrological symbolism of the Middle Ages the 'heavens', that is to say the various planetary and stellar spheres, represent these same states and also the initiatic degrees to which their realization corresponds

RENE GUENON, *Multiple States of Being*

In flowing and running water, in mists dissolving into water, also in the winds and the lightning flashing through the air, in all these, you have to look for the physical body of Angelic beings. The difficulty for man consists in his fixed idea that a physical body must necessarily have a definite outline. It is difficult for a man to say to himself: I see fog rising, I see a stream of water dissolving into spray, I stand in the blowing wind, I see lightning dart from the clouds, and I know that all these are revelations of Angels; behind this physical body, which is by no means so limited as the human one I have to recognise the spirit.

RUDOLF STEINER, *The Spiritual Hierarchies*

As long as the human being is regarded as just one species in the Animal Kingdom, there will be no possibility of understanding. Humanity is a Kingdom in itself; hence, humans require a cladistics distinct from merely biological categories. Starting with some early notes, and developed over time, Valentin Tomberg observed a clade based on the depth of a person's awareness of Self and his relationship to angelic hierarchies. There are three such classifications of the human being.

- LOVE CLASS: Those in this class have realized a permanent sense of I and are victorious. They live only for humanity and have come to help. These are in direct contact with the 1st hierarchy.
- CONSCIENCE CLASS: People in this class consciously take part in the conflict between good and evil. They have developed a sense of the I and are led by the 2nd hierarchy.

- **KARMIC CLASS:** These have not developed a real sense of I and are victims of the curses resulting from the Fall. The people of the third class are all still experiencing their own karma and looking for their real purpose in life. These are under the leadership of the 3rd hierarchy.

Finally there are those who are unable to develop a sense of I at this time.

Spiritual Baptism Tomberg describes a “spiritual baptism” which takes place before birth and prepares the soul for its life mission. The experience differs for each class.

For people of the 3rd **Karmic Class**, spiritual baptism consists in being consciously reminded of the fate that they will experience as karma.

For people of the 2nd **Conscience Class**, spiritual baptism brings to awareness a request from the spiritual world to focus attention on a task, or to develop knowledge of something in the spiritual world.

For people of the 1st **Love Class**, baptism consists in the soul telling the hierarchy what it is ready to accomplish.



Figure 8.1: Archangel Gabriel

Angelic Bodies In order to understand higher states available to humans, it is first necessary to be clear about how the angelic states are related to the human. The lowest order, the Angels proper, share the ether body, astral body, an intellectual soul (the “I”) with man. Hence Angels cannot understand man’s physical nature, yet are familiar with the corresponding states of the soul.

Archangels, then, like the angels have no physical body, but neither do they have an etheric body. Hence, they relate to the human on the astral level and above.

Of course, the various angels possess all the higher states of man, who, on the other hand, must work in order to reach those higher states.

Karmic Class In the *Meditations on the Tarot*, Tomberg describes the process of ascending from the third class to the first. When the soul is ready to move upward, the guardian Angel withdraws.

This is called in Christian Hermeticism “liberating the guardian Angel”. The guardian Angel is freed — often in order to be able to acquire new missions — when the soul has acquired the disposition of its part of “likeness” in order to experience the Divine more intimately and more immediately, which corresponds to another hierarchical degree. Then it is an Archangel who replaces the freed guardian Angel. Human beings whose guardian is an Archangel have not only new experiences of the Divine in their inner life, but also receive a new and objective vocation. They become representatives of a human group — a nation or a human karmic community — which means that from this time onwards their actions will no longer be purely personal but will at the same time have significance and value for those of the human community that they represent.

Conscience Class Those of the second class are under the guidance of the second hierarchy. Tomberg elucidates:

It also happens sometimes that the Archangel is freed as well. Then an entity from the hierarchy of Powers (*Exusiai*) replaces the Archangel. The human being then becomes a representative of the future of humanity. He lives in the present what mankind someday is due to experience in future centuries.

Unlike those in the Karmic class, who are passive to the forces of life, these people have a sense of I and consciously engage in spiritual warfare. They war against the spirits of the air from below while the Exusiai battle them from above.

The future of mankind depends on this outcome.

Love Class Those in the first class have a higher mission, and are under the guidance of the highest angelic levels. He uses Saint Francis of Assisi as an example.

Lastly, a guardian Elohim — and there are many of them — can also be freed. Then it is an entity of the first hierarchy, a Seraphim, who replaces him. It was so for **Saint Francis of Assisi**. The Seraphim who gave him the teaching of the Crucifixion whereby he gained the stigmata — the Seraphim in the vision of St. Francis — was his guardian. This is why Saint Francis represents more than mankind; what he represents is “divinised humanity”.

Sources:

Chakra Werk by **Willi Seiß**.

Meditations on the Old Testament by **Valentin Tomberg**

Meditations on the Tarot by **Valentin Tomberg**

Posted on 2022-04-27 by Cologero

* * *

Janet Martha on 2022-04-30 at 12:44 said:

“The personal God is the angel. The angel is the space in which the Godhead shows itself in your heart.” David Nieuwejaers, rephrasing Henri Corbin.

8.3 Angels and Demons

Since we cannot be present at the holy ceremonies in honor of the angels, we should not let this time of devotion go by fruitlessly; rather, such time as we do not spend in singing their praises, we should spend in writing about them. And because our aim is to present as best we can the excellence of the holy angels, we ought to begin with man's earliest conjectures about the angels. In this way, we shall be in a position to accept whatever we find that agrees with faith, and refute whatever is opposed to Catholic teaching.

THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Angelis*

In *The Multiple States of Being*, **Rene Guenon** recommends Aquinas' short theological treatise on the angels¹ as an introduction to an understanding of angels as higher, supra-individual states of being. Aquinas himself looks back to the ancient Greeks to begin his study of angelic beings. After all, if angels, demons, and gods are real entities or states of being and not merely figments of the imagination or objects of belief, then they can be understood by any metaphysician. Aquinas explains:

Now it is clear that every intellectual substance receives the intellected form according to its totality, or otherwise it would not be able to know it in its totality. For it is thus that the intellect understands a thing insofar as the form of that thing exists in it.

Thus, a complete understanding of the angelic hierarchy is possible only for the intellect that contains the form, that is, the idea of the angel, that is, it participates in the higher form. This is the metaphysical principle, "to know is to be".

¹https://www.gornahoor.net/?page_id=13278

Gods and the Celestial Hierarchy Confusion results from terminology, since we tend to consider the “angels” as good and “demons” as bad. However, Aquinas clarifies this by pointing out that angels can be evil and that according to **Plato**, demons can be good or evil. Regarding Plato, Aquinas writes:

In this way, therefore, between us and the highest God, it is clear that they posited four orders, namely, that of the secondary gods, that of the separate intellects, that of the heavenly souls, and that of the good or wicked demons. If all these things were true, then all these intermediate orders would be called by us “angels”, for Sacred Scripture refers to the demons themselves as angels.

So, Aquinas accepted the gods as angels. He also considered that the planets were ensouled. Hence, he seems to be implying that the gods Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and so on were actually angels. This aligns him with the Hermetic Tradition. **Valentin Tomberg**, in *Meditations on the Tarot*, assigns the correspondences listed in Table 8.1.

Archangel	Planet
Michael	Sun
Gabriel	Moon
Raphael	Mercury
Anael	Venus
Zachariel	Jupiter
Orphiel	Saturn
Samael	Mars

Table 8.1: Angel-Planet correspondence according to Tomberg.

Preternatural Phenomena Aquinas recognizes certain preternatural phenomena and attributes them to the influence of higher intellectual substance. Keep in mind that in the following passage, the Platonic “demon” is the same as the Catholic “angel”, so no inference should be made that it necessarily implies an evil or satanic influence.

[Certain followers of Aristotle] say that it is through the influence of the stars that persons who are possessed sometimes foretell future events, for the realization of which there is a certain disposition in nature through the heavenly bodies. But in such cases, there are manifestly certain works which cannot in any way be reduced to a corporeal cause. For example, that people in a trance should speak in a cultivated way of sciences which they do not know, since they are unlettered folk; and that those who have scarcely left the village in which they were born, speak with fluency the vernacular of a foreign people. Likewise, in the works of magicians, certain images are said to be conjured up which answer questions and move about, all of which could not be accomplished by any corporeal cause. Therefore, as the Platonists see it, who could evidently assign a cause of these effects, except to say that these are brought about through demons.

On Infallibility We see here that Aquinas asserts the traditional teaching that gnosis is infallible. Unfortunately, self-deception is not so easily overcome.

Accordingly, Augustine says in the Book of Eighty-Three Questions: “Everyone who is deceived, that, indeed, in which he is deceived, he does not understand.” And accordingly, concerning those things which we grasp properly by our intellect as well as concerning the first principles, no one can be deceived.

Posted on 2011-08-31 by Cologero

* * *

Perennial on 2011-08-31 at 03:45 said:

Based on similar analysis, St. Thomas conceded the possibility of legitimate astrology, practiced within certain limits. I could see where the information contained here would dovetail very nicely with St. Thomas' analysis on that question. It would be interesting to see St. Thomas' ideas on the relation between the heavenly bodies and the spirit explored in more depth.

Charlotte Cowell on 2011-08-31 at 18:24 said:

The daemon of Socrates was indeed instructive, while the demons of the modern world are known to serve the purpose of testing the motives and faith of humans. The Lesser Guardian of the Threshold springs to mind here. For a Christian, though, I wonder if Hermes, for instance, can truly be considered equivalent to (for example), Michael or Gabriel, as there seems to be a major difference in function. Let me be blunt to illustrate this point. One can imagine taking (or being taken by) Hermes as a lover – as nymphs and goddesses alike would attest – but Michael? No, I don't think so....But there are also definite similarities because both Hermes and Gabriel are heraldic messengers. Then there is the question of Nephilim that crops up for the occultist. There is a clear distinction between a Nephilim and an Elohim – should we equate it to the difference between 'good' and 'evil' or 'light' and 'dark', I wonder? Certainly there is a difference in quality. But perhaps it is analogous to the difference in quality between a rain cloud and the wispy clouds you see in the sun. The robe of one would feel like petals and the silk of cobwebs – the finest possible substance one can possibly imagine, the way that light feels. The robe of another would feel heavier, like storm clouds....one would bring you absolute joy and freedom, restoring you to a state of absolute innocence and joy, whereas another would hold you in suspense, hypnotically, hardly daring to breathe or blink lest the eye of the Watcher should fall upon the self. Who could bear to be faced with that terrible gaze? Guardian angels, in the meantime, are always loving and protective, best not forget them!

logres on 2011-08-31 at 22:36 said:

Funny you should mention the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold – I just came across Tomasso Palamadessi.

Charlotte Cowell on 2011-09-01 at 03:44 said:

i had never heard of him until you mentioned his name but – having just looked briefly into it – he seems like a very interesting character, i shall investigate further!

8.4 Changing of the Guard

The third dimension of history understood as the impact of imaginal world on human history. Wars, migrations, expansions, conversions, and so on, need to be seen in the light of this higher dimension, above and beyond the material, biological, economic, and ideological causes.

We have seen that **Julius Evola** attributes the movements of human events to hidden, transcendental forces. However, he gives no details about those forces. If we turn to **Rene Guenon**, we find an acknowledgment of those forces, but treated in a superficial way. Guenon distinguishes between the Unmanifested, Formless Manifestation, and Formal Manifestation.

Formal Manifestation is our human state, body and soul, along with the existing world. Guenon's writings are oriented to pure metaphysics, transcending all states, what he calls the **Supreme Identity** from Sufi teachings. Formless manifestation includes beings that are not individuated in the material world. As part of manifestation, its study is not properly metaphysics, but involves the traditional sciences, e.g., cosmology. This is not Guenon's task as he sees it.

There are two ways to look at formless manifestation. From the strictly human perspective, it is transcendent to the human state. However, from the perspective of the Being, the human state is just one possible state, among many other higher states of formless manifestation. Thus, in the Multiple States of the Being, Guenon mentions the angels, which are seen as exterior beings in exoteric religion. However, esoterically, they are higher states. These states are between the Absolute and the human state. For details of those states, we need to look elsewhere.

Please don't think of "angels" in the merely sentimental way that you may be accustomed to. We mean, by "angels", those superior Intelligences which form part of formless manifestation. Just focusing on one part of hidden history, namely, the history of nations and races, we find this from

Thomas Aquinas:

For in human affairs there is a common good which is, in fact, the good of a state or a people, and this seems to belong to the order of Principalities. . . . the arrangement of kingdoms and the changing of domination from one people to another ought to belong to the ministry of this order. Also, the instruction of those who occupy the position of leaders among men concerning matters pertinent to the administration of their rule seems to be the concern of this order.

THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 80

So there is an order of the angels, called Principalities, who influence or direct the various nations, ethnicities, and races. Wars, migrations, expansions, conversions, and so on, need to be seen in the light of this higher dimension, above and beyond the material, biological, economic, and ideological causes.

Book III of the *Summa* deals only with topics that can be known solely from human experience and reason, and do not depend on any special revelation. So what evidence is there to indicate that human events are subject to hidden, transcendental forces? We can propose these three:

1. The rapidity with which certain ideas and intellectual movements can grab hold of a nation, or particular segments of a nation. Seldom are they the result of intelligent forethought, but instead seem to arise spontaneously.
2. The actual results of revolutions or political programs do not comport with the original intentions. Even if this is not noticed right away, then certainly over time, any initial successes will be followed by stages of decline, until the final result is the complete opposite of the original movement.

3. It was the common experience of traditional cultures.

The first two are clear and obvious enough, so we can focus on the third. We recently posted an article by **Guido de Giorgio** about the recovery of the past. As he writes:

Whoever intends to remain in the pure domain of traditional truth, always turns, logically, toward the past, to retrace the stages of certitude and add them to his experience.

So, if we can no longer experience the world as our ancestors once did, we need to retrace our steps. The way to start is a form of Hermetic Meditation, what **Henry Corbin** calls creative imagination. In the Middle Ages, the imagination was counted as one of the inner wits.

As an example, in the Trojan War, the gods and goddesses took different sides in the conflict. In the *Convivio*, **Dante** relates this to the higher Intelligences, or principalities. He writes:

There are others like the eminent Plato who maintain that not only are there as many Intelligences as there are spheres in heaven, but also as many as there are species of things, for example one for men, another for gold, another for dimension, and so on. He held that just as the heavenly Intelligences each brought their sphere into being, so other Intelligences brought into being all other things and exemplars, each in its own species; and Plato called them Ideas, that is to say universal forms and natures. ... The pagans called them God and Goddesses.

Dante is saying much more here than that these higher intelligences are involved in human affairs in terms of politics or war. The gods and goddesses also represented certain qualities: beauty, wisdom, martial spirit, and so on, what Plato called the Ideas. In Guenon's scheme, the ideas are possibilities in the Infinity of the unmanifest Absolute. However, they

have another existence in the imaginal world of formless manifestation, where the ideas are experienced not as abstractions, but as living beings.

As De Giorgio pointed out, we cannot simply regard the past as simply of antiquarian interest, as something exterior to us. Rather, traditional truths must be “found again and vivified”. Specifically, one must live them as these higher states of being. As Evola never tires of pointing out, the way of action leads to the awareness and achievement of these higher states. Effective action, or the recovery of Tradition, can only arise out of these higher states.

Posted on 2012-06-14 by Cologero

8.5 The Bondage of Spirits

In the essay *On Magic*, **Giordano Bruno** discusses the existence and action of non-human spirits. The practice of invoking god, demons, and heroes is the branch of magic called theurgy. He calls this the “magic of the hopeless” because they often become the vessels of evil demons. A safer practice is to learn to command and control lower demons through higher spirits.

Valentin Tomberg describes theurgy in a similar way:

With respect to the cult of the “gods” and the iconolatry that this cult entailed, the “pagan” initiates and philosophers saw in it the practice of theurgy, i.e. that of intercourse with entities of the celestial hierarchies either by raising



Figure 8.2: Ahriman

themselves to them, or by rendering possible their descent and presence on earth.

As sources, he lists Plutarch, Plotinus, Proclus, and Hermes Trismegistus to show that the highest theurgy did not try to evoke demons. Tomberg is apparently an Euhemerist, as was Giovanni Boccaccio by the way. He explains the origins of the pagan gods this way:

The “paganism” of the poets—symbolic and mythological paganism — was, in so far as it was not a symbolic version of the wisdom and magic (theurgy) of the mysteries, a universal humanism. Its “gods” were, truth to tell, human personages — heroes and heroines, divinised or poetised, who were prototypes of the development of the human personality

Our interest here is not in magic, but rather in understanding the sources of thought.

Thinking and the Laws of Physics Several years ago², we wrote about free will and the laws of physics, reaching the conclusion that free will and physics are compatible. The confusion is the failure to understand that free will is not the same as power. A person cannot break the law of Gravity, or any other physical law, through will alone.

Another confusion is the idea that everything that exists is ultimately reducible to physical laws. The human world is not the physical world. In all likelihood, most everything around you is an artefact, not a natural kind. Even assuming that all natural kinds are ultimately reducible to physics, artefacts are not.

That is because human activity is the result of thought, and there is no physical law of thought. That is true not just of artefacts, but of all of culture. That raises the question, then, about the origin of thought.

²<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=210>

Some physicalists are persistent, and assume that thoughts are simply the epiphenomena of biochemical processes. In that case, the works of Shakespeare should be explicable in chemical terms, and a fortiori, by a physico-chemical law. That is because those works cannot arise by chance, as shown by the infinite monkey theorem³.

The next attempt is to attribute thoughts to “evolution”. The social systems arising from thought are said to have favoured by the “survival of the fittest”. Of course, this just begs the question. An evolutionary explanation, in order to be scientific, must identify a gene, or complex of genes, that are associated with a given system. Not only has that not been done, no one is even trying. I volunteer for research for 23andme, and they have never asked me such questions. Moreover, different cultures would have to have genetically different populations. Yet such a genetic population can create a patriarchy and an anti-patriarchy at the same time. Besides, no one has yet explained how genes create thoughts.

The more educated seem content to attribute thoughts to “culture” or “society”. Yet that hardly makes sense, since culture and society are the results of thought, not the creators of thoughts. How can such abstract notions inculcate thoughts in people?

We could, I suppose, remain content with the concept of the “meme”. It is useful as a description, but there is no indication of the source of the meme or why certain people, or groups of people, are more influenced by a given meme than others.

We could also speculate that there are unknown forces that create memes. That leaves us with three choices.

1. The force acts at random. If so, then it cannot explain the origin of the works of Shakespeare.
2. The force is a rigid law. That goes against all experience, since thought is fluid. One thought does not necessarily lead to another.

³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinite_monkey_theorem

3. The force is controlled by a conscious being. This would explain why thought is neither random nor rigid. This is the esoteric, Hermetic, and Traditional explanation.

Giordano Bruno Giordano Bruno explains quite a bit about such conscious beings. He explains how spirits affect our inner life:

Demons penetrate through bodies and initiate thoughts in us. They convey impressions directly to our internal senses, just as we sometimes seem to think of something suggested by the internal senses.

They send not only dreams, voices, and visions to be heard and seen, but also certain thoughts which might be hardly noticed. They communicate truths sometimes through enigmas and sometimes through sense impressions. Sometimes they may even deceive.

There are many types of spirits, which explain the different influences on human thought. Bruno elaborates:

- Some are brute animals and cause injury without reason. Mark 9:25 describes them as “deaf and dumb”, i.e., they are without reason, recognize no commands, do not hear threats or prayers.
- Demons which are fearful, suspicious and credulous. They do not distinguish the possible from the impossible, or the appropriate from the inappropriate. They are like humans who are dreaming and disturbed by fantasies.
- Wiser demons reside in pure air. They distort worship and prayers, create Illusions of fear, anger, religion, and introduce confusion and doubt.

- Ethereal spirits are pure and luminous. Not hostile.
- Aqueous and terrestrial spirits are hostile, or at least not friendly. Less rational and more fearful.
- Spirits of fire are heroes and gods, and are the ministers of God. These are the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. They have very subtle bodies made of fire.
- Spirits occupy the bodies of humans, animals, stones, minerals. This is a form of panpsychism. Whatever his defects, **Teilhard de Chardin** insisted that a true science had to deal with the inside of things as well as the outside.
- No body is totally devoid of spirit and intelligence.
- Spirits never perish; rather, there is continual change of combinations and actualisations.
- There are various loves and hates.
- Everything desires to remain in its present state of existence and does not comprehend or think about another state of being.
- The diversity of natures and drives gives rise to a variety of bonds which affect spirits and bodies.
- There are subterranean spirits.
- Demons have emotions, desires, angers, jealousies

Tomberg's definition is straight forward:

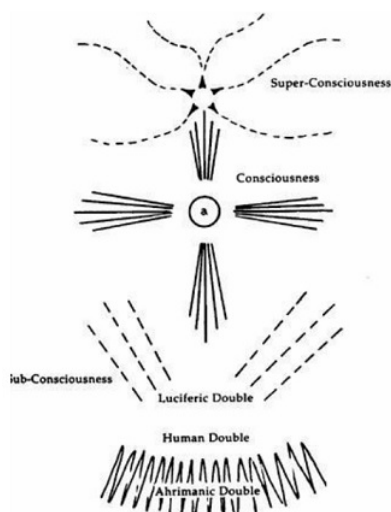
“An autonomous being capable of interfering with the intentions of the ego” and which “possesses a mental life of its own” is nothing other than what we understand by a “demon”.

We can't go into further detail in this introduction. Bruno claims to have experienced many of these spirits. The human race has always suspected their existence; this is shown in all the Hollywood films about spirits and in the works of **H P Lovecraft**.

Lucy and Harry There are two particular spirits, or actually classes of spirits, that play a prominent role in Anthroposophical literature: Lucifer and Ahriman, nicknamed Lucy and Harry by the anthros. In an early work, *Inner Development*, Valentin Tomberg describes the activities of these spirits in the human being, as shown in the diagram on the right. The Luciferic being is bound to the astral body in man's fallen state. He is called a doppelganger since it is like an evil twin. He is the father of lies, and creates idle fantasies in the mind that mask the imagination of Sophia, or Divine Wisdom. A moral universe requires hindrances, which are provided by this double. This is a clue to the meaning of the Book of Job.

Another doppelganger is the strictly human subconscious. In the *Meditations*, Tomberg uses the ideas of **Carl Jung** to explain the content of the subconscious. As for Ahriman, let us use his own words:

And just as our angel, standing above us, represents, one could say, our archetype, so it is that the Ahrimanic double, on the other hand, is our caricature. This caricature, the Ahrimanic double, is a very intelligent being, one who does not



manifest through arousing wild passions, but instead manifests particularly whenever subordination to an aim works strongly in a person. Precisely those individuals, therefore, who are highly respectable (from the external, bourgeois point of view) can be tools of this Ahrimanic double. It is precisely such people who can be subordinated, to a very high degree, to the being of the Ahrimanic double—who thereby takes on the leading role.

VALENTIN TOMBERG,
Inner Development

As a reminder, the angel is our guardian angel whose prototype is the same as the person. This notion has even penetrated Orthodox theology, for example, in **Sergei Bulgakov**.

In the *Meditations*, Tomberg became more critical of the anthro's obsession with the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings. In that, he is justified, since their tendency is to reduce, even in its highest forms, the activities of the human spirit to manifestations of evil.

He barely mentions Ahriman at all, in fact. However, in the *Letter on the Devil*, he brings up Mephistopheles, whose characteristics are actually identical to those of Ahriman described in his earlier work. For example, consider the following quotes:

Even Doctor Faust—who made a pact with the devil (and this concerns all “pact-makers” of this kind, ancient and modern)—was only the naive victim of a prank on the part of Mephistopheles (who is a rogue well-known to all those who have knowledge of the “occult world”).

Some do it in the tragic sense of having to do what they no longer want to do and they no longer believe; others do it with fierce conviction and passionate indignation; there are also entities from

the hierarchies of the left who accuse by making use of ridicule —*farce*— as a means of demonstrating their prosecuting thesis.

It is primarily human pretension and snobbery that he turns into ridicule.

Mephistopheles; and the whole revelation is only a farce made by him for the credulous? no — for spiritual snobs.

Mephistophelian accusation against those who do not seek the truth as such, but rather extraordinary circumstances of revelation.

The Ahrimanic doppelganger, aka Mephistopheles, is a *caricature* of the human being. Other features are spiritual pranks, ridicule, and farce. He can be recognized by spiritual pretension and snobbery, i.e., the desire to appear to be “spiritual” to others.

As for being well known, Mephistopheles may reveal himself in a dream rather than to the awakened consciousness. That I know from experience.

Personality Disorders Another indication of the influence of demons are personality disorders and psychopathy. Tomberg explains how that is possible:

One engenders an elemental being and one subsequently becomes the slave of one’s own creation. The “demons” or “evil spirits” of the New testament are called today in psychotherapy “neuroses of obsession”, “neuroses of fear”, “fixed ideas”, etc. They have been discovered by contemporary psychiatrists and are recognised as real — i.e. as “parasitic psychic organisms” independent of the conscious human will and tending to subjugate it.

This is not the case with organic conditions such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, whose effects can be somewhat mitigated by medica-

tions. However, personality disorders like the paranoid, histrionic, borderline, etc., are different. Just because psychologists can categorize certain complexes of behaviour does not necessarily mean they are strictly medical problems. There is no real understanding of their cause nor is there any universally effective treatment. Tomberg's description, therefore, is pretty apt. He goes on to say:

One need not fear the devil, but rather the perverse tendencies in oneself! For these perverse human tendencies can deprive us of our freedom and enslave us. Worse still, they can avail themselves of our imagination and inventive faculties and lead us to creations which can become the scourge of mankind.

If you have ever had a close relationship with someone with a personality disorder, you will probably agree that it feels more like dealing with evil than with a sickness.

Posted on 2018-10-08 by Cologero

8.6 Angelic States of Being

Hear us Lord, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, and deign to send your holy Angel from heaven to guard, cherish, protect, visit and defend all who are gathered together in this place.

*Liturgical prayer of the introductory service preceding the solemn
Mass*

The citizens of heaven are spirits of power, glorious, blessed, having individuality and ranked in order of dignity from their creation, perfect of their kind, with ethereal bodies, immortal, not created incapable of suffering, but made so pure in mind, kindly

in affection, devout in piety, perfect in chastity, of one mind in agreement, secure in peace, created by God, dedicated in the praise and worship of God.

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

We have gone on in mind, but not with our whole mind; with only part, and that too small a part. Our affections lie weighted down by this bodily mass, and they are stuck to the mire by desire: for now only dry and delicate consideration flies before.

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

States of Being The Person exists in multiple states of being, of which the human state is but one of them. Rene Guenon explains it like this:

almost everything that is said theologically of the angels can also be said metaphysically of the higher states of the being. . . . the sum of all these states is still nothing at all in relation to the personality, which alone is the true being, because it alone represents its permanent and unconditioned state, and because there is nothing else which can be considered as absolutely real. . . . in the subtle state we are still only concerned with ideas clothed in forms, since the possibilities which this state comprises do not extend beyond individual existence

RENE GUENON, *Man and his Becoming*

The theologian **Sergius Bulgakov** describes it in a different way:

everyone has a personal guardian angel who is his heavenly image.

So how is this heavenly image related to the human person? He elaborates:

A guardian angel has an affinity of individual character with a human ... There exists a likeness between the hypostasis of a guardian angel and that of a human: it is one and the same individuality living in two worlds, in heaven and on earth. ... The form of being remains distinct in the spiritual and human world, in heaven and on earth. Here one should not speak about identity but only about correspondence or likeness. Sometimes this idea is expressed in the straightforward convergence of an angel and a human soul which after its liberation from the body assumes a certain luminous shell similar to an angel's.

SERGIUS BULGAKOV, *Jacob's Ladder*

The hypostasis or individuality is what we have been calling the Person, or the I. So the human and spiritual worlds represent different states of the Person. Of course, they are not identical; the guardian angel is not human. Nevertheless, there is necessarily a likeness, otherwise they could not be states of the same person. Specifically, there is a continuity between the human state and angelic states.

Valentin Tomberg, in *Meditations on the Tarot*, goes even further. One of the Hermetic tasks is to ascend Jacob's Ladder by rising through the hierarchy of angels. He explains:

The transcendental Self is not God. It is in his image and after his likeness, according to the law of analogy or kinship, but it is not identical with God. There are still several degrees on the ladder of analogy which separate it from the summit of the ladder—from God. These degrees which are higher than it are its "stars"—or the ideals to which it aims. The Apocalypse specifies the number of them: there are twelve degrees higher than that of the consciousness of the human transcendental Self. It is necessary, therefore, in order to attain to the ONE God, to elevate oneself successively to degrees of consciousness of the nine spiritual hierarchies and the Holy Trinity

He even provides a specific example of this ascent in which the Person moves beyond even the Guardian Angel:

The guardian Angel is the friend of the bride at the spiritual marriage of the soul and God. The guardian Angel withdraws before the approach of One who is greater than he. There is what is called in Christian Hermetism the “freeing of the guardian Angel”. The guardian Angel is freed —often in order to be able to acquit new missions—when the soul has acquired the disposition of its part of “likeness” in order to experience the Divine more intimately and more immediately, which corresponds to another hierarchical degree.

Then it is an Archangel who replaces the freed guardian Angel. Human beings whose guardian is an Archangel have not only new experiences of the Divine in their inner life, but also, through this very fact, receive a new and objective vocation. They become representative, of a human group—a nation or a human karmic community—which means to say that from this time onwards their actions will no longer be purely personal but will at the same time have significance and value for those of the human community that they represent.

It also happens sometimes that the Archangel is freed as well. Then it is an entity from the hierarchy of Powers or Elohim which replaces the Archangel. The human being then becomes a representative of the future of humanity. He lives in the present what mankind someday is due to experience in future centuries.

Principles and Persons For some reason, it is considered more sophisticated to believe in “principles” rather than persons. So there is talk about the “laws of physics”, higher principles, and so on. But do you really regard your wife or husband merely as “principles”, say, for example, of authority or of caring. Are your children “principles”. Do you love

them as principles or as the unique persons that they are? Of course, we have our roles to play in the world, and as we act in principled ways, we embody those principles.

Principles or abstract ideas do not have agency; they accomplish nothing without a person with the will to embody those principles. Only a person can make an idea effective in life, the world, in history. Nor does a principle have meaning or value without a person to embody it. This is also true in the spiritual world, as explained by Valentin Tomberg:

The spiritual world is not a world of laws, principles and ideas; it is a world of spiritual beings — human souls, Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim and the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father.

The vertical world, the spiritual world, is that of values and, as the “value of values” is the individual being, it is a world of individual beings or entities.

Unlike fallen humans, the angels act with intelligence, justice, and detachment. Here are some examples:

The holy angels punish without anger those whom they receive for punishment by the eternal law of God; they help the suffering without the compassion of pity; and when those whom they love fall in danger, they minister without fear.

SAINT AUGUSTINE, *City of God*, Book IX

The Body of Angels Saint Bernard says that the angels have ethereal bodies, i.e., they are not material. As ethereal, they are not subject to the limitations of space, just to time. That is how they can sometimes be experienced in a manner imitative of sensual experience. After all, sensual

experience arises in the soul, it is not “out there”. We experience bodies in our imagination and particularly in dreams. Although dreams unfold in time, there is not space, since the scene can change into another in an instant.

Angelic Hierarchy Dionysius first formulated the angelic hierarchy. There are nine orders of angels arranged hierarchically. They each have different roles and functions. These are their roles as described by Saint Bernard.

Angels An Angel is entrusted with the care of a particular person. This angel is the heavenly prototype of that person, and sees God face to face:

in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is
in heaven.

MATTHEW, 18:10

Archangels Archangels know divine mysteries and are sent only on serious and important occasions. The most important occasion was the visit of the archangel Gabriel to Mary.

Principalities The Principalities, through their moderation and wisdom, set up and rule every power on earth which are kept within bounds, transferred, diminished, altered.

Powers The Powers check the powers of darkness and binds the malignity of this air so that it can do no evil, nor any harm, unless it is for our good.

Virtues The Virtues produce the signs and wonders which appear in the elements or are formed from the elements to instruct mortal men. There are many references to these.

Dominions The Dominions minister to spirits of the lower orders. They are masters of the rulership of the principalities, guardians of the powers, the work of the virtues, the revelations of the archangels, the care and prevision of the angels.

Thrones The Thrones are seated and God is seated on them. Sitting is symbolic for supreme tranquillity, placid serenity, the peace which passes understanding.

Cherubim The Cherubim drink from the very fount of Wisdom and pour forth a stream of knowledge to all the citizens of heaven

Seraphim The Seraphim are aflame with the divine fire. They kindle the other citizens so that each is a burning and shining light, and are burning with love, shining with knowledge.

Summary These descriptions need to be read on three levels: as descriptions of the angels, as revealing how God acts through the angels, and how they act through us. Bernard reveals how God does different things through different spirits. As for the human element, the angel is suggestive not coercive:

An angel can be present in us. ... An angel is “within” when he suggests we do good. He does not enter to cause us to do good. He is exhorting us to do good, not making us good.

Saint Bernard summarizes the three aspects like this:

God loves us as Love itself; he knows as Truth itself. He sits as Equity, rules as Majesty, governs as Prince, keeps safe as Salvation, works as Strength, reveals as Light, is with us as Holiness.

All these things the angels do.

So do we, but in a far lowlier way. Not because of the good we are but because of the good we share.

We can now understand theosis. Just like God, just like the angels:

We are to love, to know, to be at peace, to rule, to govern, to be strong, to live in the light, to be holy.

Appendix Saint Bernard in *On Consideration* reversed the Principalities and Virtues in the hierarchy, but I restored them to the more traditional ordering of Dionysius. The functions don't change.

Posted on 2020-09-17 by Cologero

8.7 Meditations on the Body

You were a model of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty; in Eden, the garden of God.

EZEKIEL 23:12-13

I've been doing some preparation for the upcoming discussion on the sexes from an esoteric perspective. Besides the obvious sources, I started reading *The Theology of the Body* by **Pope John Paul II**. I was more than a little surprised by what I read. As in any such work, the method is more important than the conclusion; the conclusion will make sense only by wrestling with the process.

Hence, this is a reflection just on chapter 1 which deals with the method. There are several themes which we have already addressed, showing the possibilities that can still be extracted from the Tradition. As such, the method is important in its own right, and not merely as a philosophically sophisticated justification of the doctrines on sexuality (the outcome is never in doubt). The real fruits will come when it is applied to other areas. I've highlighted several themes from my notes that warrant discussion.

- Opposition to modernity as defined by Bacon, Descartes, Kant
- Phenomenology as Hermetic meditation
- Subjectivity vs objectivity
- The relationship between experience and revelation
- Notion of the Person
- Nondual body/mind. Man as male and female
- Biblical texts as myth
- John of the Cross
- Self-mastery
- Tranquil witness of consciousness

While a pope has to be circumspect about what he writes, we are free to be more speculative in drawing out the logical conclusions and place these ideas in a wider context.

Modernity The primary reason that a refutation of the modern project is impossible is that it is perfectly logical within its own presuppositions, much like an alternative geometry is to the Euclidean. If you change one axiom, the rest ineluctably follows. What is necessary, therefore, is the refutation of the axiom. For that task, the ratio, or rational mind is inadequate. Rather, only the intellectus, or higher mind can accomplish it. This is the “intellectual conversion” that Guenon refers to. If the modern world is an illusion, only the truth can dispel it. But the truth must be “seen” or “intuited”, not discovered by reason, or philosophy, or scientific experiment.

Francis Bacon inaugurated the modern project when he eliminated formal and final causes from his philosophy. As a methodological assumption, it turned out to be quite powerful, leading to scientific discoveries and technological advances. The problem arises when the Bacon’s method is extended beyond that limited domain. Allegedly scientific theories about the origins of the universe, life, man, and society turn out to be destructive. The neglect of formal causes implies that the material world exists on its own and is self-explanatory. The denial of final causes implies that meaningless not just of the world, but also of man. There can be nothing “natural” beyond what we experience because nothing has a purpose beyond that.

Rene Descartes took the next step. For him, the body is part of the material world and consciousness is detached from it, with no clear relationship. This leads to **Arthur Schopenhauer**’s famous question in the introduction to the *World as Will and Idea*: where exactly is the scientist in his theory? How does he explain himself? Specifically, where is he at the “big bang” or the “origin of the species”? He claims to be an objective observer at those events, but that is clearly an absurdity.

JPII challenges this project radically. The body, for him, is never inert matter, but rather a fully integrated body/spirit. The very experience of bodiness forms the basis for his meditations.

The Turn to Interiority Although JPII Does not reject the metaphysic of being, he is more interested in exploring the states of consciousness described in the Genesis story, rather than understanding it simply as objective fact. This has led to criticism in some quarters. However, the insistence on pure objectivity, if taken too far, implies that even atheists can be theologians (such is the case). Theology becomes a “language game” with a set of rules that anyone can follow.

Now such an approach is not arbitrary subjectivity, from which many theological deviations arise. Rather, it is more like the way theology is understood in the East, as *theoria*, i.e., the theologian must actually “know” God, not just talk “about” God.

Thus, theology is not so much logic, but is based on the “interior gaze” as JPII expresses it. Confusion may arise because the distinction between the psyche or soul and the intellectus or spirit is poorly understood. At the soul level, experience is indeed merely subjective. However, paradoxically, the spirit is totally objective. It is the “witness to conscience” as JPII puts it.

The story of creation is “prehistory”, since it cannot be understood in terms of history or science. JPII describes it as a “myth” and relies on figures such as **Mircea Eliade**, **Carl Jung**, among others to grasp mythological symbols in their fullness. Note that this does not mean JPII denies that something “happened”, but he proposes a way to understand it.

He calls this method phenomenology, but it is not your grandfather’s phenomenology. Actually it is more like the Hermetic meditation described by **Valentin Tomberg**. He even refers to the lectures as “meditations”. So JPII uses the Biblical narrative to explore ever deeper levels of psychic layers. The main topics are “original innocence”, “original solitude”, the origin of shame, what it means to be embodied.

The objective text is insufficient. That is, revelation needs to be related to experience; it is not some incredible belief without relevance to

life.

Sex Now Adam's original state was solitude. Although he named, or knew, all the animals, none were suitable companions to him. With Eve came the awareness of being embodied as male and female. Now this brings up an interesting point about how sex is related to humanity.

Definitions can be conventional or real. A conventional definition, for example, includes types of triangles (equilateral, isosceles). A type of triangle is still a triangle, it has the property "triangularity". Hence, the distinction is conventional and is made for convenience and communication.

A real definition includes genus and difference, e.g., "man is a rational animal". Man is of the genus "animal", and what distinguishes him is "rationality". So he is both animal and not-animal. Of course, the scientific project rejects that notion, and regards man as just a "type" of animal. Rationality is a matter of degree not qualitative distinction.

So what then is sex? Is it more like a type of triangle? That is the modern view that regards one's sex as somewhat arbitrary, and a person can therefore reassign or redefine his own sexuality. That is rejected.

But is it not of the second kind, since both male and females are fully human, and not different species of the genus "human"? JP II writes that sex is "constitutive for the person" not an "attribute of the person". Thus it is not conventional; it is essential to who one is, not accidental.

Thus there are differences between male and female. For example, man is the knower, woman is known, i.e., man is conscious.

Self-mastery In the Baconian project, every problem is presumed to have a technological solution. The body is no different from any other material object, so surgery, drugs, genetic manipulation, and other techniques are employed to solve existential issues.

However, for JP II, the human person is called to self-mastery. That

is, the person is master of the body or, in Hermetic terms, the “subtle rules the dense”. Obviously this is also Evola’s position when he writes of an inner autarchy.

Now to be free is to be free of constraints. JP II points out that a “drive” is just an inner constraint. On the other hand, for the modern mind, freedom is the ability to act on one’s “instinctual” drives. Any “voice” that opposes that misunderstanding is experienced as a threat. From that perspective, happiness should be the result of such acting out. In other words, “the dense rules the subtle”.

This false maxim is taken to the extreme by Marxism, for which the forms of consciousness are determined by the material aspects of life. Since few people bother to understand the root thoughts of their worldview, they may hold Marxist ideas even while denying it. For example, the notion that all social problems can be “solved” by more education, programs, etc. is such a view. While a good regime is known for bringing peace and prosperity, it also requires a population that is able to exercise a certain measure of self-control.

Further Directions This method of phenomenology can be applied into new areas. Since the focus of *The Theology of the Body* is on marriage and procreation, there is still much more to be said about being embodied as a man. There is the meditation on “original innocence”, as JP II says:

Original innocence conceived in this way manifests itself as a tranquil witness of consciousness that precedes any experience of good and evil.

Obviously, the “witness” state is not descriptive, as phenomenology claims to be, but rather prescriptive. That is, it is a task and is therefore “real” only for those able to achieve such a state. Elsewhere, he writes:

Man is the causal origin of actions and at the same time the author of their meanings.

Thus, a man must act consciously, understanding the meaning and consequences of what he does, for a determinate aim. Much of human activity is meaningless.

Similarly, rationality in the animal is virtual in most cases. A man's task, then, is to actualize that quality. We can quickly mention:

- A life lived in accordance with reason
- Becoming free from irrational drives, emotions, etc.
- Taking responsibility for one's actions
- Recognizing the personhood of others, not treating them as objects
- Achieving an inner state of calm and detachment
- Letting the subtle rule the dense
- Becoming the witness of consciousness

These qualities, and more, deserve studies of their own.

I Sleep, but the Heart is Awake

I sleep, but my heart is awake.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:2

Please consider the four states of consciousness mentioned by **Bede Griffiths** in *The Cosmic Mystery*⁴.

⁴<https://gornahoor.net/?p=8055>

We are accustomed to consider the sleeping, dreaming, and waking states as distinct states of consciousness, which follow each other consecutively. However, most of us have noticed that, rather than sequential, they interpenetrate each other. Our presumed waking state is mostly a series of semi-dreams: i.e., thoughts, imaginations, little stories, and so on. Then there is something deeper, beyond conscious awareness, in operation, affecting our postures, movements, attention and so on.

Among those dreams is the dream of awakening. That “I”, the subject of that dream, will “snap us out of it” from time to time. That I needs to be nourished until the whole heart is awake.

Theology of the Body A delay was caused by some new information⁵ on the *Theology of the Body* (H/T Perennial) that I came across as I was writing the introduction to the chapters on Sintesi that relate the sexes to race. Surprisingly, Evola’s ideas have some things in common with **Pope John Paul II**’s conceptions. Perhaps that is so, given the influence of German idealism and the philosophy of personalism on both of them.

For Scholasticism, the mind, or intellectual soul, is the image of God. The mind is without qualities, neither male nor female. For JP II and Evola, on the other hand, the body is the outward expression of spirit, hence either masculinity or femininity permeates the whole being. The Scholastic approach easily devolves to a Cartesian dualism of body and mind.

Moreover, the Scholastic definition of the person is too abstract: *an individual substance of a rational nature*. It does not mention Will, I, Freedom, Consciousness. Then there is Guenon’s objection that it focuses on Being to the exclusion of non-Being. Specifically, it is too static, not making the distinction between the virtual and the actual. The actualization of a person is something else. Will must be developed, consciousness expanded, freedom/liberation must be achieved as it is not simply a given.

⁵<https://sspx.org/en/theology-of-the-body-genesis-of-confusion>

“Truth shall set you free.” For the Scholastics, there can be no development of the person. However, for JPII and Evola one of hallmarks of the person is self-possession, which requires a development.

Also, speculative theology does not make a clear distinction between soul and spirit. Mystical theology, on the other hand, does. **St John of the Cross**, for example, distinguishes between psychic experiences and truly spiritual experience. **St John of the Cross** is one of the influences on the Theology of the Body.

Sex and the Body These are some of the main points of the Theology of the Body. When the Evola translations come out, we can see better how they relate.

- There is no abstract “human”: the human being is always embodied as a man or a woman. Masculinity and Femininity are expressions of the person.
- The Spirit is not without qualities.
- The body is not just matter, subject to physical or biological laws. Rather, it is permeated by the soul and the spirit. Otherwise, resurrection cannot be understood except as the revival of a corpse.
- Biology is a human construct and does not exhaust all we know about the human being, sex, or the body.
- The Baconian project of gaining power over nature, specifically, technological power over the body, is rejected. Rather, the subtle rules the dense so the spirit must control the body, without relying on material means.

Unintended Consequences There are perhaps other results that can be derived from this approach, not that they can be attributed to JPII. Biblical, mystical, philosophical, and phenomenological sources are used to develop the theology of the body. Why, then, can we not include other sources and even traditional sources? For example, Evola relies on **Otto Weininger**'s book *Sex and Character* as well as the Laws of Manu for his own teachings on the spiritual and bodily aspects of masculinity and femininity.

Although JPII does not mention this, if the spirit has qualities, then race, or *ethnos* as **E Michael Jones** calls it, has its counterpart in the spirit. The relationship is not necessarily one-to-one, as we will see. Of course, this doctrine rejects the idea that biology or DNA is the cause of differences in psychic and spiritual makeup of the person.

Furthermore, the body cannot be understood as a piece of matter, but rather as a non-dual body/soul/spirit complex. This conception is developed by **Valentin Tomberg** in Letter XX of the *Meditations of the Tarot*. He shows the chain:

spirit \Rightarrow psychic forces \Rightarrow energy \Rightarrow material organs.

That is the vertical process that works with the horizontal process of heredity. More research needs to be done to relate these various currents of thought.

Then, too, the notion that the body can be more or less dense begins to make some sense. Hence, there may be no physical traces of the Hyperboreans for the reason that the body in that era was less dense. This is something proposed by Rene Guenon. In this case, the positive sciences cannot be the last word.

Posted on 2015-05-08 by Cologero

* * *

David on 2015-05-08 at 01:33 said:

Fascinating to delve into the theology of recent popes. I also liked the extract you took from Benedict XVI some texts ago; he is a brilliant theologian.

␣Now to be free is to be free of constraints. JP II points out that a “drive” is just an inner constraint. Of course, for the modern mind, freedom is the ability to act out on one’s “instinctual” drives. Any “voice” that opposes that misunderstanding is experienced as a threat. From that perspective, happiness should be the result of such acting out. In other words, “the dense rules the subtle”.␣

This also seems to be the error of psychoanalytic, i.e. the fascination with the subconscious as a force that drives and subject even the Self (considered in poor form, i.e. a social construct for overruling of subconscious urges). Psychoanalysis in more than one way is a direct inversion of Traditional principles, especially of Plato’s ideas.

aegishjalmer on 2015-05-08 at 01:58 said:

Thanks for that great analysis. Very helpful

Jacob on 2015-05-08 at 13:56 said:

Good post Cologero. There need needs to be some clarity these days on how to think about sex because all other information is so biased and convoluted that it causes a lot of confusion.

I struggle sometimes myself with eliminating Marxist materialist thoughts from my arguments. How can I oppose Liberalism as a force which causes the breakdown of Tradition without resorting to material conditions affecting a person’s thoughts.? It goes back to a question I had earlier when Evola said that degeneration caused people to think a certain way and adopt certain ideologies. That seems almost like materialism to me. I had always assumed the opposite. Certain modes of thought was the cause of degeneration. Maybe there’s a golden mean in between libertarian thought that the person is a self contained free willed individual with no external influences and Marxist determinism.

obscure on 2015-05-09 at 01:52 said:

Cologero,

This was a very even post: A calm tide at the day’s end reiterating what was also present before daybreak; only having achieved a greater height. The pregnant Moon lifts up the waters of the soul in the darkness and offers the Father’s light and that very light pours in which is the Son and the image of the Father. The light travels far in the darkness but is never divided from the Father. The waters rise up in the darkness receiving the Son’s mediation with the subtle aid of feminine gravity.

Then day breaks again and men forget the terrors and struggles of the night; falling down and away quickly until they are reminded again. The sea of souls rages in ignorance with the Father in full view. Although on some days there is a calm breeze of grace sent down from above.

The light penetrating the breeze is the same Son carried in the womb of the Moon at high tide. And the breeze of air pulls the waters along the surface, carrying the fire and separating the salt; walking upon the waters and embodying the light of presence. What is far is not far and what is close is not close; what is close is far and what is far is close. The height creates the depth and the depth returns to the height because there is nowhere else to go upon the horizon. Anyone can see, if they want to, that those who chase the horizon never get to heaven.

So, the wise stop moving their legs and instead they tilt back their heads. In this way, they understand that through not moving they are truly moving. This is why it is good to see good patterns in repetition.

Wayne Ferguson on 2015-05-09 at 15:10 said:

John Paul II

"The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage" (Theology of the Body)

"From the Weekly Audiences of His Holiness September 5, 1979 – November 28, 1984"

[http://www.catholicprimer.org/papal/theology`of`the`body.pdf](http://www.catholicprimer.org/papal/theology%20of%20the%20body.pdf)

X on 2015-04-22 at 01:16 said:

"St John of the Cross, for example, distinguishes between psychic experiences and truly spiritual experience."

Can you please say it more detailedly for this?

Cologero on 2015-04-22 at 05:36 said:

X, this topic is discussed at length at *Three Ages of the Interior Life*⁶ by Fr Garrigou-Lagrange.

For example, concerning psychic phenomena: *The Illuminative Way of Proficients*⁷.

Also, on mystical union, which can also be read as the antidote to Cassiodorus' objections: *The Transforming Union*⁸.

X on 2015-04-22 at 06:04 said:

"The state which St. John of the Cross describes here is a state of love linked to a state of infused contemplation. The connection is owing to a necessity of love: 'True and full love cannot hide anything.' This connection is not accidental, since this need is connatural to perfect charity."

thomas walker on 2015-04-22 at 10:11 said:

⁶<http://www.christianperfection.info/index.php>

⁷<http://www.christianperfection.info/tta82.php>

⁸<http://www.christianperfection.info/tta105.php#bk2>

We know from our own experience that body and soul are intimately related : bodily ailments can completely dominate our thoughts and emotions . I think that the kabbalistic idea of *nephesh* speaks to this , Our personalities are intimately linked with our bodies . There is a problem to understand how after death only the soul will exist until it is joined to the body in the Last Judgement . If time and space are abolished how can there be bodies which as bodies with extension must occupy space ?

Also , doesn't Jesus teach that in heaven there will neither be taking or giving in marriage because bodies will be like the angels (i assume that means without gender) Therefore gender is only accidental not essential .

obscure on 2015-04-22 at 15:20 said:

Nous is indeed prior to qualities, but qualities are received prior to the quantitative features of the body since quantity most signifies prime matter. The first relation to the body and thus to the macrocosm is qualitative, but pure Nous is not for this reason qualitative. Prime matter is also not separable and thus not really distinct from information. Although form itself as Spirit or Idea is really distinct from matter or informed matter.

The rational soul is a discursive intellect animating a material substance or complex subject (these terms are synonymous). Its constitutive features are active intellect, passive intellect and sense-perception. Pure intellect is only an active intellect and its constitutive features are its simple form and its essential act (sometimes erroneously translated by neo-Thomists in the tradition of Gilson as 'act of existence'. but in truth 'essential act' or 'actus essendi' is pure will). A pure intellect is necessarily passive in relation to the First, but this is due to metaphysical necessity rather than discursive intellection with respect to the agent. The psychological (or 'epistemological' triad of the rational soul is not to be confused with the physiological triad (rational soul, sentient soul and vegetative soul) or the moral-constitutive triad (intellect, will and appetite).

Substantial form is the subsisting simple subjectivity of a complex subject (or compound substance, material substance, etc.: These terms are synonymous). A per se simple subject (not subsisting in a complex subject) is either a Spirit or Idea which is specifically different from the Absolute simple subject. Thus the metaphysical triad of all reality is Absolute simple subject, relative or 'specific' simple subjects and lastly the complex subjects. In the order of pure simple subjects Spirits are active while Ideas are passive, although with respect to what is inferior (the order of complex subjects, the material cosmos, temporal procession, nature, etc.: These terms are synonymous) Ideas are obviously called 'active'. but this is due to metaphysical necessity (which is to say, the hierarchy between God, supernature and nature). Corporeal form is constituted by extension and quality; it is an accidental form of a simple subject and it is the basic information of matter. Substantial form is not corporeal form, it 'contains' essential possibilities not corporeal matter.

The basic qualification of Spirits other than the Absolute is their essential act or will gratuitously caused by the First (for the only relationship between the Infinite and the finite is gratuitous i.e. grace). The Absolute cannot be distinguished from His essential act in any respect since the Absolute is a Pure Act of Infinite Power. Even though neo-Thomists may not write in this way it is all to be found in the primary texts of their Doctor and of other medieval doctors. Duns Scotus is in many respects the master and I recommend this blog containing some historical materials if any are interested:

<http://lyfaber.blogspot.com/>

David on 2015-04-22 at 16:30 said:

Cologero : Would it be possible to have all the texts within this site on a .zip or .rar format have a download link ? If the site is to end, a great part of the first texts I never had the chance to read. I imagine you have either a backup of .html files or the actual text files somewhere which could be given. Thank you.

obscure on 2015-04-22 at 18:48 said:

Here are some translations of the Scotistic Theoremata:

<http://lyfaber.blogspot.com/2010/01/theoremata-scoti-partes-i-v.html>

Scotus' discusson of quality is interesting, although I'm sure it won't surprise many.

Cologero on 2015-04-22 at 20:28 said:

TW, this is the full quote: "In the resurrection they take neither wife nor husband, but are like the angels in heaven."

I suppose one approach is Guenon's: the being that was in the human state is now in an angelic state.

But. JPII contrasts the resurrection body with our bodies as they are now, with its members at war with the spirit. The resurrection body will not experience that opposition, it will be spiritualized. JPII is closer to Tomberg with this explanation:

Spiritualization signifies not only that the spirit will master the body, but that it will also fully permeate the body and the powers of the spirit will permeate the energies of the body. (67:1)

He takes pain to emphasize that this state is not "disincarnation" of the body, nor a dehumanization. There is a deep harmony between spirit and body, but primacy resides in the spirit. He goes on to relate this to theosis (translated as divinization).

In the resurrection, the body is outside of human history “tied to marriage and procreation”. However, this does not mean that the body is suddenly neutered. (It would be interesting to compare that idea with the way Mouravieff includes marriage and procreation as part of the “General Law”.)

Cologero on 2015-04-22 at 20:47 said:

Thanks for that synopsis, Obscure, but the issue is the whether or not JPil is introducing novelty into that doctrine. It appears that he is rejecting the notion that the Spirit is distinct from the body. For the Scotist, is masculinity or femininity an accidental or an essential quality? If God has qualities, then why would not a man have them?

As for your other link, I read the claim that the “more perfect man has more perfect intelligence”. I thought the Scotist position is that the goal of creation is the divinization of man, i.e., union with God. I don’t see them as the same thing.

Cologero on 2015-04-23 at 08:55 said:

David, Gornahoor will not be taken off-line, since it is intended for a future generation that may have a better perspective. However, I won’t be updating it but perhaps someone else will.

obscure on 2015-04-23 at 23:15 said:

Hello Cologero,

Keep in mind that when I write some long comment I intend a general audience and not just yourself in particular, for I enjoy sharing information. There is much ink I could spill with regard to the hierarchies of metaphysical qualification. This would require a fine treatment with some more effort than I can provide at the moment. If anything I’ve provided has produced some degree of confusion it was due to a degree of privation on my part. I promise to address your points at a later time.

As for the ToB, I can’t say I’ve read it. My impression was that it was mostly an exoteric text of a more-or-less existential nature.

I will leave off for now with a Hermetic passage (Although it is not the sort of passage to be taken with little consideration or lack of interpretation):

“Soul enters the body by necessity, Intellect enters soul by judgment. While being outside of the body, soul has neither quality nor quantity. Once it is in the body it receives, as an accident, quality and quantity as well as good and evil for matter brings about such things.”

Cologero on 2015-04-24 at 00:07 said:

No confusion at all, Obscure, what you describe is how I would have been accustomed to look at it.

However, in light of the ongoing translation of Evola's *Sintesi*, there are questions that arise. I am not trying to provide the basis for a sophisticated theory of "white nationalism", but in exploring the metaphysical ramifications of his doctrine. Precisely, is there spiritual differentiation among men?

It is not so obvious that corporeal life is an accident. For example, in Plato's Myth of Er, the circumstances of birth are determined by the prior state of the spirit. For Guenon, each human being is a possibility of manifestation in God's mind, and this determines the "accidents" of birth. Perhaps these are differences in terms, but maybe not.

Based on the way it's been used, I, too, assumed that ToB was sort of a Catholic Kama Sutra. However, it is actually heavily indebted to John of the Cross. It also brings back final and formal cause to the understanding of the human being, contra both science and the entire modern project. It restores the notion of interiority to the body, which therefore cannot be treated simply as passive matter.

Michael on 2020-04-21 at 08:01 said:

"Biology is a human construct and does not exhaust all we know about the human being, sex, or the body."

An interesting point when contrasted to the modern approach of "constructs". While the modern approach says we can determine these for ourselves, JPII says there are higher methods of understanding to more great knowledge of the categories, a theology of the body (unified).

Yet in the other approach, we believe we can determine that human construct by just thinking it, isn't this just intellectual thinking centered from the individual? Pulling it down into discursive thought where all differences are forgotten instead of realized.

8.8 Solarity and Impassibility

Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît pas.

BLAISE PASCAL

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

JOHN 8:32

Many people expect to experience physical effects and/or emotional consolations from the meditation and prayer practice. I'm not denying that effects like visions, auditory phenomena, and condolences are possible. Rather they are not the goal. A fortiori, they usually diminish as you advance and it would be a mistake to expect them all the time.

At a recent Sunday sermon, the priest brought up the same point. He said that because God is spirit, He has no emotions, at least not as we understand them. Hence, we should not seek such emotional consolations. Of course, he was referring to God's impassibility but probably didn't want to explain that teaching to random lay people.

Impassibility Impassibility was one of the preternatural gifts before the Fall. (The others are integrity, immortality, and infused knowledge or gnosis.) If the aim of the spiritual life is theosis, to become more like God, then we need to recover the quality of impassibility that was lost. As this applies to God, the philosopher Edward Feser explains⁹:

the claim that classical theism makes God out to be “unemotional” is ambiguous. If by an “emotion” we mean a state that comes upon us episodically, that varies in its intensity, that has physiological aspects like increased heart rate and bodily sensations, etc., then it is certainly true that the classical theist maintains that God cannot possibly have such states. However, if the insinuation is that classical theism makes God out to be “unemotional” in a way that entails that he cannot be said to love us, to be angry at sin, etc., then that is certainly false. To love is to will the good of another, and for the classical theist God certainly wills our good, acts providentially so that we attain what is good for us, etc. Hence he loves us. The classical theist also holds that God

⁹<https://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2014/09/olson-contra-classical-theism.html>

wills that sin be punished, and acts so that those who are unrepentant are in fact punished. Hence he is in that sense wrathful at sin. And so forth. Hardly “apathetic.”

Our impassibility is analogous to God’s, but not identical. Obviously, as embodied beings, we do indeed experience emotions that spontaneously arise in us and with intense bodily sensations. Nevertheless, we can achieve some freedom from negative emotions like worry, doubt, fear, hate, apathy and despair, all of which imprison us to some degree. Of course, unlike in Eden, we are subject still to irreprehensible qualities such as hunger, thirst, pain, weariness, death, disease.

Practical Esoterism Valentin Tomberg has provided us a different standard by which to measure spiritual progress: viz., the sequence mysticism, gnosis, magic, philosophy. These can be briefly summarized.

- **Mysticism:** The first step is inner contact with the divine, beyond created being. This requires the body to be relaxed and the soul to be serene. This means that inner serenity is the starting point rather than the result.
- **Gnosis:** Gnosis is mysticism that has become conscious of itself, i.e., it is mystical experience that has been transformed into higher knowledge. This is direct, unmediated intuition, not a theory.
- **Magic:** Magic is the power of the invisible and spiritual over the visible and material. The aim of magic is “liberating action, i.e. the restoration of freedom to beings who have partially or totally lost it”, as Tomberg phrases it. Hence, gnosis is knowing the truth, which then sets us free.
- **Philosophy:** Esoteric philosophy is the culmination of the sequence. Its fundamental requirement is not to substitute one intellectual

conception of the world with another, but rather to create in the individual a new “dimension” and a new depth of life.

Note that this does not include emotional consolation nor any physical sensations as necessary aspects of the mystical experience. To the contrary, emotions need to be silenced. Tomberg warns us of the danger of not following through the whole sequence.

Mysticism which has not given birth to gnosis, magic and Hermetic philosophy—such a mysticism must, sooner or later, necessarily degenerate into spiritual enjoyment” or “intoxication”. The mystic who wants only the experience of mystical states without understanding them, without drawing practical conclusions from them for life, and without wanting to be useful to others, who forgets everyone and everything in order to enjoy the mystical experience, can be compared to a spiritual drunkard.

Three Vows To prepare us, Tomberg provides us with the esoteric understanding of the three traditional vows. These are suitable not just to the religious, but especially to those living in the world.

- **Obedience:** The vow of obedience is the practice of silencing personal desires, emotions and imagination in the face of reason and conscience.
- **Poverty:** The vow of poverty is the practice of inner emptiness, which is established as a consequence of the silence of personal desires, emotions and imagination so that the soul is capable of receiving from above the revelation of the word, the life and the light.
- **Chastity:** The vow of chastity means to say the putting into practice of the resolution to live according to solar law, without covetousness and without indifference.

In other words, obedience means that personal desires, emotions, and fantasies must be made subservient to the intellect and the moral conscience. Spiritual poverty means the silencing of such desires, emotions, and fantasies.

Solarity Tomberg then explains the meaning of the solar law, or solarity.

For virtue is boring and vice is disgusting. But that which comes from the depths of the heart is neither boring nor disgusting. The foundation of the heart is love. The heart lives only when it loves. It is then like the sun. And chastity is the state of the human being in which the heart, having become solar, is the centre of gravity.

This describes the awakening of the heart chakra, as he explains:

Chastity is the state of the human being where the twelve-petalled lotus (anahata in Indian esoterism) is awakened and becomes the sun of the microcosmic “planetary system”. The three lotus-centres situated below it (the ten-petalled, the six-petalled, and the four-petalled) begin then to function in conformity with the life of the heart (the twelve-petalled lotus), i.e. “according to solar law”. When they do this, the person is chaste, no matter whether he or she is celibate or married.

The three lowest chakras are the seats of fear, sex, and hunger. When these chakras are subservient to the solar law, they are balanced and beneficial. Otherwise, they are disordered, abnormal, and come to dominate consciousness when they should be in line with intelligence and morality.

For more on the chakras as described by Johann Gichtel and Oscar Hinze, see *The Degrees of Existence*¹⁰.

For the lower chakras, see *Sex and Tropism*¹¹.

¹⁰<http://www.gornahoor.net/?p=8618>

¹¹<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=8349>

Posted on 2018-12-21 by Cologero

* * *

Patricia on 2018-12-23 at 19:11 said:
This is so precise, so profound, so helpful. Thank you.

About the Unknown Friend

9.1 The Conversion of Valentin Tomberg

Much ink (virtual and real) has been spilled regarding the conversion of **Valentin Tomberg** from Anthroposophy to Roman Catholicism. Yet, as we saw in the conversion of **Rene Guenon**, such a move cannot be understood in the conventional sense as the rejection of one thing and the adoption of another.

Nevertheless, there are those who are convinced that Tomberg rejected so-called New Age teachings to become a Catholic, and therefore attempt to follow him in that path. As a matter of fact, it seems that the Internet is replete with converts (or reverts) who are quite enthusiastic in promoting their new-found faith, usually to excess. While we think such conversions are a good thing in general, that is not at all Tomberg's message.

In Letter XI, Tomberg explain his reasons for entering the Church.

The way of Hermeticism, solitary and intimate as it is, comprises authentic experiences from which it follows that the Ro-

man Catholic Church is, in fact, a depository of Christian spiritual truth, and the more one advances on the way of free research for this truth, the more one approaches the Church. Sooner or later one inevitably experiences that spiritual reality corresponds — with an astonishing exactitude — to what the Church teaches.

He then lists several specific teachings:

- There are guardian angels
- There are saints who participate actively in our lives
- The Blessed Virgin is real, as she is understood, worshiped, and portrayed
- The sacraments are effective and there are seven of them
- The three sacred vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty constitute the very essence of all authentic spirituality
- Prayer is a powerful means of charity
- The ecclesiastical hierarchy reflects the celestial hierarchical order
- The Holy See and the papacy represent a mystery of divine magic
- Hell, purgatory, and heaven are realities
- The Master himself abides with his Church
- The Master is always findable and meetable there

The Common Believer Any cursory reading of the Meditations shows that it is replete with references to ideas, systems, books, and people that are certainly precursors to the New Age teachings of today. Yet Tomberg did not reject them in toto, not at all. To the contrary, he makes the remarkable claim that following Hermetic teaching to its depths led to his “conversion”. The reasons for this must be explored in what follows. But first of all, note that Tomberg does not claim any sort of superiority; rather, he acknowledges a solidarity with common believers, as expressed in Letter IV.

For the Hermetic-philosophical sense has more in common with the plain and sincere faith of simple people than abstract metaphysics has.

- For the common believer, God lives; likewise for the Hermeticist.
- The believer addresses himself to saints and Angels; for the Hermeticist they are real.
- The believer believes in miracles; the Hermeticist lives in the presence of miracles.
- The believer prays for the living and the dead; the Hermeticist dedicates all his efforts in the domain of sacred magic to the good of the living and the dead.
- The believer esteems all that which is traditional; the Hermeticist does likewise.

Rejection of Alternatives In the Introduction to *Inner Development*, we are informed that Tomberg initially tried to align himself with the Christian Community and then with Russian Orthodoxy.

The Christian Community was formed by some of Rudolf Steiner’s followers; they have no dogmas, although they have priests and seven

sacraments. However, dogmas are not an affront to free will as the Community claims, but rather they are living symbols of a higher spiritual reality as Tomberg came to realize. Typically, organisations that reject dogmas tend to converge to liberalism.

Tomberg attempted to work with the Christian Community by introducing a cult of Mary-Sophia. Emil Bock reportedly said to him: “We have Michael, that’s enough! We don’t need Mary-Sophia.”

As we will see in the next section, that is absolutely contrary to Tomberg’s purpose and mission.

Orthodoxy lacks a complete hierarchy, in particular, the papacy which Tomberg regards as a mystery of divine magic. Russian Orthodoxy retains a notion of being the Third Rome, with an Emperor and the Patriarch as Pope. From the esoteric perspective, this is a caricature of the true teaching, whose real source is suspect. Most of the early popes came from the East; they were more aware of the celestial hierarchy and divine magic. Someday, there will be a Russian pope ruling in the first Rome.

The Blessed Virgin Tomberg insists that the Blessed Virgin is real, as she is understood, worshipped, and portrayed in the Church. This means that he accepts the four Marian dogmas, not as beliefs but as a personal experience. These are:

- Mary as the Mother of God
- Perpetual Virginity
- The Immaculate Conception
- The Assumption

Although it is not so common today, when I was a schoolboy, we would attend yearly novena to the Blessed Virgin. We would be given scapulars or medals. Although I might not have fully understood their significance

at the time, I have always lived in the security of Mary's promises of protection. Tomberg describes the esoteric meaning of these promises:

Every Hermeticist who truly seeks authentic spiritual reality will sooner or later meet the Blessed Virgin. This meeting signifies, apart from the illumination and consolation that it comprises, protection against a very serious spiritual danger. For he who advances in the sense of depth and height in the "domain of the invisible" one day arrives at the sphere known by esotericists as the "sphere of mirages" or the "zone of illusion". This zone surrounds the earth as a belt of illusory mirages. It is this zone which the prophets and the Apocalypse designate "Babylon". The soul and the queen of this zone is in fact Babylon, the great prostitute, who is the adversary of the Virgin. ... One cannot traverse it without the protection of the "mantle of the Blessed Virgin".

Mary is celebrated as the Queen of Heaven. Tomberg has a deeper insight that takes that teaching much further. In Letter XI, he asserts:

The day when it is achieved will be the day of a new festival — the festival of the coronation of the Virgin on earth. For then the principle of opposition will be replaced on earth by that of collaboration. This will be the triumph of life over electricity. And cerebral intellectuality will then bow before Wisdom (SOPHIA) and will unite with her.

The Virgin will be not only Queen of Heaven, but also Queen of the Earth. Of course, this is confirmed in the *Dogmatic Constitution*, which calls Mary the Queen of the Universe.

The triumph of life over electricity refers to the Hermetic teaching of electricity, or electro-magnetism, arising from lower forces. Just as a reminder, Tomberg explains:

The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil — the fruit of the polarity of opposites — is therefore electricity; and electricity entails fatigue, exhaustion, death. Death is the price that is paid for the knowledge of good and evil, i.e. the price of life amidst opposites. For it is electricity — physical, psychic and mental — which was introduced into the being of Adam-Eve, and thereby into the whole of life-endowed Nature, from the moment that Adam-Eve entered into communion with the tree of opposites, that is to say with the principle of electricity. And it is thus that death entered into the domain of life-endowed Nature.

Therefore, the next dogma will be Mary as Co-Redemptrix.

Way, Truth, and Life Tomberg rejected Anthroposophy (although not Steiner himself), describing it as

a movement for cultural reform (art, education, medicine, agriculture) deprived of living esotericism, i.e. without mysticism, without gnosis and without magic, which have been replaced by lectures, study and intellectual work aiming at establishing a concordance between the writings and stenographed lectures of the master.

In other words, it has Truth but not the Life. It is locked in concepts, meaning that one learns the concepts first, then tries to have the experience, whereas it should be vice versa. Tomberg explained this in a letter to Bernhard Martin:

First they [i.e., Anthroposophists] have a world of formulated concepts and then try to arrive at experience. But the concepts hold them shut within their world: the spiritual world remains silent, because they are the ones talking about the spiritual world; they don't let it speak. It's otherwise with people [like

Jung]; in silence they let the spiritual world speak. And the spiritual world speaks in symbols — i.e. in mystery speech — today just like before.

In other words, it is necessary to treat the concepts as symbols, as the symbol is understood in the Meditations. It is an invitation to a personal meditation, not a univocal concept to be learned. In *Covenant of the Heart*, Tomberg is more explicit:

Alas it happened, however, for reasons which we need not go into here, that Rudolf Steiner gave his work the form of a science, so-called “spiritual science”. Thereby the third aspect of the indivisible threefoldness of the Way, the Truth, and the Life was not given enough attention. For the scientific form into which the logic of the Logos had to be cast, and by which it was limited, left little room for pure mysticism and spiritual magic, that is, for Life. So there is in Anthroposophy a magnificent achievement of thought and will — which is, however, unmystical and unmagical, i.e. in want of Life. Rudolf Steiner himself was conscious of this essential lack. Therefore, it was with a certain amount of hope that he indicated the necessary appearance of a successor (the Bodhisattva), who would remedy this lack and would bring the trinity of the Way, the Truth, and the Life to full fruition.

Knowledge as Intuition Tomberg is trying to get us out of our heads in order to experience a higher type of knowledge. In *Covenant of the Heart*, he explains:

truth is based on “intuition [which] is not attained through practical knowledge or intellectual consideration (reflection), but through direct experience of reality ... ‘an evolving revelation from the inner being of man’ ... and ‘a direct grasping of the being of things’.

He then goes on:

For those who experience it, this form of knowledge counts as the highest because it is experienced . . . as the result of the most profound contemplation and the greatest concentration, in comparison with which that of intellectual consideration and the practical knowledge gained by way of observation appears superficial. However, it does not count in the slightest way as knowledge (let alone as the highest form of knowledge) for the scientific disciplines which, as such, lay claim to being of general validity. For the scientific approach is not to strive simply for the truth, but rather to strive for that brand of truth which is of general validity, i.e. that which can be comprehended fundamentally by everyone bestowed with healthy understanding and faculties of perception, and which should thus be concurred with. A scientific discipline, whether a spiritual-scientific or a natural-scientific discipline, does not want to, and is not able to, address itself only to those people who are capable of the concentration and inner deepening necessary for intuition. Were it to do so, it would then not be scientific, i.e. generally comprehensible and provable. Rather, it would be “esoteric”, i.e. a matter for an elite group of special people. In this sense theology is also “science” since, assuming the authority of Scripture and the Church are acknowledged, it can be comprehended and tested by all believers.

Direct spiritual knowledge achieved through intuition is *personal*—never general or universal, i.e. scientific in the conventional sense. That is why Hermetism is not one philosophical system among many systems, nor one scientific theory among other competing views, nor the foundation of a new religion. In other words, it is not expansive in the horizontal sense, but rather a matter of depth, i.e., a deepening of understanding.

Postscript So, to simplify, we can define:

- The Truth as the understanding of concepts
- The Way as the deepening of that understanding
- The Life as direct intuition

An example might be this:

- Hegel's system of Absolute Idealism, or perhaps other similar systems
- Steiner created not just a thought system, but also proposed a path of spirit and soul development
- Tomberg opens up the meaning of symbols and intuition

Posted on 2018-08-17 by Cologero

9.2 The Temptations in the Wilderness

[materialists] fear judgment. Because the future brings retribution for the past, people deny both the moral world order and the future in the sense of that moral world order.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

One generation creates the destiny of the next.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Although the sequence differs between Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13, these are the three temptations:

- To turn stones into bread

- To jump off the pinnacle
- To rule the world

The first item to note is the symmetry between the beginning of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Genesis sets the stage for the emergence of the First Adam and the three temptations in Eden:

- Listening to the serpent. The serpent was cunning and shifted the perspective of Adam and Eve from the vertical to the horizontal.
- Seeing fruit as a delight to the eyes.
- Eating of the fruit

Adam and Eve succumbed to each of those temptations, and then experienced the corresponding effects.

First of all, Eve allowed the voice of the serpent to have equal influence with that of God. This was an act of disobedience and the result was doubt, i.e., having two minds in conflict with each other.

This put the tree in a new light, for now it seemed desirable. Doubt wants to be resolved by experience, i.e., to actually taste the fruit of the tree. That is greed, the opposite to poverty.

Eating the fruit, i.e., actually undergoing the experience is unchastity.

The New Testament begins with the stories of Jesus' origins ending with the Baptism in the Jordan. He is led to fast for 40 days in the wilderness. There, Satan tempts him, but Jesus resists each one of them. The following sections show Tomberg's analysis from each of the four works mentioned.

Anthroposophic Meditations on the New Testament In this work, there are two chapters devoted to the temptations in the wilderness. The NT starts with the human and leads to the divine. Curiously, Tomberg begins his discussion with Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche experienced loneliness and isolation in their depths. That is, he knew the wilderness and its temptations, yet yielded to them.

His emptiness led him to seek the fullness of life in the instincts and the will to power. Then from the mountain top, Nietzsche came up with the idea of the Eternal Return. This means that the Earth has no future, but is condemned to repeat itself endlessly. Nietzsche claimed to have been inspired by superior forces. Yet then led him to devalue God, spirit, soul. The same temptations exist today, although few succumb with the same intensity.

Jesus in the wilderness was likewise isolated; the angels did not minister to him until afterwards. For, according to Tomberg, it is human freedom that must resist the temptations. The wilderness represents the Kali Yuga, the Dark Age. That is the temptation of humanity as a whole, which we see constantly repeated. Suprasensory experiences are rare because people have not yet decided:

- Whether to rule or to serve (power or obedience)
- Whether to possess the kingdoms of the past or to wander destitute into the future (wealth or poverty)
- Whether to desire miracles of knowledge (the authority of miracles or the chastity of knowledge)

People are exposed to these temptations in diverse forms and Tomberg provides examples.

First Temptation. Stones into Bread The tendency is to substitute a quantitative numerical value to everything qualitative and specific. But quantity is death and the property of quality, the living, cannot be reduced to it.

Tomberg considers money as an example of converting metal or paper into a “basket of bread”. The value of money is arbitrarily set while bread, which supports life, is subjected to the power of number. The prime example of this is in the USA where the major concern in elections is the GDP, as the spiritual and intellectual level of society declines precipitously.

Second Temptation: retreat into the subconscious This temptation is to seek the source of life in the instinctual life of the subconscious. This is jumping from the pinnacle into the abyss, the domain of hidden instinctive urges. Thinking is difficult so the temptation is to expect miracles from the subconscious.

The true source of life, however, is the superconscious and the free life of thinking.

Third temptation: materialism Materialism is the temptation to see the world as having no moral or spiritual guidance. This view grants them freedom from responsibility. However, when materialism is followed all the way through, the ruling intelligence behind matter will be seen to be the “prince of the world”.

The path of materialism leads through hallucination to insanity and from insanity to demonic possession. These terms are not meant in a clinical sense, and the symptoms are certainly noticeable in our time.

The fundamentals of materialism are force, chance, matter

- Blind force is the opposite of spiritual light, a denial of the Holy Spirit

- Blind chance is the opposite of the Logos, or Son
- Spiritless matter stands in contrast to the cosmic First Cause, or Father

Force is unspiritual time, chance the lack of causality, and matter, the mechanization of life. The results are sleep, prostration, and death. The following meditation contains the opposite tendencies:

- Out of the Godhead is created humankind.
- In Christ death becomes life.
- In Spirit's cosmic thoughts, the soul awakens.

Inner Development In the series of lectures published with the title *Inner Development*, there is a brief discussion of the three temptations. The context is a critique of the three currents of contemporary intellectual life, viz., religion, art, science

Religion Religion has succumbed to the temptation of reckoning with the Prince of this world. It has succumbed to the temptation to organize the world with the help of a power principle and take possession of it with the help of a centralized power organization. This is the temptation to rule the world, provided one bows down to Satan.

He then criticizes the Roman Church which, he claims, “strove to bring the world and its glories under its dominion.” However, in the Meditations, the view becomes more balanced. He came to recognize that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, i.e., a real entity. It is the egregore of the Church, a factitious creation, that succumbs to the temptation, not the Mystical Body.

Art Tomberg then turns his attention to art:

Artistic creation is increasingly becoming a situation whereby the artist creates out of the deep dark underworld of his subconscious.

That is because the artist succumbs to the temptation of jumping into the abyss.

The artist leaps from the pinnacle of the temple of clear consciousness into the sphere of impulses, instincts, whence something is supposed to arise that is to be regarded as angelic revelation.

The art of popular culture is now plagued with vulgar, scatological, and sexual innuendo. For some reason, this is considered to be a deep insight into the human condition.

Science Science succumbs to the temptation to turn stones into bread:

Modern science is based upon the conception that the dead mineral world can be the foundation of everything, and that everything living is only a consequence of movement in this mechanical, dead world. i.e., all bread arises out of stone.

Summary Tomberg related the temptations to the political forces rampant at that time. The specifics might not be so important now, but the temptations still arise in different contexts.

World history is essentially nothing other than the continual karmic confrontation of humanity with the first, the second, the third, or all three temptations.

Degeneration and Regeneration of Jurisprudence In this PhD thesis, written shortly after his conversion, Tomberg reformulates the temptations in the context of jurisprudence. Instead of religion, art, and science, the concern is now law, ethics, and religion.

A view which presumes law, ethics, and religion to be a structure unity cannot avoid recognizing a kind of “fall” in the history of jurisprudence in the 19th and 20th centuries. A fall consists of succumbing step by step to the same three temptations to which Christ was exposed in the desert.

First Temptation

The turning away from the ideal of reason, and the turning towards the instinctual is, seen morally, nothing but the leap from the pinnacle of the temple into the abyss, hoping that there angels of God will lift the one falling. i.e., intelligence reigning in the darkness of the instinctual.

Thought should be oriented toward the divine, but the temptation is to sink.

The height of pure thought (pinnacle) oriented towards the divine (temple) has been left behind to find the reign of the nation’s subconscious force (angels) in the instinctual (abyss). This is the path from faith to superstition.

Just as an individual’s personal instincts may be made, so too are the national instincts. Hence, there is a risk or a leap into the unknown. This temptation is to put the irrational above reason.

Second Temptation Historically, there have been no intervention of angels to break the fall. Only the ground can break the fall, leading to the cult of materialism.

Hence, one generation creates the destiny of the next, although not necessarily a repetition of what came prior. Culture and morality were assumed to be determined by mechanical and material forces. Hence, the materialist generation reversed the order of the higher and the lower. In particular, the revolutionary movements of the 19th century were rooted in the primacy of the material. Quantity placed above quality.

This is the temptation to transform stones into bread. The transformation of inorganic and dead stones into organic bread is actually a reversal of the above and the below.

It treats culture (law, ethics, religion) as the product of the material (amoral and irrational).

Third Temptation The materialist generation gave way to the positivistic generation:

Law is only what was laid down by a power according to its will and sanctioned by force. The good is only what leads to the set objective. And that objective is defined to be “truth”.

Matter is no longer fundamental, but force is. In man, force is actualized as the Will.

Will is the reality in the life of a human—ultimately it creates and directs everything—including all of civilised and legal life. But for legal life this means a decisive change in its foundation: might replaces right.

The temptation is to become the authority over all the kingdoms of the world, provided on bows down and worships Satan. This is predominantly the situation we find ourselves in today.

Meditations on the Tarot The three temptations have a prominent place in the Meditations. However, they are always put in contrast with the temptations in Eden, and in relation to the three vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity.

The three vows are, in essence, memories of paradise, where man was united with God (obedience), where he possessed everything at once (poverty), and where his companion was at one and the same time his wife, his friend, his sister, and his mother (chastity).

The work of redemption begins with the three temptations in the wilderness. However, this time the tempter was not the serpent. Rather, the tempter was the prince of the world (the new man, the superman, or other son of man who, if incarnated, would be the realisation of the promise of freedom made by the serpent.

The three temptations of the Son of Man in the wilderness were his experience of the directing impulses of evolution, namely the will-to-power, the “groping trial” and the transformation of the gross into the subtle. They signify at the same time the test of the three vows—the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty.

Bread and stones The first temptation came after Jesus’ forty day fast:

Hunger of the spirit, the soul and the body is the experience of *emptiness* or poverty. It is therefore the vow of poverty which is put to the test when “the tempter came and said to him: If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread” (Matthew iv, 3). “Command these stones to become loaves of bread”—this is the very essence of the aspiration of humanity in the scientific epoch, namely to victory over poverty. Synthetic resins, synthetic rubber, synthetic fibre, synthetic vitamins, synthetic proteins and. . .eventually synthetic bread! —When? Soon, perhaps. Who knows?

Forty-five years later, we can begin to answer such questions. Synthetic meat is being grown in the laboratory and will soon be mass produced. Of course, the advances in artificial intelligence are seen as a threat. Synthetic humans are already being produced for specialized purposes (i.e., sex).

Through the media, the population is being prepared to accept these androids as fully human. Some even predict them to be the next root race that will replace biological humans.

In cultural terms, this temptation leads the intellectuals to deny life, which is regarded as merely complex molecules. In the political realm, economic life is regarded as primary.

Groping Trial This is the temptation to jump off the pinnacle into the abyss, assuming God will come to the rescue. In practical terms, it is the idea of evolution over creation. Creation is the accomplishment of absolute wisdom and absolute goodness.

Evolution, on the other hand, proceeds blindly by trial and error, from one species to the next. Evolution is actually guided by the serpent, or prince of the word. This temptation is opposed to chastity, and fornication is threefold: spiritual, psychic, and carnal.

The principle of spiritual fornication is therefore the preference of the subconscious to the conscious and superconscious. of instinct to the Law, and of the world of the serpent to the world of the WORD.

Transformation Temptation The third temptation is directed against obedience. The temptation is the will-to-power, the desire to rule over the world.

It is a matter, therefore, of accepting the ideal of the superman (“fall down and worship me”), who is the summit of evolution (“he took him to a very high mountain”) and who, having passed

through the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, subjecting them to his power, is lord over them, i.e. he is their final cause or aim and ideal, their representative or their collective concentrated will, and he is their master, who has taken their subsequent evolution into his hands. Now, the choice here is between the ideal of the superman, who is “as God”, and God himself.

Obedience is faithfulness to the living God.

Fundamental Law of Magic A fundamental law of sacred magic is this:

That which is above being as that which is below, renunciation below sets in motion forces of accomplishment above and the renunciation of that which is above sets in motion forces of accomplishment below.

This means:

When you resist a temptation or renounce something desired below, you set in motion by this very fact forces of realisation of that which corresponds above to that which you come to renounce below.

Or

It is not desire which bears magical realisation, but rather the renunciation of desire (that you have formerly experienced, of course). For renunciation through indifference has no moral — and therefore no magical — value.

This renunciation is actually the practice of the three sacred vows, which is the true magical training, and concentration without effort. That is the esoteric value to resisting those temptations.

Posted on 2018-09-07 by Cologero

10.1 Do Dogs Go to Heaven

Like a Moth to a Flame The two primary conditions of elementary life are attraction and repulsion. A healthy organism will be attracted to whatever is good for it, including its genetic integrity. Likewise, it will be repulsed by anything that threatens its well-being, again including its genetic integrity.

In the animal soul, an emotional element is added to those conditions. Attraction and repulsion are no longer merely mechanical, but are reinforced by that strong emotional component. Since there is no abstract intelligence in animals, these emotions can be easily fooled. For example, the proverbial moth is attracted to light, which is good, but also to a flame, which will be its downfall.

Many people live primarily an animal life of emotion, with occasional forays into a true intellectual understanding. These emotions have quite a hold, so it is difficult to dissuade them from unnatural attractions and repulsions, because they feel so good. That emotional life is so sweet and

appealing, except when it isn't.

The definition of love, for such people, is defective, since it is purely passive:

Love is attraction with a strong and pleasant emotional component.

True Love, on the other hand, is active, a matter of the will. The intellect must decide what is attractive and repulsive; the emotions and body will follow.

To Love is to will the Good.

Stray Dogs in the Intellect

If our intellect is inexperienced in the art of watchfulness it at once begins to entertain whatever impassioned fantasy appears in it, and plies it with illicit questions and responds to it illicitly. Then our own thoughts are conjoined to the demonic fantasy, which waxes and burgeons until it appears lovely and delectable to the welcoming and despoiled intellect. The intellect then is deceived in much the same way as lambs when a stray dog comes into the field in which they happen to be: *in their innocence they often run towards the dog as though it were their mother, and their only profit in coming near it is that they pick up something of its stench and foulness.*

In the same way our thoughts run ignorantly after demonic fantasies that appear in our intellect and, as I said, the two join together and one can see them plotting to destroy the city of Troy like Agamemnon and Menelaus. For they plot together the course of action they must take in order to bring about, in practice and by means of the body, that purpose which the demons have persuaded them is sweet and delectable. In this Way sins are produced in the soul: and hence the need to bring out into the open what is in our hearts.

PHILOKALIA

Beyond Good and Evil Many people claim to have learned of “unconditional love” from their relationship with a pet. Now unconditional love is not necessarily desirable if the object of such love is not the Good. True Love is an act of the will toward the Good.

Now the dog is beyond good and evil, and has no interest in the moral state of its human companion. It is only interested in what is good or bad for its own well-being.

Oddly enough, such people like being the recipient of the pet’s “unconditional love”, but not so much as the giver of such love. A woman who took that lesson to heart would experience better relations with her lover. For example, she would give him three square meals a day, clean up his shit without complaint, and scratch his belly every night. Try that at home and let me know.

States of the Spirit in the World In *Heaven and Hell* #435, **Emmanuel Swedenborg** writes:

All this has been said to convince the rational man that viewed in himself man is a spirit, and that the corporeal part that is added to the spirit to enable it to perform its functions in the natural and material world is not the man, but only an instrument of his spirit. But evidences from experience are preferable, because there are many that fail to comprehend rational deductions; and those that have established themselves in the opposite view turn such deductions into grounds of doubt by means of reasonings from the fallacies of the senses.

Here is the key to understand Swedenborg. He is not really describing a visit to the spirits in Heaven or Hell at some future time, but he is describing phenomenologically the spiritual states of people in the here

and now. This is a matter of direct experience and is called in Tradition “external considering” or “reading souls”.

This is obvious from this paragraph from the web site of the Swedenborg Foundation:

Swedenborg writes that each person self-selects a destination in the afterlife depending on what they loved most while on earth. Those who become evil spirits are people who love things like power and wealth and even being cruel to others at the cost of all else. After death, such people push away anything that was good within them and become completely focused on the thing that they value above all else—they become their emotions in tangible form. Spirits are grouped together into societies according to what they love.

Such behavior does not just happen “after death”, but right now in the life of such persons. The death referred to here is a “spiritual death”. Swedenborg’s colorful descriptions of the various evil spirits he encountered are his way of describing their inner soul life.

Continuing his discussion of #435, Swedenborg denies that pets “go to heaven” because, unlike man, they are not spirits. Nevertheless, many people have little self-knowledge of themselves as spirits in the world and remain entrenched in corporeal imagery. They can see little difference between themselves and animals.

People who have convinced themselves [of the opposite view] tend to think that animals live and sense just the way we do, so that they too have a spiritual nature like ours; yet this dies along with their bodies. However, the spiritual nature of animals is not the same as ours. We have an inmost nature that animals do not, a nature into which the Divine flows and which it raises toward itself, in this way uniting us to itself. So we, unlike animals, can think about God and about divine matters of heaven and the church.

We can love God because of these matters and by engaging with them; and so be united to him; and anything that can be united to the Divine cannot be destroyed. Anything that cannot be united to the Divine, though, does disintegrate.”

I don’t believe he writes about the destination of those who love their dogs more than they love God, other than that they will organize themselves together, probably into a pack.

Living like a Dog A year or two ago, I watched a short feature — whose title now eludes me — about a man who designed a pharmaceutical that turned him temporarily into a dog. His drug became very popular, so that clubs arose whose members became dogs, prowling the streets of the city, and rutting, for a night, only to return to the human state in the morning.

Eventually, the authorities regarded his drug as the cause of a public nuisance and ordered him to cease and desist manufacturing and distributing the drug. Instead, he found a way to make the effects permanent and turned himself — and his many followers — into dogs.

The Complete Man **Nicolas Cabasilas** (1320-1392) is a Greek saint and his writings appear in the Roman Liturgy of the Hours. According to **Mircea Eliade**, he considered the layman to be superior to the monk. The goal of the latter is the *angelic life* while that of the layman is the *complete man*.

[The Law of Love] demands no arduous nor afflicting work, nor loss of money; it does not involve shame, nor any dishonor, nor anything worse; it puts no obstacle in the pursuit of any art or profession. The general keeps the power to command, the labourer can work the ground, the artisan can carry on with his occupation. There is no reason to retire into solitude, to eat unusual food, to

be inadequately clothed, or endanger one's health, or to resort to any other special endeavor; it suffices to give oneself wholly to meditation and to remain always within oneself without depriving the world of one's talents.

NICOLAS CABASILAS

This confirms our claim about the need, in our time, for the spiritual man to be active in the world. The complete man actualizes all his possibilities, not just the angelic ones. The spirituality of the monks has dominated religious discourse, although it is not necessarily appropriate for the man living in the world. It is to these latter men that the future belongs.

Christendom and Skillful Means Frithjof Schuon describes the spiritual state of European man, and why he had to overcome the ancient pagan religion:

European humanity has about it something Promethean and tragic. It therefore required a religion which could surpass and sublimate the dramatism of the Greek and Germanic gods and heroes. Furthermore, the European creative genius implies a need to "burn what one has worshipped," and from this comes a prodigious propensity for denial and for change. The Renaissance offers us the clearest proof and the most stupefying example of this, not to speak of what is going on in our own time on an incomparably more dangerous level; it is still "Man" that is at issue, but with totally different emphases.

The new religion overcame the arbitrary forces, experienced as the whims of gods and goddesses, that seemed to dominate life. It added Providence to the forces of Destiny and Will, bringing warmth to the world. With the Logos, the world could be experienced as an ordered cosmos rather than the result of Fate or blind Will. Nevertheless, Schuon points to a certain tension, which has only become more exacerbated over time.

Christianity has a dramatic quality about it: it has the sense of the Sublime rather than that of the Absolute, and the sense of Sacrifice rather than that of Equilibrium. In this second aspect it extends to society as a whole a vocation that is properly speaking ascetic – above all in the Latin Church – something which, as a particular *upaya*, it certainly has a right to do, but which has nonetheless provoked historical disequilibriums that are both disastrous and providential.

Time, Space, and Equilibrium are the three preliminary conditions of manifestation from which the active, passive, and neutralizing forces arise. If Tradition is the Civilization of Space, then Time will tend to consume Space unless Equilibrium is established. The re-establishment of equilibrium will require the replacement of “skillful means”, that may have been appropriate at a given time and place, but are no longer effective. The tendency to accept *upaya* as equivalent to dogma must be avoided, since skillful means are appropriate to a particular time and place. Ultimately the goal is *prajna*, i.e., gnosis.

The Eucharist and Nonduality

The Tao acts and does not exhaust itself.

TAO TE CHING

About 6 weeks ago, I heard a sermon at mass on the Eucharist by a visiting priest. In retrospect, I wish I had taken notes for the 45 minute talk, but I had no expectation of it.

Ultimately, it was a nondual explanation of the Eucharist. The thought experiment for the priest was how the Christ can be present in all the hosts while remaining undivided. He compared Christ to the Sun, which is inexhaustible, while all the masses received the light and substance of the Sun. However, this is not a dualism. The priest himself represents

Christ, so that he is also present in the Eucharist. Moreover, the whole congregation, is also the Body of Christ, and so is present in the Eucharist.

The sacrifice of the Mass is not a repetition of Calvary, as the heretics mistakenly assert, but is rather the very *same* sacrifice. So the Eucharist transcends both time and space, and is a theophany connecting the world of being to that of becoming.

The Conversion of Russia At the end of the Latin rite mass, prayers are said for the conversion of Russia. The missal explains:

These prayers were introduced by Pope Leo XIII to obtain an acceptable solution to the Vatican's relations with the Italian State after the seizure of the Papal States. After its resolution by the establishment of the Vatican State through the Treaty of 1929, Pope Pius XI asked that these prayers should be said for the conversion of Russia.

So for over 80 years, these prayers have been said. Perhaps some have noticed a small change in Russia today, different from what it was in 1929. What Western ruler has asked his subordinates to study the works of such eminent philosophers like Vladimir Solovyov and Nicolas Berdyaev?

If the Orthodox still have a beef with the West, perhaps they should return the favor instead of engaging in useless carping.

Huxley on Love **Thomas Molnar**, in *The Decline of the Intellectual*, notes the fundamental message of **Aldous Huxley's** dystopian novel *Brave New World*:

Aldous Huxley had come to the disturbing conclusion that culture, that is, the inner man, cannot survive without tragedy, that is, outside traditional society, where human rapports and not scientific organization, prevail. This is the disillusioned statement of

the World Comptroller from which everything incalculable, the last ounce of freedom and hence the restlessness accompanying creative work, had been eliminated.

That is, the World Comptroller wants knowledge without gnosis, by which he will organize society. So-called scientific control of society is the dream of leftism, although it is a nightmare for those controlled. It tries to control the outward circumstance of life to replace the sense of inwardness.

It leaves out of the picture transcendence, darkness, the depths — or the abyss. Consider, for example, **Jacob Boehme**'s revelation of the Ungrund which is prior to Being, from which creative freedom arises, which cannot be anticipated in any scientific organization. The world is a mix, then, of Darkness and Light, and the darkness cannot be hidden by any technocrat. Nay, he actually is the darkness.

Unfortunately, Huxley eventually ended up California dreaming, that strange attractor. Molnar explains:

In a series of lectures sponsored by the University of California, he advocated the strengthening of love among people by suggesting that mothers all over the world, while suckling their babes should rub them against other people and animals saying “nice-nice, good-good,” and should point at everybody around repeating some incantatory formula like “this is a good man, we must love him.”

In other words, he thinks people should start acting more like pet dogs.

Loving your Enemies If true love is to will the good for someone, then the desire for justice, as the greatest natural virtue, is an expression of love. For example, a general would engage only in a just war with an enemy, not targeting women and children, nor anything without a military purpose. Such a general would become a complete man.

Now the principle of justice is “to each his own”, or in other words, in justice a man should get what he is entitled to. In particular, a good general will give the enemy exactly what he deserves.

Answer at the Back of the Book

The angels are the thoughts of God incarnated in the celestial flesh.

PIERRE DEGHAÏE, *La Naissance de Dieu*

Specifically, there is an angel of the dogs, which serves as the “group I” for all dogs, which lack an individual “I”. This angel will know all the dogs, in a supra-individual way, as non-formal manifestation. Presumably you can communicate with that angel and experience your pet “from the inside”, in a much more intimate way.

But first of all, you need to work out your own salvation.

Posted on 2016-09-07 by Cologero

* * *

William on 2016-09-08 at 00:33 said:

“According to Mircea Eliade, he considered the layman to be superior to the monk.”

Does Gornahoor also take such a view? I understand the need to actualize possibilities beyond the angelic, but how can the assertion of lay superiority over the monastics be reconciled with the eminence of the priestly caste, which is clearly above the laymen in the caste system.

Cologero on 2016-09-08 at 07:58 said:

So are you “off the hook”, William? Do you want a free ride, while letting the monks do all that hard stuff?

We accept them as teachers, so we posted a long excerpt from the *Philokalia*. How will you use that passage in your life today?

By the way, not all monks are priests.

In a very recent post, we made this suggestion in regard to some ideas from Joachim di Fiore:

Hence, the Age of the Holy Spirit is actually the beginning of a new cycle, not the final stage of some evolutionary process. If the first age was that of the fathers, then of priests, Joachim thought the Third Age would be that of an elite corps of contemplative monks. Actually, it is more likely that that corps will consist of men and women active in the world, while transcending it.

William on 2016-09-08 at 19:46 said:

My question has nothing to do with whether or not I'm off the hook. I know what my duties are in accordance with the caste system. I'm simply asking how we can consider the priestly caste to be higher in the hierarchy than most of us will ever reach, yet still consider ourselves as lay people to be superior to monastic priests. Also, what are we to make of lay brothers? Perhaps they are who the sentence in question was referring to and I'm just misunderstanding? Even then, though, wouldn't they be considered ascetics, which Evola described as a path of the Absolute Man?

Pepé on 2016-09-08 at 20:59 said:

William – as I understand it, that means a 'new caste'. so to speak.

Cologero on 2016-09-09 at 00:01 said:

The castes are all mixed up today, and few may be in their correct caste. So your point is irrelevant.

mleow on 2016-09-09 at 03:06 said:

Moving away from christianity, sanatana dharma which unarguably has more authority to it (from a traditional perspective) then some sayings from swedenborg, considers that animals definitely do have a soul life for example a short summary of the views expressed;

<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/essays/animals.asp>

Besides cologero it is almost amusingly predictable how your canine hatred shines trough and resurface in every odd post you made here over the years. Were you bitten by a dog when you were young or something? Your knowledge and experience of dogs seems to be limited, "Now the dog is beyond good and evil, and has no interest in the moral state of its human companion. It is only interested in what is good or bad for its own well-being." Is it really cats you are referring?? St Roch would probably not concur with that statement..

Cologero on 2016-09-09 at 08:24 said:

No, mleow, but I did bite a dog once.

????? on 2016-09-09 at 10:13 said:

I recall hearing someone ask a similar or the same question at a sufi gathering, and the response concerned the dog who lived in the cave with the (seven?) sleepers. Since the dog was a good dog and a companion of saints, it will live on as a human in Paradise inshaAllah. IIRC. Because you will be with those whom you love. But will dogs be with those whom they love? That hadith wasn't directly addressed to dogs... This is a controversial issue among Muslims too.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Pray in the sheep pens and wipe their dust (raghaam), for they are among the animals of Paradise."

Ulysses on 2016-09-09 at 13:44 said:

On the subject of experiencing pets "from the inside", Groucho Marx said "Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."

Matt on 2016-09-09 at 23:11 said:

Mleow,

The Church also recognizes that animals have a soul. The question is, do they have an intellectual/rational soul? Because the matter of immortality rests with the intellectual soul. From Tradition (christian or not), humans have all three soul layers: vegetative, animal/sensitive, and intellectual/rational. That's what makes us fundamentally different from animals and plants (a difference of kind, and not merely of degree). Swedenborg's statements are in keeping with the authoritative teachings of the Church, and also with those of the other legitimate traditions.

Just putting aside Tradition and doctrine, and instead looking at empirical studies (if that's what matters to some readers), the supposed evidence for certain animals possessing substantive(moral) reason and intelligence is rather limited and weak, with the concepts of reason and intelligence being poorly grasped by the researchers that make claims about certain animals.

Ultimately, how does one envision what eternal life is like? Is it the ever deepening-ascending contemplation and love of the Divine, or is it forever playing fetch with Fido?

William on 2016-09-10 at 11:27 said:

"The castes are all mixed up today, and few may be in their correct caste. So your point is irrelevant."

I've been reading Gornahoor for quite a while, and out of all the asinine replies you've given to readers, this has to be the least satisfactory one yet.

Cologero on 2016-09-10 at 14:39 said:

Apparently, William, my source is equally asinine:

Have we not arrived at that terrible age, announced in the Sacred Books of India, 'when the castes shall be mingled, when even the family shall no longer exist'.

As we have already pointed out, under the present state of affairs in the Western world, **nobody any longer occupies the place that he should normally occupy by virtue of his own nature; this is what is meant by saying that the castes no longer exist, for caste, in its traditional meaning, is nothing other than individual nature**, with the whole array of special aptitudes that this carries with it and that predisposes each man to the fulfillment of one or another particular function.

From *Crisis of the Modern World* by **Rene Guenon**

AC on 2016-09-10 at 18:48 said:

Two relevant excerpts:

According to the [evolutionist explanation of the instinct of animals], instinct is the expression of the heredity of a species, of an accumulation of analogous experiences down the ages. This is how they explain, for example, the fact that a flock of sheep hastily gathers together around the lambs the moment it perceives the shadow of a bird of prey, or that a kitten while playing already employs all the tricks of a hunter, or that birds know how to build their nests. In fact, it is enough to watch animals to see that their instinct has nothing of an automatism about it. The formation of such a mechanism by a purely cumulative ... process is highly improbable, to say the least. Instinct is a nonreflective modality of the intelligence; it is determined, not by a series of automatic reflexes, but by the "form"—the qualitative determination—of the species. This form is like a filter through which the universal intelligence is manifested. ... The same is also true for man: his intelligence too is determined by the subtle form of his species. This form, however, includes the reflective faculty, which allows of a singularization of the individual such as does not exist among the animals. Man alone is able to objectivize himself. He can say: "I am this or that." He alone possesses this two-edged faculty. Man, by virtue of his own central position in the cosmos, is able to transcend his specific norm; he can also betray it, and sink lower; "The corruption of the best is corruption at its worst." A normal animal remains true to the form and genius of its species; if its intelligence is not reflective and objectifying, but in some sort existential, it is nonetheless spontaneous; it is assuredly a form of the universal intelligence

even if it is not recognized as such by men who, from prejudice or ignorance, identify intelligence with discursive thought exclusively.

-Titus Burckhardt, *Modern Psychology*

And:

We have seen reason to believe that not all animals suffer as we think they do: but some, at least, look as if they had selves, and what shall be done for these innocents?

The real difficulty about supposing most animals to be immortal is that immortality has almost no meaning for a creature which is not "conscious" in the sense explained above. If the life of a newt is merely a succession of sensations, what should we mean by saying that God may recall to life the newt that died to-day? It would not recognise itself as the same newt; the pleasant sensations of any other newt that lived after its death would be just as much, or just as little, a recompense for its earthly sufferings (if any) as those of its resurrected – I was going to say "self", but the whole point is that the newt probably has no self. The thing we have to try to say, on this hypothesis, will not even be said. There is, therefore, I take it, no question of immortality for creatures that are merely sentient. Nor do justice and mercy demand that there should be, for such creatures have no painful experience. Their nervous system delivers all the letters A, P, N, I, but since they cannot read they never build it up into the word PAIN. And all animals may be in that condition. If, nevertheless, the strong conviction which we have of a real, though doubtless rudimentary, selfhood in the higher animals, and specially in those we tame, is not an illusion, their destiny demands a somewhat deeper consideration. The error we must avoid is that of considering them in themselves. Man is to be understood only in his relation to God. The beasts are to be understood only in their relation to man and, through man, to God. Let us here guard against one of those untransmuted lumps of atheistical thought which often survive in the minds of modern believers. Atheists naturally regard the co-existence of man and the other animals as a mere contingent result of interacting biological facts; and the taming of an animal by a man as a purely arbitrary interference of one species with another. The "real" or "natural" animal to them is the wild one, and the tame animal is an artificial or unnatural thing. But a [believer] must not think so. Man was appointed by God to have dominion over the beasts, and everything a man does to an animal is either a lawful exercise, or a sacrilegious abuse, of an authority by divine right. The tame animal is therefore, in the deepest sense, the only "natural" animal – the only one we see occupying the place it was made to occupy, and it is on the tame animal that we must base all our doctrine of beasts. Now it will be seen that, in so far as the tame animal has a real self or personality, it owes this almost entirely to its master. If a good sheepdog seems "almost human" that is because a good shepherd has made it so. . . I am now going to suggest that . . . beasts that attain a real self are *in* their masters. That is to say, you must not think of a beast by itself, and call that a personality and then inquire whether God will raise and bless that. You must take the whole context in which the beast acquires its selfhood – namely "The good man – and – the – goodwife – ruling – their children – and – their – beasts –

in – the – good – homestead”. That whole context may be regarded as a “body”; and how much of that “body” may be raised along with the goodman and the goodwife, who can predict? So much, presumably, as is necessary not only for the glory of God and the beatitude of the human pair, but for that particular glory and that particular beatitude which is eternally coloured by that particular terrestrial experience. And in this way it seems to me possible that certain animals may have an immortality, not in themselves, but in the immortality of their masters. And the difficulty about personal identity in a creature barely personal disappears when the creature is thus kept in its proper context. If you ask, concerning an animal thus raised as a member of the whole Body of the homestead, where its personal identity resides, I answer “Where its identity always did reside even in the earthly life – in its relation to the Body and, specially, to the master who is the head of that Body”. In other words, the man will know his dog, the dog will know its master and, in knowing him, will be itself. To ask that it should, in any other way, know itself, is probably to ask for what has no meaning. Animals aren’t like that, and don’t want to be.

My picture of the good sheepdog in the good homestead does not, of course, cover wild animals nor (a matter even more urgent) illtreated domestic animals. But it is intended only as an illustration drawn from one privileged instance – which is, also, on my view the only normal and unperverted instance of the general principles to be observed in framing a theory of animal resurrection. I think [believers] may justly hesitate to suppose any beasts immortal; for two reasons. Firstly, because they fear, by attributing to beasts a “soul” in the full sense, to obscure that difference between beast and man which is as sharp in the spiritual dimension as it is hazy and problematical in the biological. And secondly, a future happiness connected with the beast’s present life simply as a compensation for suffering – so many millenniums in the happy pastures paid down as “damages” for so many years of pulling carts, seems a clumsy assertion of Divine goodness. We, because we are fallible, often hurt a child or an animal unintentionally, and then the best we can do is to “make up for it” by some caress or titbit. But it is hardly pious to imagine omniscience acting in that way – as though God trod on the animals’ tails in the dark and then did the best He could about it! In such a botched adjustment I cannot recognise the master-touch; whatever the answer is, it must be something better than that. The theory I am suggesting tries to avoid both objections. It makes God the centre of the universe and man the subordinate centre of terrestrial nature: the beasts are not co-ordinate with man, but subordinate to him, and their destiny is through and through related to his. And the derivative immortality suggested for them is not a mere amende or compensation: it is part and parcel of the new heaven and new earth, organically related to the whole suffering process of the world’s fall and redemption. Supposing, as I do, that the personality of the tame animals is largely the gift of man – that their mere sentience is reborn to soulhood in us as our mere soulhood is reborn to [God] – I naturally suppose that very few animals indeed, in their wild state, attain to a “self” or ego. But if any do, and if it is agreeable to the goodness of God that they should live again, their immortality would also be related to man – not, this time, to individual masters;

but to humanity. That is to say, if in any instance the quasi-spiritual and emotional value which human tradition attributes to a beast (such as the “innocence” of the lamb or the heraldic royalty of the lion) has a real ground in the beast’s nature; and is not merely arbitrary or accidental, then it is in that capacity, or principally in that, that the beast may be expected to attend on risen man and make part of his “train”.

When we are speaking of creatures so remote from us as wild beasts, and prehistoric beasts, we hardly know what we are talking about. It may well be that they have no selves and no sufferings. It may even be that each species has a corporate self—that Lionhood, not lions, has shared in the travail of creation and will enter into the restoration of all things. And if we cannot imagine even our own eternal life, much less can we imagine the life the beasts may have as our “members”. If the earthly lion could read the prophecy of that day when he shall eat hay like an ox, he would regard it as a description not of heaven, but of hell. And if there is nothing in the lion but carnivorous sentience, then he is unconscious and his “survival” would have no meaning. But if there is a rudimentary Leonine self, to that also God can give a “body” as it pleases Him—a body no longer living by the destruction of the lamb, yet richly Leonine in the sense that it also expresses whatever energy and splendour and exulting power dwelled within the visible lion on this earth. I think, under correction, that the prophet used an eastern hyperbole when he spoke of the lion and the lamb lying down together. That would be rather impertinent of the lamb. To have lions and lambs that so consorted would be the same as having neither lambs nor lions.”

-CS Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

Max on 2016-09-11 at 05:55 said:

We have anticipated the discussion of this intriguing question since it first appeared among the upcoming topics.

There are “mysteries” of the human condition that demand an answer as well, for example why some people are reduced to speaking baby talk as soon as they see a dog. I heard children of parents who speak to them in such a way grow up to become less intelligent and capable, so one can legitimately ask who is really benefiting from it since it is obviously not the children or the dogs? People may try to convince themselves that it is a benevolent concession to others, but it is more likely to correspond to their own projected needs.

Dogs does not understand “economy” and will not obey for moral reasons or to gain an advantage since they even stays with an owner who abuses them. Humans on the other hand, understanding economy, are always looking to gain one thing or another. What that is and how successful we are at it differs. I do not think that a hypothetical “dog heaven” would be very appealing, but perhaps that is what some people aspire to.

Dogs do not choose whether to “love” or not, it is an instinct that they need for survival since they are not even capable of hunting their own meals. Humans are also generally a domesticated

race that does not need to hunt for survival because of setting in place welfare systems providing for them. What a dog feels for a human provider is like humans "unconditional" loyalty to these institutions. This tamed nature gets expressed for example as childlike acting or being drawn toward increased socialization, the seeking of approval from the environment, or speaking in baby talk which is the equivalent of a dog's immature bark retained throughout life (a mature wolf will not bark, it launches its deadly attack without warning, something that stupid zookeepers have repeatedly got the opportunity to experience).

The process as a whole involves certain advantages but it causes a higher dependency on the right upbringing, training, and so on to result in a well equipped and highly functional individual. Basically it allows for more "plasticity" and through that potential for freedom and self-direction, but at the same time also the risk of slavery, making it a kind of gamble. For example, the mental resources that are normally used for social approval can be redirected to the pursuit of knowledge. That does however not imply a lack of "social intelligence", but rather the judgement of the direction (or lack thereof) of the majority as a meaningless evolutionary dead end. Humans mature at varying rates, and the longer the stage of childhood, the higher the potential intelligence of the mature man becomes, but with it the vulnerable formation period increases.

In North America, genetic testing has shown the existence of wild wolves bred with coyotes and domesticated dogs. It was speculated that this has resulted in a far more dangerous creature, perhaps inheriting the wolfs capabilities and merciless killer instinct, now combined with the other parts disrespect and fearlessness for the weak modern man, sort of like the animal equivalent of stealing the Promethean fire, serving to introduce new instincts into the wild population. As a veritable "age of the wolf", this would be like the Caucasian race loosing its universal altruistic side, bred out of existence for lack of bringing any advantage in the current climate. The popular narrative always risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy when its inherent destiny proceeds to travel its course.

The technocratic attempt to minutely control the world has deprived our contemporaries of the feeling of a vast cosmos made up of various forces, wills, beings, an experience without which Christianity becomes difficult to approach. It seems that generally, and without an inevitable mechanical backlash to current trends bringing a deepened disclosure of reality, that higher view will remain closed to most.

Taxonomic species are often defined on the basis of whether they breed with each other or not. That however not only depends on physical opportunity but on will and intent, which could be both good or bad news depending on how you interpret it. For leftist egalitarians it would become possible to promiscuously become an "equal" to lower forms of life, which in turn means that we can without remorse exclude them from the species. Humanity seems to be on the brink not so much of "breakaway civilization" as breakaway speciation, that is to say shifts in Intelligence. We are seeing not the widespread surpassing of the totemic level (from "Social

Facts and Group Control”), but a return to it. Since the modern welfare state is not based on an equilibrated state of “social fact” that can persist for centuries, perhaps in a hundred years, all that will be left of it is a primitive dog cult in the outback mindlessly chanting the Law of the Jungle in baby talk...

“And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.”

The article on epigenetics that you linked to (I cannot find on which page) raises the point that genes, or the entire genesis of an organism for that matter, is much more fluid than previously thought – it can quite literally absorb from its environment the genes that are congenial to its aspirations, even by other means than reproductive sex. All of this is consistent with the ancients’ account of for example “genii” or “daemons”, and also makes much more sense in a worldview of mind over matter.

It also makes the point that “survival of the fittest” merely means “survival of those who survive” which is circular reasoning with no explanatory power. Now, we may in an exercise of conscious judgement choose to measure “fitness” by other criteria than reproduction, acquiring a view not merely of a vague “survival”, but what lives on and in which way.

Epigenetics tells us that the expression of our genes, influencing what we become, is partly dependent on our environment. As a spontaneous experience, thought belongs to the environment of the human organism. This means in practice, even in a materialistic framework where thought is nothing but chemical reactions (those reactions are no less fundamental an environment than chemical reactions occurring outside the body), that thinking something specific holds the potential of unlocking and activating, through providing the correct stimuli, aspects of our inheritance that were previously dark and inaccessible.

Cologero on 2016-09-11 at 11:22 said:

Thanks for finding those excerpts, AC.

The one from Burckhardt makes more sense, as it is closer to our viewpoint. The vegetable, animal, and intellectual souls interpenetrate. So even if an animal does not have an independent intellectual soul, the two lower souls do have an intellectual component. That is the manifestation of what we called an “angelic intelligence”.

Lewis is just speculating. Any “self” he seems to observe does not belong to the animal as an individual being, but may perhaps be a vestige of that angelic intelligence. Of course animals suffer since they are sentient beings. We’re not in agreement with Descartes on that point.