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I.I Excerpt from Forming the Soul

The following is an excerpt from a tract circulated within the *Orthodox Word*; it was written by the Sisters of St. Xenia's Skete. A good friend of mine gave it to me a long while ago.

There is food for thought here, as the writer(s) argue that old Western culture can be a sort of *pre-evangelium* to form the soul in preparation for higher spiritual discipline. I find it interesting on the grounds that the Orthodox Church is officially strongly anti-Western (at least theologically) & that the argument here is a case of sophisticated and wise application of difficult doctrines which the body of Christians ordinarily use to ignorantly argue against "higher learning".

To regard everything Western as immediately suspect argues a profound insecurity, a *legalism* more rigid than any sect, a scholasticism more arid than any *summa*. We have not inherited Western culture at all. That is precisely our trouble. We have simply grown up on the degenerate and

decaying vestiges of that culture. We live, not in the West, but on the fading memory of the West. Our present culture is an absence of culture, a vacuum that has left our souls shrunken and our spirits stifled. Before trying to plunge his spirit into the deeps of Orthodoxy, today's man must first feed his soul, for its paucity will not permit any profound growth of spirit. Modern Western man is like a plant with the shallowest of possible roots, and he naturally cannot support any great growth. His spirit is no longer capable of soaring, because a lofty spirit must rise out of a deep soul which has the maturity, the sensitivity, to feel noble things and become ennobled by them.

Without this, it is difficult to attain sobriety, fruitfulness, authenticity, depth, in our spiritual lives, simply because an unformed, uncultivated, undisciplined soul seldom has the discernment and balance to see clearly and honestly, nor the sensitivity to feel deeply, nor the intensity to strive wholeheartedly, nor the idealism to reach uncompromisingly for what is truest and best. This capacity of the soul is not in and of itself spiritual. Rather, it serves as a preliminary to spiritual things, and it acts as a sort of spiritual tuning fork, often helpful in preserving a well-grounded, sober, discriminating, yet exalted habit of mind. It will be both restraint and prod. We must regain the capacity of soul which can only be developed by proper and careful cultivation.

It is psychologically impossible for us suddenly to become "non-Western", even if such a thing was desirable. It is spiritually unwise to try to feed a spirit from a dead and dormant soul, and it is intellectually irresponsible to offhandedly reject the treasures of hundreds of years of Christian culture in hopes of escaping the taint of Westernism. If we reuse to nourish ourselves on what is edifying and elevating, we will inevitably be fed by what is not, as the popular culture of America, in all its shallowness and falseness, seeps into our unguarded hearts daily. If we do not counteract it, if we fail to set the loftiest things before us, we will inevitably let our souls remain choked with artificiality and cheapness. We will remain

mired in the fatal shoddiness of world and ourselves, and we shall not be able to touch the depths of our own hearts, nor answer the needs of our neighbor's.

The Orthodox Christian who wishes to avoid crippling even further the already spiritually-underdeveloped soul of today's man can find his guide in the actions of the early Church, and he can also find there his defense against those who would wish to regard all artistic and intellectual pursuits as worldly or useless. When the Church denounced pagan culture, She denounced only those aspects of it which were based on or nourished by the demonism of pagan religion or the hedonism of pagan art. Those aspects of Hellenic culture which were useful and healthy, She not only refrained from denouncing, but even transmuted into a profoundly convincing missionary statement. Then, as now, many decried the use of secular art and learning as a means of cultivating and educating the soul, defending their position with the Apostle's warning to *beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ* (Col. 2:8). In answering them, the Fathers of the Church formulated the response which has remained the Orthodox position on the issue, a response expressed in the teachings of men such as Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil, & St. John Damascene.

In his *Stromateis*¹, Clement teaches that the Apostle's warning applies only to those who have turned back from spiritual things to the things of the world, from the ultimate truth of Christ to the partial truth of secular learning, "philosophy being most rudimentary compared to Christianity, and only a preparatory training for the truth" (*Strom*, VI, 7).

It is quite true that the study of poetry, history, art, fiction, is indeed a "most rudimentary" one. It is indeed not a spiritual study. But we, in our modern condition, are in dire need of the rudiments, not only of spiritual

¹<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0210.htm>

life, but of simply humanity. It is absolutely imperative for us to elevate our souls before trying to participate in any sort of authentic spiritual life. To try to ignore or to overleap this primary step leads only to spiritual sterility or deception. We do not live in a normal age, and we are no longer normal people, even by the minimal standards universal to previous ages in the life of fallen man. The Apostle warns us not to mistake the lower life of the soul for the higher life of the spirit, and warns us not to turn back from the fullness of Christ to the emptiness of the world, but he does not tell us to ignore the development of the soul altogether... The Fathers have always taught that the higher, spiritual part of man's nature is founded on the first level of the soul, that which is sensitive to and best developed by the study of virtuous, noble, and beautiful things. Our faculties and responses, distorted by the Fall, must be restored, through virtue, to normalcy, and after that we can begin to progress in spiritual things...

[...]

He treasured hierarchy because it was for him a reminder of God. His whole world was an endlessly unfolding, interlocking allegory of the majesty and love of God. He rejoiced in the delight of obedience and walked fearfully in the humility of command, because both were images of profound spiritual realities. He revelled in the color and beauty of the physical world, because they were fore-shadowings of the even greater splendors of the Kingdom of God. He could spend his entire adult life building a cathedral, and never forget the transcendence of the temporal world.

His whole world acted continuously to form his soul in an elevated way. His literature, didactic and moralistic, reminded him of the beauty of virtue and nobility, and the brevity of life, and his poetry sang of his delight in the created world and his awe of God... His society taught him to feel the reality and proximity of the spiritual realm almost more intensely than the physical. His churches, resplendent, delicate, glowing,

lifted his soul on traceries of stone, and set his spirit on the heights.

The spiritual impetus of that world carried over for almost a thousand years more. The nourishment provided by a thousand years of Orthodoxy was the spiritual ground in which grew all the best in Western thought and art, and that impetus remained largely intact until the Enlightenment, was eroded greatly during the Romantic Age, and finally crumbled entirely in our own time. The best that was done, was done in this spirit, springs from this world. The community of feeling and intent which marks the best of our writers, artists, musicians, springs from this source. Regardless of social, political, and religious changes, Shakespeare and Dickens, Bach and Mozart, Donne and Hugo share the same world, and it is to this world the Orthodox Christians of today must look for formation of soul. There are lessons we must learn from our own past before we can possibly hope to go on.

We must recover the feelings and sensitivities which were once the common property of all civilized people. Those works of art, of literature, of music, which are pre-modern are of essential value for us. They can teach us, as will nothing we ourselves now produce, what nobility is, what virtue is, what honor and purity are, what sacrifice and loyalty are, what is worthy and what is not. Poetry, music, art, fiction, are not spiritual food, but are rather the milk and bread we need to strengthen ourselves to live on the meat of the spirit.

Posted on 2012-10-05 by Logres

* * *

william zeitler² on 2012-11-03 at 11:28 said:

"He treasured hierarchy..." Who is the 'he' to whom this blog refers?

Logres on 2012-11-03 at 14:35 said:

The average peasant, who had a finer sense of what is actually real than 90% of our America. Listening to Americans reminds me of those old movies where the mayor comes out to say a

²<http://www.williamzeitler.com/>

“few words” about the community, which invariably ends up being the “best”, “finest”, “happiest”, etc., etc. in all kinds of ways, in the world. And I am an American. Why are we this way? I think I have a few clues...

1.2 Graduation Day

Here are some suggested spiritual practices and how to know when success is achieved.

Detachment and Spiritual Combat The fundamental bases of our esoteric practice are detachment and spiritual combat. A sense of detachment needs to be developed. That is, you become the observer of your own life. You watch yourself make coffee, you watch yourself shave. Whenever you can, you wake up and observe.

In spiritual combat, you guard against the thoughts that enter your mind. You don’t control what thoughts arise and when, but you do have some measure of control over what thoughts and images you allow to take root in your mind. If you are not diligent, then they can become obsessions, making it more difficult to root them out.

Intentional Suffering You must be willing to make sacrifices when necessary. The first thing to sacrifice is negativity. Yes, people love their negativity and are reluctant to give it up.

Suffering out of love is of a different character. If you give up your meal so your child does not go hungry, your pain turns to joy as you see his hunger satisfied.

Abstinence is the intentional denial of certain beneficial foods for a higher purpose. A common one is to give up meat. We see that in the story of Cain and Abel. Ask yourself what they had for dinner.

Cain had a loaf of bread, since that is all he had. Abel also ate a loaf of bread because he had sacrificed his meat earlier. That is why Abel's sacrifice was accepted; Cain didn't really sacrifice anything.

Purgatory is often misunderstood as a form of punishment. Rather it is a purification, because that process was neglected on earth. According to St. Catherine of Genoa, the souls in purgatory are happy because they know they are doing God's will.

The Persona and Conscious Acting The soul life contains many persona, which are the roles we play in our family and social lives. As such, they are necessary. However, there is a problem when the Ego starts identifying with one of those roles, or Persona. We need to be aware of the roles we play. Eventually, you can start playing them consciously and deliberately.

Collective Unconscious The task of individuation is achieved when there is harmony and equilibrium between the spontaneity of the unconscious and deliberate action by the conscious Ego. To maintain this equilibrium, unconscious processes compensate for the conscious ego to balance the psyche as a whole. These unconscious processes will correct for the egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions. However, self-knowledge will ameliorate the effects of these processes, which manifest as irrational and uncontrollable impulses. As consciousness is widened, the actions of the ego will be freed from these unconscious corrections.

Clearing away the fog of this personal unconscious will reveal a deeper layer, called the collective unconscious. Man's mind is not a blank slate. Rather, the common heritage of the human race is contained in the mind as archetypes, which manifest themselves endlessly in history. Jung gives as examples the parent archetype, which is the reflection of the parent in the child. Of course, the collective imago is intertwined with a personal

imago, since the child cannot fully understand the parent. There is also the imago of the child itself. This allows for the spontaneity of play. One can become child-like in this regard, which is not at all the same as being childish.

A man will have an interior image of a woman (anima) and a woman, that of a man (animus). The Sage is another one, since everyone tries to be wise to some extent in his own life. The human mind is prepared for psychic life just as the body is prepared for material life. It is inborn in him. Jung writes about it:

The whole nature of man presupposes woman, both physically and spiritually. His system is tuned in to woman from the start, just as it is prepared for a quite definite world where there is water, light, air, salt, carbohydrates, etc. The form of the world into which he is born is already inborn in him as a virtual image. Likewise parents, wife, children, birth, and death are inborn in him as virtual images, psychic aptitudes. These a priori categories have by nature a collective character; they are images of parents, wife, and children in general, and are not individual predestinations. ... They are in a sense the deposits of all our ancestral experiences, but they are not the experiences themselves.

Psychology and Esoterism When Jung writes as a scientist, he must necessarily limit himself to the phenomena of psychic (i.e., psychological) events. Whether there is something beyond the phenomena is opaque to the scientific method.

On the other hand, the esoterist is definitely interested in what is beyond the merely psychic layer of life. Now Jung in his personal life did indeed believe in the reality of a noumenal reality beyond phenomena. Nevertheless, we are less interested in his spiritual writings, but his immense psychological knowledge can be used profitably.

Megalomania There are two main obstacles to spiritual development: the tendency to megalomania and sexual obsession. The former manifests as an unjustified high opinion of oneself. Jung write about several such cases. Such an individual will underrate, belittle, or criticize others, especially those close to him. He shows how unconscious processes will compensate for those feelings.

However, on our path, we don't rely on such unconscious processes. Rather, our method is deliberate and conscious. We notice that this megalomania manifests as "taking accounts", that is, we are keeping track of all the alleged snubs and mistreatments we have received from others. By observing this tendency in a detached way, the Self will compensate consciously and we make find that such feelings simply dissipate.

It is necessary to "wake up" somehow in order to catch such manifestations "in the bud" as it were, before they can catch hold.

Song of Innocence It is accepted that childhood is a time of innocence free from overt, *pace* Freud, sexual thoughts. This is followed by the time of experience. Once again, the notion that sexual activity in itself is somehow bad needs to be dispelled. Rather the issue is the misuse, or better said, the reuse of sexual energy. After the son of duty, different options present themselves. Like the faster, one can give up sex as a form of deliberate suffering, not because it is bad.

The goal is self-mastery, but it soon becomes clear that the desire is quite intense. It doesn't suffice not to engage in sex, because once the idea of it comes into the mind, it will recur, usually in an even stronger way. So it is really a spiritual rather than a material battle. It is a matter of guarding the thoughts.

Perhaps one can remain in the state of innocence for an hour, for a day, even for several days. One becomes a child again, spontaneous and innocent. You stop looking at women with that leering look; you know what that feels like.

Freud wrote of the state of polymorphous perversity, in which sexual energy is not confined to the genital region. The entire body can be on edge. Sometimes it can be difficult to even look at a pretty woman, because the body feels so intense; you may need to shield your eyes in that case.

Often, you just feel really good all day long.

Anima The imago of a woman in a man is called the Anima. Jung describes it:

Woman, with her very dissimilar psychology, is and always has been a source of information about things for which a man has no eyes. She can be his inspiration; her intuitive capacity, often superior to man's, can give him timely warning, and her feeling, always directed towards the personal, can show him ways which his own less personally accented feeling would never have discovered.

I want to focus on the esoteric teaching rather than the psychological, although they are compatible. Originally the human being was whole, but such as we are (speaking from a man's point of view), there is a gap in consciousness where the woman belongs. There is one, and only one, who fits perfectly. She may not be found, so there are others who fit less perfectly; some are closer than others.

The two who find each other are called Polar Beings. From an experiential point of view, it suddenly seems as though another person is sharing the same body. Her thoughts become mixed up with your own thoughts, her feelings are your feelings. Times of separation are an ache, times together a joy.

There are states beyond this one, provided certain tests of purity are met. I don't know those states personally, so I'll hold off for now.

Self The end result of individuation is the birth of a Self, or Real I, beyond the conscious Ego. The Self is not scientific because it can never be an object of thought. It is noumenal and beyond the psyche. It includes the Ego as well as all the unconscious processes. However, the Self integrates them all into a whole, eliminating the multiple independent little selves that seem to exist.

From the psychological point of view, Jung claims that the experience of the Self and the experience of God are the same.

St. Catherine of Genoa goes beyond that when she writes:

My Being is God, not by some simple participation but by a true transformation of my Being.

Graduation Day Quite some time ago, I had been participating in a group for a few years. I noticed the repetitive nature of it and no one seemed to be progressing. There were the same stammerings, the same excuses, the same struggles. One woman expressed the joy she felt communing with the squirrels in the morning.

I suspected most were lying, because my descriptions of the inner life were more vivid — and shocking — than theirs. I had assumed that the two group leaders were following some special program. I learned later that they were just winging it. Moreover, once you moved beyond their own limited frame of reference, they sounded lost. And there was no metaphysical teaching sustaining it.

Not that it wasn't helpful to me, just the opposite. One night I asked the group leader, "When do we graduate?" His response was simple, "Just graduate," he replied. So I never went back after that.

You graduate when the burden becomes light, as St. Catherine described. You have achieved more self-awareness. You are liberating yourself from the lower forces that enthrall you with anxiety, despair, worry, uncertainty, obsessions. There is no need for any of that.

Posted on 2018-05-04 by Cologero

* * *

Lyon on 2018-05-06 at 16:10 said:

This was brilliant on many levels. Thank you!

One question for you...

You mentioned Freud in your post. My surface-level take on him is that he is a charlatan of the highest order and that his ideas are deleterious. What is your general assessment of him? Apologies if your explicit views on Freud have already been covered in your writings. I am a rather recent visitor to this site.

And a comment...

The St. Catherine of Genoa quotes were profound and sublime. The insights in her quoted words, used judiciously in your post, I found both deeply rooted and uplifting. I never heard of her before visiting this site (...I recalled you mentioning her previously in a post, so at the time I did a quick internet search of her; I will go back to read up on her further).

Thanks again!

Dennis on 2018-05-08 at 15:12 said:

My problem isn't getting to "graduation day", but knowing where to begin the journey properly in the first place in order to even chart a path to "graduation day." There are just so many books, resources (such as this blog – which itself would take forever to read and digest systematically from beginning to end), etc., that just knowing where to begin and how to separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, is daunting. I find myself often flitting from one book to the next, one thinker to the next, with no clear plan or goal, and in a rush of enthusiasms that soon fade, then I move on, hoping the next book or thinker will be the that changes everything for me...and on and on... Any ideas or recommendations from anyone on where and how best to begin?

F on 2018-05-10 at 09:29 said:

With the right desire the Bhagavad Gita and Boehmes Way to Christ should be enough to get you started.

Sean on 2018-05-11 at 12:29 said:

Not sure how to reply to someone but this is for Dennis.

Dont worry about reading the right books. Start with simple actions in your daily life. I'll give 5 I started with.

1. Make your bed every day

2. Do some physical activity, a walk, a few push-ups, anything. No need to go to the gym if it feels daunting.

3. Quit all drugs/drinking save special occasions like wine at a wedding.

4. Sacrifice some sort of food. I started with processed carbs and made my way to all meat except wild caught fish. (still have difficulty with sugar)

5. Think positive thoughts about all you people you encounter. It's easy to judge that obese lady who buys nothing but Pepsi at Walmart but try and only let yourself think something positive about her. Even if you can't confirm it. Sometimes I'll think "I bet she's a really great aunt" or something.

lenamaria5 on 2018-05-15 at 19:36 said:

@Dennis, Sean gave some good suggestions. I have also struggled with flitting from book to book. Perhaps that's a product of my (our?) generation's digital consumption habits and general lack of focus. It is much better to concentrate one's efforts on a single work or thinker for a longer period, aiming for depth and not breadth. Read meditatively, rather than just seeking information. Set a much longer timeline than you think you need for a work. If you've read through it before the time is up, you've read too quickly. Gornahoor has a post on *Lectio Divina* that's very good, if you're interested in Holy Scripture.

1.3 Reaching your full Potential

Every Real Man has realized all the possibilities of the human condition, but each one has done so in a way which is typical of him alone, and which differentiates him from all other Real Men. If that were not the case, how could there be room, in our world, even for beings who have not achieved that level?

RENE GUENON *in letter to Evola*

The first stage in esoteric teaching, the "Lesser Mysteries", comprises everything related to the development of the possibilities of the human state. These possibilities transcend the activities of



our ordinary life. The roles we play, such as family, occupation, and so on, are the fields of activity in which further development is made possible. Developing whatever talents we might have through education — the arts, science, sports, watching TV, and so on — may constitute the field of action that prepares us for higher possibilities, some obviously, better than others.

A fortiori, the search for powers or secret knowledge is fruitless, if not disadvantageous, from the esoteric perspective. These include:

- Fascination with vast conspiracy theories
- The search for psychic powers of all types
- The desire for mystical experiences
- Obsession with manifesting material objects
- Channeling higher beings
- Seeking secret knowledge of some sort
- Relying on psychedelics for spiritual experiences

The common element is the focus on the corporeal and/or psychic worlds rather than the strictly spiritual part of oneself. **Rene Guenon** provides this admonition:

[Psychic powers] are in fact a distraction in the rigorously etymological sense of the word. The one who lets himself be absorbed by the many activities of the corporeal world will never center his consciousness on higher realities, nor consequently develop within himself the corresponding possibilities. This will be all the

more true for one who goes astray and disperses himself in the incomparably more vast and varied multiplicity of the psychic world, with its indefinite modalities.

The “Rejection of Powers”, *Perspectives on Initiation*

This is not to deny the possibilities of such manifestations, which may arise as side-effects of mystical evolution. Nevertheless, our higher possibilities are not tied to any specific talents or abilities, since they are the principles which make those actions possible. From higher to lower, these are:

- True Will
- Consciousness
- Real I

The attainment of these faculties completes the evolution of the possibilities of the human state, lifting the being to the Primordial State. Boris Mouravieff summarizes this succinctly:

It is by this evolution that animal man can overcome Adam’s Fall, can become a spiritual man, and so be initiated into divine wisdom.

Then he is prepared for the Greater Mysteries.

Obstacles

Many are called but few are chosen.

MATTHEW 22:14

Here we encounter some immediate obstacles that prevent or discourage seekers.

Unnecessary People believe that already have those faculties of a True Will, Consciousness, and a Real I. Hence, they don't see the need for esoteric training. They become more interested in phenomena.

Explicit knowledge This type fails to understand the distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be communicated through the written or spoken word. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, cannot be communicated in that way. It is more like "knowing how" rather than in knowing. Tacit knowledge comes only by doing.

Like riding a bike or learning to swim, one has to actually do it. Reading a book about biking or swimming won't do it for you. Tacit knowledge is more effective if there is a guide, but most people are satisfied by reading or hearing theories about biking or swimming.

Hard work

We can buy food for others; we can cook a dish with this food; we can serve it once it is cooked; we can cut it up; we can even act as if to put the food inside the mouth, as we do for a child or sick person. But at this point, each of us must make the necessary effort to swallow the food for ourselves; this cannot be done by anyone else.

Gnosis I

Few people have the stamina or discipline to perform the exercises that transform explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge.

Self-knowledge

When we close our eyes in an attempt to meditate, we are amazed to discover a boiler factory inside of us.

JOEL GOLDSMITH, *The Art of Meditation*

Meditation is sold today as an absolute good, that will relax us, lower blood pressure, and so on. However, if done properly, many, who believe that their inner life is nothing but Sunshine and Lollipops, are shocked to witness the “boiler factory” of irrelevant, fearful, or anxious thoughts that cast doubt rather than certainty.

It takes effort and persistence to get past that point.

Inequality This teaching is the hardest to accept:

Among several persons who receive an identical teaching, each one understands and assimilates it more or less completely and profoundly according to the range of his own intellectual possibilities, and in this way selection, without which there could be no genuine hierarchy, comes about quite naturally.

RENE GUENON, *Man and his Becoming according to the Vedanta*

Higher Centers As mentioned in *The Descent of the Absolute*³, the Emotional Center (animal soul) and Intellectual Center (intellectual soul) are divided into lower and higher centers. As we are born, the higher centers are undeveloped and are therefore only virtual. Esoteric training starts with the proper awakening or development of the higher centers.

Since our untrained emotional life is so erratic, mastery over the expression of the emotions is imperative in order to make further progress.

The Higher Emotional Center is located in the Heart, the seat of our Real I, the Sun center of our being. The Higher Intellectual Center is located at the level of the Head, the seat of consciousness.

³<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=14019>

Objective Art The first step in the in the development of the higher emotional center is to mitigate the effects of negative emotions. That opens up some space for more subtle emotions to manifest. Aids in the process include objective art, myths, and symbols. The focus of personal art is on the personality of the artist, while objective art is the reflection of higher ideas. The following passage refers to why, according to Plotinus, a sculpture is more beautiful than the block of stone from which it was carved.

The real question is, why is the sculpted stone more beautiful? “The matter did not have this form, but it was in the one who thought, and before it came to the stone; but it was in the craftsman, not insofar as he had eyes or hands, but in that he shared in art” (Enneads V.8.1.16–19). If the sculpted stone is more beautiful than the lump, this is because thought, or idea, is more evident in it. The distinctive beauty of the sculpture, as opposed to the lump, is the form that it has received through the artist’s work, which is an image of the form existing as pure thought-content, or idea, in the artist’s mind. Consequently, the form, that is, the beauty, that renders the sculpture pleasing to behold is first and more truly in the artist’s mind, as the paradigm of which the sculpture’s beauty is an image.

ERIC PERL, *Thinking Being*

Myths and Symbols The purpose of Myths and Symbols is to reach these higher centers, the higher emotional and higher intellectual centers respectively. The attempt to understand myths and symbols by the lower mind will result in misinterpretation.

Sexual Sublimation Sexual energy can be redirected to the higher centers, which is the means to produce results.

This consecration is produced by the sublimation of sex. Thus the circle closes itself. Each manifestation of life starts by a sexual act; at the end of the cycle, the activity of the sexual centre is manifested once more, but on a higher level, that of the higher centres, the level to which — by its nature — this centre belongs.

Gnosis I

Ultimately, individual and group work will be replaced with Hieros gamos or polar couples. Since each one of the pair has a different way of knowing, their shared experiences enhance each other.

The means ... is to work as a couple. We must believe that in the new era which approaches, this method will be favoured more and more, will be protected, and will eventually become obligatory. However, for this esoteric work to be completed successfully by two people, it is essential that the two beings — man and woman — are integrally polar.

Posted on 2021-03-21 by Cologero

* * *

Greg on 2021-03-22 at 10:59 said:

As to exercises does the form of Meditation matter? Is the Jesus prayer or say centering prayer effective in attaining these states or are other forms of exercises needed?

Tannheuser on 2021-03-22 at 12:47 said:

I was actually just discussing this question of Objective vs. Personal art last night.

I used the term “arbitrary” to describe what you call Personal art – to me it is boring because it does not participate in any universal idea or higher reality. That kind of art is usually a waste of time, because it doesn’t offer any valuable possibilities to the one participating in it – just “A influences” imposing themselves and insisting on their own importance.

Interestingly, in contemporary art and entertainment, this arbitrary personal quality is the strongest in the so-called “high” arts (modern opera, painting, orchestral music, sculpture, architecture, and so on). Low or popular art often expresses less personal, more universal ideas, in

the same way that folklore can preserve an echo the original spirit of a civilization long after the high art has become degenerate. Recently, however, there is a concerted effort to replace everything traditional even in low art with political propaganda (extending as far as 60 year old children's picture-books).

Arthur Konrad on 2021-03-23 at 09:20 said:

@ Tannheuser,

Ever since the 19th century, opera and orchestral music is mostly an elaborate cacophony, operating on the same principle as a kid's toy made to produce some fabulous sound, after which the kid in question mutters 'ooooohhh!' in awe – in other words, it is infantile. This is why Nietzsche loved Wagner, he had an infantile mentality. Most 19th century music was tailored to the tastes of women and effeminate men. Some operas of the romantic era are downright embarrassing. The bottom one and a half octave on the piano serves pretty much the same function. Most 'virtuoso' pianists today play in a cacophonous way and abuse the bottom octaves as a rhythm section, and they think that a correct tempo does not exist. If you have healthy ears, you might as well shun piano performances for good, that thing is never going to get better.

Compare that nonsense to the masterpieces that are Baroque operas.

Paulo Adolpho on 2021-03-24 at 22:50 said:

"A fortiori, the search for powers or secret knowledge is fruitless, if not disadvantageous, from the esoteric perspective. These include:

Fascination with vast conspiracy theories"

Cologero, why studying conspiracy theory, would it be negative? Don't you see that we must become aware, of who is trying to control and destroy this world, the anti-traditional forces?

1.4 Rules too Difficult for Young Men

The Internet has been able to create a new type of Star. The iSoapbox has given non-standard viewpoints a small space in which to be heard. There are the pretty right-wing girls who do well. However, men also gain larger audiences.

Recently a Star was born in the persona of a Canadian psychologist, and his influence has extended beyond the confines of the Internet. Part of his appeal, it has been said, is that he provides a positive message to young men. That may be true, even if the necessity for it is sad.

Once in a while, someone suggests to Cologero that he should be on TV. I'm sure they intend that as a sort of praise, although they have really not thought things through. First of all, the message here is a bit too difficult to summarize. The professor's worldview, on the other hand, can be summarized in a paragraph or perhaps in 12 rules for life. Then it is a matter of repetition.

Also — and I can say this — Cologero does not have a very dynamic personality. Not experiencing emotions like most of the world, he cannot imitate that pained, thoughtful look, nor does he weep on cue. Furthermore, he is quite low on “amiability”. He eschews current events and does not believe in “debates”.

Nevertheless, Gornahoor has touched on many of the same themes to a much smaller audience. These rules for life have been available online for several years with minimal impact. While Cologero is preoccupied, I've taken the liberty to propose Gornahoor's rules for life for young men. There must be some who can handle a deeper understanding of Life.

Stand up straight Those who have participated in the online seminars would have heard of the importance of posture since the very first meeting. Cologero has recommended the Alexander technique for those who still have trouble. Moreover, posture is just one aspect of a larger theme which includes voice, intonation, facial expression, and so on. Mastery of the body is part of self-development.

In a larger perspective, this includes physiognomy which includes more than just a face. Curiously, once out of favor, scientific interest in physiognomy has been growing.

Hierarchy

The authors of the Middle Ages could not imagine ... the Universal Church without a pope. Because if the world is governed hierarchically, Christianity or the *Sanctum Imperium* cannot be

otherwise. Hierarchy is a pyramid which exists only when it is complete.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Meditations on the Tarot*

It is one thing to joke about the hierarchy of lobsters, but quite another to follow the hierarchy created by God. There is no need to repeat the details here, since the notion can be found throughout Gornahoor. There can be no compromise. It can be a difficult teaching because few want to accept voluntarily their rightful place in any hierarchy.

A pyramid is not complete without its summit; hierarchy does not exist when it is incomplete. Without an Emperor, there will be, sooner or later, no more kings. When there are no kings, there will be, sooner or later, no more nobility. When there is no more nobility, there will be. Sooner or later, no more bourgeoisie or peasants. This is how one arrives at the dictatorship of the proletariat, the class hostile to the hierarchical principle, which latter, however, is the reflection of divine order. This is why the proletariat professes atheism.

VALENTIN TOMBERG, *Meditations on the Tarot*

Purification This is the metaphysical equivalent to “clean your room”. Granting that as a metaphor for “get you own life in order”, that is not possible without first getting your inner life in order. Here are some links to get you started.

- Purification of the Will⁴
- Purity of the Mind⁵

⁴<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6950>

⁵<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6961>

- Purification of the Word⁶
- Purification of the Sex Act⁷
- Purification of the Breath⁸
- Moral purification of the Will⁹

Self-Mastery

Self-mastery or autarchy is:

For those who have absolutely possessed themselves, the alagon indicates only the unconditionality of his will, autarchy. Therefore, beyond the abstract intellectual, there is still an abyss between the man who lives his own life as lord and master, and the man who feels himself only as a demonic force of a nature that is passive to himself and that has its *raison d'être* outside himself.

First, the autarch must master his thoughts, then his emotions, and ultimately his body insofar as it is possible. This is actually the Hermetic path, since each of those stages of self-mastery leads to the development of higher states of being.

Learn a martial art If so inclined, learn a martial art or become skilled in weaponry. A martial art develops concentration and attentiveness. The competition simulates life and death situations. Cologero wrote:

⁶<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6969>

⁷<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6985>

⁸<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=6991>

⁹<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/moral-purification-of-the-will>

A man, for his preparation, can conquer his fear of the elements: fire, air, water, and earth. Overcoming such fears leads to self-knowledge and a concentrated mind. Those with a warrior cast of mind need to excel at a martial art or develop skill with weaponry. Time spent in this way is more beneficial than excessive, or obsessive, reading. If you don't regard these activities as spiritual, then make them so. Do them with the right attitude and full consciousness.

Spiritual Combat Spiritual combat is the analog of martial arts on a higher plane. However, at this level one's eternal life is at stake.

Even without being killed a man can experience death, he can conquer, he can realize the culmination characteristic of a "super-life". From a higher point of view, Paradise, the Kingdom of Heaven, Valhalla, the Island of the Heroes, etc., are only symbolic figurations forged for the masses, figurations that in reality designate transcendent states of consciousness, beyond life and death. The ancient Aryan tradition used the term *jivan-mukti* to indicate such a realization while still in the mortal body.

JULIUS EVOLA

The Modern World It is necessary to have an adversary relationship to the modern world, even if only private. That means "to be in this world but not of it". In anticipation of ridiculous comments, "modern" does not simply mean "contemporary". We are neither Luddites nor Amish. Here are two of three steps (the third is in preparation).

- Understand the crisis of the Modern World
- Revolt against the Modern World

Honor your father Honoring your father means gratitude for your inheritance and respect for those ancestors who created it. For Western Europeans, these are the three main currents of that inheritance.

- Hellenic Culture
- Roman Tradition
- Neoplatonic philosophy

Hellenic Culture: The Hellenes have given us art, philosophy, political theory, and folk religion. Therefore, either create, or learn to appreciate, poetry, sculpture, drama (both tragedies and comedies). Develop a foundation in the trivium of grammar, logic, rhetoric: learn to speak well, logically, and persuasively. Learn the various types of political systems and the causes of their degeneration.

Pure thought is insufficient. A good life will include the Greek virtues: temperance, prudence, courage, and justice.

The Greek folk religion included reverence of ancestors, respect for the founders, and engaged the whole being in every aspect of life. Hegel describes it this way:

In a folk religion in particular it is of the utmost importance that the imagination and the heart not be left unsatisfied: the imagination must be filled with large and pure images, and the heart roused to feelings of benevolence.

Roman Tradition: The Romans brought us martial valor, administration, and engineering.

The primary Roman virtues included Piety, Gravitas, Dignitas, and either manliness or modesty.

Neoplatonic Philosophy: Neoplatonic philosophy integrated the best parts of Plato, Aristotle, and Stoicism. It is a powerful counterweight

to contemporary philosophies of naturalism or materialism. A thinking man should always be an idealist, since the understanding of ideas is the aim of thought.

Start with **Augustine of Hippo, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Boethius.**

Conclusion If you've come this far, then draw your own conclusions.

Posted on 2018-03-17 by Aeneas

* * *

manfred arcane on 2018-03-18 at 05:53 said:

I see Peterson as a gateway drug, of sorts, to traditionalism. He is not there of course, not even close, but he is pointing people in the right direction and his lectures – if they bother to follow them – are providing them with tools with which they can approach a number of relevant thinkers. And, given his reach, that is a good thing – even if the 1% of his followers decide to do a deep dive into Jung or Heidegger thanks to him, and even if the small portion of that 1% eventually reaches the strain of thought that is espoused by the blogs like this one.

Matt on 2018-03-19 at 08:44 said:

George Heart, in his book "Christianity: Dogmatic Faith & Gnostic Vivifying Knowledge" seeks to address the crisis of the lack of faith in modern people, by understanding the root cause, which is revealed in the Law of 3: the active force being the Church, the passive force being man's spirit/Personality, and the equilibrating force (the root of the issue) being change.

What has changed is that modern man has developed a stronger intellect, whereas the Church still preaches a simplistic "milk of the spirit" theology.

Perhaps this Canadian psychologist is gaining a foothold with many of his followers, on topics that don't usually have mass appeal (biblical analysis and hierarchy), partially due to his ability to engage and excite the intellect.

It's also interesting that he has discovered the hierarchical principle in nature, but fails to see it as the reflection of something higher.

<http://matthewnanderson.wordpress.com/>

LH00Q on 2018-03-21 at 07:54 said:

Manual of Epictetus is a good read to begin an ethical and philosophical life.

Kenneth Lyon MacNeil on 2018-03-25 at 14:33 said:

A deep thank you to all who are responsible for the information and insights on this website. I will say little else till I do a deep dive into the information on offer here. I do look forward to doing so.

Much appreciation,
~Lyon

Robert on 2018-04-07 at 12:13 said:

There are many traditionalist resonances in Peterson's work, as far as I can see, and he is far from being dismissive of religious belief. Quite the contrary. See, for example:

jordanbpeterson.com/philosophy/on-the-ark-of-the-covenant-the-cathedral-and-the-cross-easter-message-i/

Although I've seen no evidence that he has read Guénon, Schuon, Coomaraswamy or Evola, Eliade seems to have been important for him.

Bloom on 2021-03-18 at 17:59 said:

Nice post, a lot of young men were captivated by Jordan Peterson for at least a year or two before moving onto greener pastures. He's a nice tutorial level boss.

Anyways, I want to add a comment on your last bit about the three main currents of Western Tradition. According to Evola, when we look at the Western Warrior Tradition, the three main currents are: Roman, Christian, and Nordic tradition.

1.5 Program for Beginners

- Furnish your mind as completely as possible with the knowledge of how to inspect and control it.
- Train your body to obey your mind, and not to distract its attention.
- Control your mind to devote itself wholly to discover your True Will.

- Explore the course of that will till you reach its source, your Silent Self.
- Unite the conscious will with the True Will, and the conscious ego with the Silent Self. You must be utterly ruthless in discarding any atom of consciousness which is hostile or neutral
- Let this work freely from within, but heed not your environment, lest you make difference between one thing and another. Whatever it be, it is to be made one with you by love.

References

Crowley, Aleister. **The Law is for All**

Posted on 2010-09-28 by Aeneas

1.6 Scire, Potere, Audere, Tacere

Scire, Potere, Audere, Tacere

To know, to be able, to dare, to keep silent

ZOROASTER

Nature does not open the door of the sanctuary to anyone.

In these pages, the uninitiated will perhaps discover some proof of a genuine and positive science. I do not however, flatter myself that I shall convert them, for I know full well the obstinacy of prejudice and the great



strength of preconceived opinions. The disciple will derive greater benefit from this book, provided always that he does not despise the works of the old Philosophers and that he studies with care and penetration the classical text, until he has acquired sufficient perception to understand the obscure points of the practice.

No one may aspire to possess the great secret, if he does not direct his life in accordance with the researches he has undertaken.

It is not enough to be studious, active, and persevering, if one has no firm principles, no solid basis, if immoderate enthusiasm blinds one to reason, if pride overrules judgment, if greed expands before the prospect of a golden future.

The mysterious science requires great precision, accuracy and perspicacity in observing the facts, a healthy, logical and reflective mind, a lively but not over-excitable imagination, a warm and pure heart. It also demands the greatest simplicity and complete indifference with regard to theories, systems and hypotheses, which are generally accepted without question on the testimony of books or the reputation of their authors, it requires its candidates to learn to think more with their own brains and less with those of others. Finally, it insists that they should check the truth of its principles, the knowledge of its doctrine and the practice of its operations from nature, the mother of us all.

By constant exercise of the faculties of observation and reasoning and by meditation, the novice will climb the steps leading to

Knowledge A simple imitation of natural processes, skill combined with ingenuity, the insight born of long experience will secure for him

Power Having obtained that, he will still have need of patience, constancy and unshakeable will. Brave and resolute, he will be enabled by the certainty and confidence born of a strong faith, to

Dare Finally, when success has crowned so many years of labour, when his desires have been accomplished, the Wise Man, despising the vanities of the world, will draw near to the humble, the disinherited, to all those who work, suffer, struggle and weep here below. As an anonymous and dumb disciple of eternal Nature, he will remain faithful to his vow of silence. In Science, in Goodness, the adept must evermore

Keep Silent

Posted on 2010-09-28 by Cologero

* * *

Niko The Exile on 2019-02-15 at 00:18 said:

This is exceptional, this so much reminds one of the Desert Fathers, i wonder if they were on the same wavelength as Fulcanelli.

2.1 Moral Purification of the Will

Man's mind is rapt by God to the contemplation of the divine truth in three ways:

1. He contemplates it through certain imaginary pictures.
2. He contemplates the divine truth through its intelligible effects.
3. He contemplates it in its essence.

Now when man's intellect is uplifted to the sublime vision of God's essence, it is necessary that his mind's whole attention should be summoned to that purpose in such a way that he understands nothing else by phantasms, and is absorbed entirely in God.

MARY OF AGREDA, *Mystical City of God*

Mary of Agreda has given us the three stages of Hermetic contemplation, which are related to their Yoga counterparts in the Table 2.1:

Hermetism	Yoga	Theophan	Description
Concentration	dharana	Spoken prayer	Visualization
Meditation	dhyana	Mental prayer	Mental Prayer
Contemplation	samadhi	Unceasing prayer	Prayer of the Heart

In his booklet, *The Path of Prayer*, **St. Thephan the Recluse** provides some basic guidance on these stages. *Spoken prayer* is when we pray using the prayers of others. In *mental prayer* we raise our mind to God through reflection on divine things. But these are preparatory stages to *unceasing prayer* which is the constant turning of mind and heart to God.

In *Meditations on the Tarot*, Tomberg describes a type of meditation based on visualization which I call Hermetic Meditation¹, which culminates in a state of Deep Silence.

Concentration without effort, which means there is nothing to suppress and where contemplation becomes as natural as breathing and the beating of the heart, is the state of consciousness — of the intellect, the imagination, the feelings, and the will — a state of perfect calm, accompanied by the complete relaxation of the nerves and muscles of the body. It is the deep silence of desires, concerns, imagination, memory, and discursive thought. We would say that the entire being has become like the surface of calm waters reflecting the immense presence of the starry sky and its inexpressible harmony. And the waters are deep, oh how deep! And the silence increases, always increasing, what SILENCE! Its growth takes place in regular waves which pass, one after the other, through your being: one wave of silence followed by another wave of deeper silence, then yet another wave of even deeper silence ... Have you ever drunk the silence. If so, you know what concentration without effort it.

¹<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=898>

Beyond the images and thoughts of the first two stages, the third stage is a direct intuition, or gnosis, of the divine essence. It involves the Will and the Heart. But Purity of Heart is to Will one thing. A divided self or impure heart cannot attain this stage. Tomberg explains:

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 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**

Originally published on 12 April 2011 in medtarot.

Posted on 2023-01-02 by Cologero

2.2 Purification of the Will

This is a section from an article titled “Purity as a Metaphysical Value” published in *Bilychnis*, the journal of the Baptist Theological School of Rome. It is dated June, 1925, volume XXV. **Julius Evola** was around 27 years old at the time, which is about the median age of Gornahoor visitors. The section that preceded it is called “Purification of the Mind” and the following sections deal with the purification of the word, sex, and breath.

There are some interesting points here. First of all, there is the admission that he underwent psychoanalysis; this should not be surprising given that there were two psychoanalysts who participated in the UR group. The other is his rather odd experience

of the purification of the will, wherein he felt he could not move. Has anyone else felt that? Obviously, he means something different from mere indecision, or does he?

Perhaps he did not make himself clear, but his pairs of opposites do not seem to derive from Plotinus, since the primal will is for the Good. True, the One transcends all opposites. Nevertheless, if one is not motivated by pleasure or desire, one must transcend them, i.e., become “superior” to them. The important point is that Evola is here advocating a rather austere ethic: choose the necessary over the pleasurable, the difficult over the easy, i.e., choose the path of greatest resistance. A man needs to become master of his domain, self-motivated and self-ruled. But what self?

The impurity of the will consists in heteronomy, i.e., in its being determined by something other than itself. In western culture, because of the prevailing extroversion, the conviction that every action must have a sufficient reason is widespread, or that there must be a reason or a cause for its happening or not happening, for its happening in one way and not otherwise, and this has joined with thinking that things do not happen in a different way through a divine act. It is precisely such a mode of action that is called impure. In fact, in it, action draws its own impulse not from itself, but from a motive, reason, impulse, or object by way of appetite or aversion, etc. The will to the thing desired does not want only and nakedly itself, but something else, so that it is properly said that it is willed by that other. That is the *sakama karma* of the Orientals: action based on desire, action that is not through itself, but through what proceeds from it. Purification in this case is instead connected to the conviction that *the sufficient reason of an affirmation can be the affirmation itself*, rather than to the concept of an act that is done only from a pure creative impulse. One can also find the best expression of this in a passage from Eckhart:

From this deeper principle you must do your works, without a

why. I affirm it decisively: even if you do your works for the kingdom of heaven, for God, or your sanctity, although motivated by the other, even then you will not really be in the right. If you ask a true man, a man who acts from his depth: “Why do you do all your works?” he will answer you rightly only if he says: “I act only for the action itself.”

Here it is rather important to note that the need for purification assigns both the pure and the impure, the good and the bad, in a word: not particular terms but the combination of pairs of opposites. The purity in question means full autonomy, pure possession of oneself, and in respect to that, the link to the good, the sacred, etc., is no better than any other link: if that which is called good or pure by men binds the will, that is likewise to be called impure. Hence in such order, they appeal to expressions like cleansing oneself, baring oneself. *Afele panta* [from **Plotinus**, “forsake everything”]: it is necessary to cleanse oneself of everything — the “high” as the “low”, the “spiritual” as the “material” — it is necessary to reduce the will to its naked essence resting only on itself. Once that point is reached, *everything* becomes equally pure, just as prior to that *everything* is equally impure. And that in such an order the pure must not be said of things in themselves, but of a way to live them, the measure of which is autonomy and autarchy, so that in being compelled to call something impure, only the proof of its own impurity is conveyed.

Here a particularly subtle discipline is necessary for the fulfillment of the requirement. In fact, how to guarantee that what one wills proceeds truly from the unconditioned and not from an obscure, incomprehensible complex of inclinations and impressions rooted in the subconscious? The answer is an in-depth self-analysis, to make everything progressively emerge into the light of consciousness that previously had been taken away. Even among us today we begin to work in this direction with psychoanalysis. Beyond that, there are methods of control based on the principle, that depending on whether action is conformed or not to a hidden

inclination, it will produce pleasure or aversion. Along these lines, it is not enough to believe that the alternative is indifferent, or to put aside one's own will and to leave decisions to chance; for example, by the flip of a coin. In the sentiment that results from it and extending this discipline to a topic that always more closely concerns us, we will have a real means of indicating the progress or decline along the path of the purification of the will.

In general: it is necessary to renounce everything once one feels that it becomes necessary, or once one uncovers a desire or satisfaction for it; *it is necessary to do, on principle, not as one pleases, but what is required, to always take, on principle, the line of greatest resistance and, thereby, to make the will ever stronger and purer, to make self-possession ever more energizing.* Hard discipline, which one would hardly know how to adapt to unless one succeeds in feeling in the naked will, in autarchy, a stronger motive and a more intense and vaster pleasure than what things in themselves can ever offer us.

In any case, it leads to a rather difficult point, whose reflection is precisely the difficulty that common knowledge meets in conceiving an action where there is no longer a "because" to arouse it. One feels as if the entire inner being were crystallized, so that no movement is any longer possible: it is like a paralysis, an absolute aphasia, that contrasts painfully with the sense of inner possibility. Almost as if one had something to say but the mouth remains mute and inert to command.

The experience of such an inner state provides the sign of purification and for that reason the individual knows how little what he called his action was truly his, how much a real impulse was absent from his ordinary life, "higher" or "lower", and he being not the author, but a puppet, a medium blown about by alien forces. He knows however the I, and beyond that, how to find an excess of strength, he knows in spite of all acting, that he has achieved in himself the principle of a higher life, a power that stands beyond his being made from dependency, con-

tingency, and finitude. And the door for that higher accomplishment, which is connected to the remaining purifications, is disclosed to him.

Posted on 2013-11-03 by Aeneas

* * *

n0e on 2013-11-04 at 08:22 said:

Psychoanalysis in Evola is, I suppose, just a modern way of achieving alchemical result, uniting Sun and Moon, consciousness and unconsciousness. Which would be a necessary precondition for developing maximum control by the Will of the Self.

JA on 2013-11-04 at 08:57 said:

This is very similar to Crowley's teachings in Liber Aleph. I've always seen C and E as quite similar personae, I think if E had not made the fortunate encounter with Guenon's writings Baron Evola would have wound up as the Italian version of AC.

For clarity, let's point out that this was written before the Baron discovered Guenon, at the time he was still working within a modernist framework of spirituality; as he described himself in *The Path of Cinnabar*, hence the positive discussion of psychoanalysis which he would later condemn after becoming a Traditionalist.

scardanelli on 2013-11-04 at 10:16 said:

In light of the content of the post, there seems to be a tendency amongst traditionalists to create another pair of opposites, Tradition:Modernity. There was a comment previously about Jung not being "Traditional" or in this context, psychoanalysis not being "traditional," as if there were a list of authors one is authorized to read when one becomes a "traditionalist."

But it seems less a case of something being traditional or modern and more a case of "everything in its place." If one seeks to see the self and the world through the lens of psychoanalysis (or Freudianism, Marxism, Feminism, etc) this is obviously an error, but when seen as integrated in a hierarchical fashion, as a possible tool to analyze the "inclinations and impressions" of the soul, it is neither modern nor traditional, but either a more or less effective tool. This, I believe, is what Tomberg refers to as the spirit of free research. Everything is "traditional" in its proper place. It is the breakdown of this hierarchy that is not traditional.

It seems that this paralysis Evola speaks of is only necessarily so from the perspective of the ego, and this contrasts with the inner freedom of the Spirit or Self. When one realizes this interior freedom, he sees the exterior as arbitrary and dualistic. To act in the name of good is to evoke the bad. To act for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven is to evoke The World. So

this paralysis is effectively a binding of the ego and elimination of arbitrary and conditioned action, in favor of unconditioned action, whose source is the Spirit or self. And the "[t]hief will be obliged to flee with his artifices of iniquity."

scardanelli on 2013-11-04 at 10:28 said:

Further, it seems that Evola is saying that we must not only recognize these opposites, but use them for the sake of purification of the will. I don't think Evola is advocating that we be manly men, and do what is difficult for its own sake, but to recognize our attachments and use their opposite to bring about detachment. We choose the difficult to detach from ease and comfort, not to create some perverse masochistic attachment to pain and difficulty.

Avery on 2013-11-04 at 10:38 said:

"Jung does not simply return a Christian to Christianity, a Jew to Judaism, a pagan to his paganism, as he claimed. More importantly, by rendering the suppressed underground emotions conscious and acceptable, Jung legitimates the demonic and destructive as having rights of their own on the strength of their therapeutic potential."

Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*

JA on 2013-11-04 at 15:49 said:

It's for me to be the voice of humour and add, in reference to dear scardanelli's mention of masochism, that the practice's nomenclature derives from Baron Leopold von Sacher-Masoch; an Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, and that experimental and different tastes in sexuality are quite the norm among those of us of a higher breeding.....

Scardanelli on 2013-11-04 at 22:04 said:

@Avery, forgive my mental laxity, but I'm not sure what your point is. Is this an argument against Jung as "non-traditional"?

@JA, I suppose I'm lucky then to be the low born descendant of dairy farmers and coal miners.

Jacob on 2013-11-05 at 19:52 said:

@Scardanelli:

I assume you mean my comment. I agree with what you wrote. The Scholastics always said truth is one.

However, I'd like to understand where is Jung's place. Some (most notably Charles Upton) seem to imply Jung is subversive and that following his teachings would lead to confusion between the psyche and spirit. I always assumed Jung viewed God as changing and at least partly evil himself. This may be a complete misunderstanding and extremely incorrect, which

is why I commented that if Cologero (someone more knowledgeable than I) believes there is something redeemable there I would take a second look.

Still I don't believe reading half truth would be beneficial if I can get access to the full truth. To kind of illustrate my point: Giles Deleuze is sometimes said to have based his metaphysics on Hermeticism and early Christianity. As I investigated though it seems that the word desire was being interpreted differently than Deleuze probably meant it. Instead of making an attempt to reconcile Deleuze to Christianity it seems far better to simply bypass Deleuze altogether since I have far better resources at my fingertips. Even though he has intelligent points to make, I'd like to understand where he is wrong first in order to fully understand the issue.

Anyway, sorry for the long post and I hope this did not sound combative, because it was not my intention a lot of communication is lost over the Internet though.

Cologero on 2013-11-05 at 21:04 said:

Jacob, you can safely ignore Jung, there is nothing necessary in his works. In the "Answer to Job", Jung describes God as unconscious, requiring man to make him conscious. Nevertheless, when Jung restricts himself to empirical psychology rather than metaphysics, he has some interesting things to say. This may be useful in our times since the predominant method of argument these days, even among neo-traditionalists who should know better, is to attack the motives or impugn the psychological states of one's interlocutor. The truth or falsity of a statement is barely considered.

At the least, Jung had an encyclopedic knowledge of religions, religious experiences, history, symbols, etc. Hence, I find reading his works of interest just for that reason. By the way, Jung had high regard for Evola's book on Hermeticism.

scardanelli on 2013-11-06 at 11:56 said:

Jacob,

I wasn't necessarily arguing for or against Jung. I apologize for not clearly expressing it, but I was trying describe a way to approach truth as a process that unfolds within, rather than something we search for in books. In this sense, Jung is either more or less helpful in this process. I think that for many of us, books serve as a starting point. But for too many they are also an ending point. So we become dogmatic about who we read, who is traditional, who is modern, and in the end we change very little. Reading is instrumental, but really becomes a distraction at a certain point, when perhaps more concrete efforts are required.

scardanelli on 2013-11-13 at 20:54 said:

One can see an interesting parallel with this series on the purification of the will, word, sex, etc in St John of the Cross. In *The Ascent of Mt Carmel*, regarding practical advice for the active night of the senses in which one purifies oneself of the passions, he gives this advice:

- 1) Seek to imitate Christ in all things
 - 2) Renounce any sensory satisfaction in things that does not strictly serve to honor God
 - 3) Harmonize the passions by always choosing:
 - the most difficult over the easiest
 - the most distasteful over the most delightful
 - the less pleasant over the most gratifying
 - hard work over rest
 - the unconsoling over the consoling
 - the least rather than the most
 - the lowest and despised over the highest and most precious
 - to want nothing rather than something
 - 4) seek to carry out these practices and overcome the will's repugnance for them
 - 5) desire to act, speak, and think with contempt for oneself, and desire others to do likewise.
- So we clearly see an accordance with Evola's discussion of opposites, and the way in which one can use one to eliminate attachment and dependence on the other.

2.3 Purification of the Mind

This is the second section from the article titled "Purity as a Metaphysical Value" by **Julius Evola**. It was published in *Bilychnis*, the journal of the Baptist Theological School of Rome. It is dated June, 1925, volume XXV.

Here he relies on Patanjali's yoga sutras to describe the stages in the purification of the mind. Interestingly, he describes a further stage beyond Patanjali's highest stage of Samadhi. Not surprisingly, Evola regards Patanjali's stages as negative and passive, so he describes an active and positive stage beyond that. This he relates to the "intellectual intuition" as understood in the West from Aristotle to the medieval scholastics, and then to German idealism. This stage is beyond discursive thought, and the lack of that type of knowledge accounts for most of the common misconceptions about Tradition.

The impurity of the mind proceeds from the passive character of common perception that (not from the gnoseological point of view, but from that of empirical conditions) it is a feeling, an impulse from the outside to the inside pursuant to the coercion of the sensible object from the outside—so that the I cannot avoid perceiving or feeling what it perceives or feels depending on various times and places. Purification comprises two phases in this order:

The first refers to the domain of the powers of the senses, to the capacity of detaching the mind from external objects, of withdrawing it onto oneself and fastening it at will. In other words, it is a matter of the maximum platonic catharsis: “To detach one’s eyes and, in general, the soul, from sensible things”—taken however not in a metaphoric or moral sense, but literally: it is necessary to liberate the various perceptive faculties that the objects enchain, violate, and contaminate and to make them free of perceiving and not perceiving—and by that, in fact, unadulterated: pure. **Patanjali** indicates the stages that can realize that way through ordered discipline, of which, in any case, one can hope to progress only through exceptional inner energy:

1. *Pratyahara* or control and mastery of the various impressions and accidental processes of associations and thought.
2. *Dharana* or concentration on a single object or sensation, excluding all the rest.
3. *Dhyana* or absorption in a not more sensible object, but produced by the mind itself.
4. *Samadhi* or elimination of the mental object itself and conjunction of the mind with its sole naked power.

But this negative phase does not constitute the final instance. One does not have true purity of the mind through the capacity of detachment,

but rather through its power whereby the “other”, the correlation to the material object ceases to be a condition for perception, so that the “I” can, besides not perceiving, give himself, create from himself his own perception at will. It would be a matter, then, of substituting for the form of sensible and passive perception another that is active and positive, no more receiving but producing the object from one’s interiority. Such is the virtue of the Aristotelian *nous poietikos*, or of the “intuitive intellect” of the scholastics, Kant, and Schelling.

Only one must note that such a positive perceiving must not be *another* faculty limited to the ideal order and juxtaposed to material perception, but rather its transformation and full resolution. Elsewhere [in *Essays on magical idealism*], I considered the phases of such a path: here, as a simple suggestion, we can refer to so-called “supernormal knowledge”: modern psychology has ascertained that two distinct modes of perception are possible and real, having in equal measure the character of objectivity.

One is the normal connection to the physical organs, which—from the physiological, not the gnoseological, point of view—can be called centripetal, proceeding from the outside to the inside, starting from physical impressions transmitted from the afferent system to the central brain. The second way is, instead, independent of the physical organs and has an opposite direction: the point of departure is not the peripheral physical stimulus but rather an interior apperception, which then goes on to result in terms of physical perception and also in images, according to a centrifugal course analogous to that of hallucinatory processes.

Now while the first knowledge is limited by spatial-temporal and physiological conditions, the second is in a large measure freed from them and, what would result from the latest research, tends to participate in the nature of an omniscient principle. One could therefore connect to that the meaning of perfection, of the teleion, of the “purification of the mind”. From the philosophical point of view, it would then be a

knowing that would originate no longer from a particular sense object to be subsumed to a discursive concept, but instead *from everything*, in order to give the particular thing its place in this—just as a limb has a place in the organic unity of the body.

Posted on 2013-11-05 by Aeneas

* * *

scardanelli on 2013-11-06 at 11:42 said:

I have been thinking about this concept of wisdom being “centrifugal” and “centripetal” when considering Tomberg’s second letter. It seems that there is no reason why knowledge gained from the senses, from discursive thought should have to remain “limited by spatial-temporal and physiological conditions.” This thought can be a starting point for meditation, wherein one deepens the thought. So meditation can, in a manner of speaking, raise up what is below and bring down what is above by giving form to experience of the Spirit. Wisdom spiritualizes the material and materializes the spiritual. This is only possible once one has undergone the negative phase as described by Evola.

2.4 Purification of the Word

In this rather interesting section, **Julius Evola** writes on the purification of the word. This is the fruit of his study of the Tantras, which he learned from the writings of **John Woodroffe**. We need to reemphasize that his goal is not to convince everyone to become Hindus, but rather to use those teachings to elucidate metaphysical principles. Hence, Evola in this series always relates those principles to the corresponding Western ideas. There are three consequences:

- It shows that such principles have been known as well in the West

- It points the way to the recovery of Tradition by deepening our understanding of those principles
- Even those who choose to look in a different direction, e.g., the re-paganization of the West, must nevertheless incorporate this understanding into their own worldview

All things are created through the Word, i.e., it is the principle of all created things. In the process of creation, the original creative impulse passes through a series of stages arranged hierarchically².

The concept of the mantra, although it goes into deeper detail, is akin to the Western notion of hylomorphism. The “idea”, or “word”, are non-dual, but as they manifest, we experience the effects as a duality between the idea of the thing and its particular manifestation. That is why to know the real “name” of a thing is to know it in its essence. We came across this in the discussion of Occult Phenomena in the case of Adam, who had the power to name things.

Note, too, how the power of the mantra is related to the devata and matrikas, which in the West are better described as “angels” or angelic intelligences. They are in the “causal” state, which is beyond form. Since the discrediting of the works of **Dionysius the Aeropagite** by academics, the role of the angels in creation has been neglected and they have become merely sentimentalized. Here, we see Evola relate them to an idea or word, a teaching we have alluded to many times previously. **Valentin Tomberg** also advocated for a better understanding of the role of angels.

Finally, I don’t know that the phenomena mentioned in the final paragraph can be empirically verified.

At this point, it is necessary to refer to the Indian doctrine of the

²<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/the-cosmic-hierarchy>

“mantra” and, first of all, to indicate the metaphysical principles it presupposes.

The Word (*shabda*) — according to the *mantra shastra* — is the principle of the totality of created things. In the system of reality and beings, there is the manifestation of an originary power of expression, a manifestation that is structured in various hierarchical grades. In order to understand that, we note that a duality is implicit in the Word: on the one hand there is the word properly called (*vak* = *vox*), on the other, the meaning or the object that the word itself expresses (*artha*). Now in the first, supreme power of the Word, called *shabda brahman*, word and meaning are one and the same thing, the expression is pure self-revelation, absolute transparency of the eternal meaning in itself. However such a unity becomes altered at the point of expression properly called. In fact, in the concept of manifestation there is implicitly a duality, or a proceeding, a going toward the other (*bhavamukha*). Thus what as *shabda brahman* is a second absolute, individual simplicity, is articulated and distinguished in further powers of the Word.

The Word, in being incarnated, germinates, through its own proceeding, what was a meaning resolved by it and is made objective in an existence. In this dichotomic process, the “supreme sound” (*para shabda*) assumes two aspects. The first is called the “subtle or causal state” (*sukshma, karana*) of the sound and corresponds to “nature naturing”, to the Logos in its properly creative function (*hiranyagarbha shabda*): object or meaning and word here are distinct; in the second place it no longer has a unique, concise meaning of the whole, but a unity that is dispersed in a multiplicity. Nevertheless here the distinction and multiplicity are still included in the unity of a productive function; although distinct, object and word are still not external to each other. In this second power of “sound”, there is therefore an ensemble of cosmogonic functions, corresponding to the *logoi spermatikoi* of Greek speculation and to the “letters of light” of the Kabbalah and which are precisely called “letters to the

causal state” or *matrikas* (goddess mothers) and connect symbolically to those of the Sanskrit alphabet. All things in the world would proceed from the “combination” of these letters, but not such as they appear in their effects to sensible perception, but rather what are in their causes: such are the “Names” of things. Now, in these functions of the Word, the aspect of the meaning corresponds to “*devata*” (Vedic deities), and the aspect of the word or expressive corresponds to the “mantra”. The mantras would therefore be the Names of the *devata*, or the various “bodies of power” that rule the productive process of things; and, vice versa, the *devata* would be the transcendental meanings that the mantras incorporate and bring to light.

Beyond this subtle state of the Word, there is a third material state (*sthula*), corresponding to the audible spoken voice (*vaikhari shabda*). That is, one stands at the level of worn-out manifestation, where the scission between *artha* and *shabda* is complete: on the one hand, there is the spoken language, on the other, material objects, whose relation to it is exterior: the “Name” or the world no longer has an objectively expressive or creative value, but only a conventional, allusive value of materiality, not of the inner meaning of the object. Besides, while the “natural name” or mantra of things is universal, the name which appears at this level is particular and contingent, it depends on time, place, individualization, race, etc. But beyond the various languages of men there would be, or would have been, (according to some initiatic traditions, in the period prior to the “confusion of tongues” alluded to in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel) a type of universal language, in which each thing and each being would have its natural, original or essential Name (*bija mantra*).

The word, such as it is known by the finite being, is therefore “impure”: impure first of all because it does not have in itself, in its own power, but outside of itself, the object that it expresses, because it no longer provides the real nature of the object in a productive function, but

only the simple subjective image; in the second place, through the contingency and particularity of this same image, which depends on place, time, individualization, etc. Now the requirement of the practices that reconnect themselves to the mantras is exactly toward a “purification of the word”, which is: to bring the I from that language that is the evocative faculty of simply subjective images, to that other language that is the power of evoking the things themselves, that is, to the language that produces things in their causes, being identical to the its supernatural productive process.

The mantras are the “natural approximate names” of things; by means of a living compenetration in them, the yogis seek therefore to return to, or better said, to identify themselves with, the various causative powers or *devata*. That is the awakening of mantras: to awaken a mantra means to evoke, regenerate, render into act, the subtle function of the Word connected to it. It is a matter of a true putting in relationship, of a real identification. The I of the order in which the word is simple evocative discourse of vague images passes on to that in which it is a creative spiritual power, however, from the plane in which the perceiving is a passion to the plane in which it is a putting (whence the connection to the “purification of the mind”). The mantra is therefore nothing if it is not “reawakened”: one can repeat it a million times—it is said in the texts—but as long as it is not known, it remains a mere flapping of the lips. The mantra must be actualized, “made to bloom” (*sphota*) in its essence “made of light” (*jyotirmayi*): only then does it “work”. Its pronouncement is therefore an inner act, whose material expression acts only as the vehicle. The *sphota* can happen only by means of the force of will: but more often the vital force (*prana*) or the force of generation (*kundalini*) is undertaken as auxiliary.

Now when one realizes a state of identity with the individuating principles of things with the mantra, it is evident that, by vibrating the same will in a “reawakened” mantra, the related act has magical value

(that which corresponds to it is directly realized) since what one wills is as if the thing itself wills it. So the virtue attributed by the texts to the mantra—to the “pure word”—is astonishing. Having reawakened the mantras of various elements, the yogis acquired power over them, he can, for example, make fire flare up where he wants or to go into the middle of it without being affected by it; through mantras, he can produce the well-known phenomenon of the growth of a seed into a plant in a few minutes; he can place around himself a circle that nothing can pass through: a lance or a projectile hurled against him rebounds instead against the one who threw it; he can conceal himself from the view of others, in order to provoke visions, thoughts, and feelings in them; he can kill or cure at will. In the *Vishnu Purana*, the power of procreation by means of the mantra is even considered.

Posted on 2013-11-10 by Aeneas

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2.5 Purification of the Sex Act

In this section, Evola offers his comments on the purification of the generative act. Drawing primarily on the tantric writings and German idealism (especially **Fichte** and **Schelling**), but also **Clement of Alexandria** and **Plotinus**, Evola equates the woman with nature. And nature is that which is still dark or impervious to the spirit. The goal, as he sees it, is not detachment from the body, but rather its transformation into spirit, the “resurrection body”. The desire to eternal life lies in the depths of man.

Since an act is impure or imperfect if it does not attain actuality from itself, it is evident that the generative act is like that, and in a typical

way—and it can be said that the woman in a transcendental way is nothing but the symbol of the impotence of the I to give itself a body from itself. Now, in order to understand what meaning purification has in this case, it is necessary to keep in mind what was said in principle, and that is that the imperfect act only apparently resolves the insufficiency of the agent, in reality it reaffirms it: whoever drinks, whoever asks for water that is “another” and not the eternal water that is “pure act”, and who, with Christ whom we referred to, will never have his thirst satisfied for all eternity. It follows from this that as long as the “I” asks the woman for the conditions for a generative act, he will remain in the state of privation and impurity: and the dyad and the “other” that he presupposes as such (in the duality of the sexes) can with justice only be reaffirmed in the result, i.e., it will make it so that the act is worthless as self-generation, but rather as *heterogeneration* (generation of the son), whence the destiny of death.

What gives life to the son, *kills* the father, which makes the “Only One” mortal, an individual [See Clement, *Stromata*, Book III, Chapter 9, para 63]. The act escapes from the agent and makes his life pass away. To explain it more clearly: in the depth of the individual there is an originary power that *wants* life beyond temporal limits; this power, at the level of normal and *extroverted* human existence, is the desire “to look outside” (*bhavamukha*).

It strikes on “another” (the woman) and so the impulse for continuity degenerates, the act that should have been the affirmation of oneself (autogeneration) becomes the affirmation of the other — of the son. The resulting continuity is not then that of the individual but *that of the species* — and man is drawn into the wheel of finite and discontinuous existence, dominated by the law of generation and corruption — mortal, eternally thirsty, and eternally disappointed.

This impurity of the generative act is connected to that which inheres in the very existence of a physical body. In the normal man, the conscious power falls to a great degree outside that deep principle that rules the

various processes of his organism. For this reason, he does not know how to give himself a body from himself; for this reason, he is impotent against the law of corruption. As Leibniz expressed it, the “flesh”, corporeity, represents simply the indistinct and unconscious *quantum* (or better: passion and privation) that is in the I, and only in this sense is it to be understood as an imperfection. And one could say that such a region of privation in the I is the transcendental foundation of the woman, since we indicated that the correlative of the generative act as imperfect is conveyed precisely in the woman.

This is, to use alchemical symbolism, the “salt” that encompasses the active and central principle of “fire” or of “sulfur” and which “mercury” must release until reconciling this same sulfur only with itself, in the flame of the divine (*theion* = sulfur = divine), of that which is pure possession or perfect act and whose eternal life, whose eternal autogenesis, is precisely symbolized by the Phoenix pulling himself out of the fire.

This is the “Great Work” that has, as its direction, the construction of a “body made of freedom”, of a body spiritually transparent to itself. We are led to the doctrine of the “immortal or cosmic body”, traces of which are found in almost all the religions and is therefore based on the following premise: corporeity is only whatever is passive in the spirit, the not yet expressed, the virtual, “in potential”; it does not constitute a distinct principle, but instead is a state of privation (*sterema*), a shadow in the unique reality of the spirit.

Thus it is clear that liberation cannot consist in detachment from the body, but in its *resolution*. Here purification means precisely the realization, as a function of potency in act, that the material body is experienced as a function of passion — and as such, the construction of the immortal body or “resurrection body”, “body made of spirit”, “apparent body” (*mayavirupa*: recall that *maya* in the tantric and mahayana schools means both appearance and magical power) or body “of flames” [according to Plotinus, the body of flame is sufficient in itself and does

not require food], it is the dissolution without residue of the material body in pure activity, in *shuddha-sattva-guna* — it is the individual in which the negative aspect of *rajas* and *tamas* has entirely vanished.

It is called immortal because, depending entirely on the I, the I can make it appear or disappear, maintaining it or destroying it when he wants, for the time that he wants, in a way that the law of life and death is vanquished. It is called the “cosmic body” for this reason, it is admitted that the metaphysical principles or “divinity” that rule nature are present in the body, although only under a darkened form as if sleeping, a form which the I experiences precisely as nature, i.e., as the “other”, and not in itself as spirit. But at the point in which corporeality is entirely conquered in conscious actuality, this form, however, is less identified in the various principles of the cosmic hierarchy, and the individual goes on to feel that his true body is the universe.

Now if the impurity of the generative act is the cause of finite and mortal existence; and if, on the other hand, this existence is defined in the differential of obscurity and privation that the body as such represents; one understands how at the construction of that supreme purity that is the “immortal body” — through which the very “other” of exterior nature is dissolved — a conversion of the force of generation is associated. This is not the place to expound on the technique of such a process.

Posted on 2013-11-13 by Aeneas

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X on 2013-11-13 at 04:30 said:
Sometimes Evola is deadly accurate and sharp.

JA on 2013-11-13 at 09:45 said:
it's like he's trying to transcend corporal sex instead of seeing sex as the transcendent as Crowley did.

Jacob on 2013-11-13 at 22:08 said:

It's great reading the same thing in different language. I feel like I understand slightly better what Serrano was getting at the whole time in El/Ella.

I'll have to think on this some more.

n0e on 2013-11-16 at 04:58 said:

in modern terms one could say that Evola shows here metaphysical underpinnings of astral projection

Cologero on 2013-11-17 at 19:27 said:

Jacob, there is an Italian saying "tradurre è tradire" (translation is betrayal). So, of course, there is a certain amount of "interpretation" along with a translation. That is, there is no univocal correspondence between a word in one language and another, so the meaning has to be grasped in order to choose the correct word or phrase. In a sense, Evola is doing something similar when he points out that a concept in one tradition is expressed in a different way in another, although the meanings are the same.

It is certainly worth the effort, as much for me as for the readers here, and it is part and parcel of learning how to read, I mean to truly read. Now a parrot has no understanding, so there is no point in just quoting long passages from Guenon, Evola, Nietzsche, etc. That is something that will get you a lot of "likes" on facebook, but no respect in this quarter.

I presume you are reading El/Ella in Spanish? Now that my health has been cleared for the time being – I've seen every specialist but a psychiatrist – I am thinking of reviving the El/Ella discussion list. I just need to decide on the best format to keep it on track. Gornahoor's time is running short and the more important work will be done in discussion lists.

Jacob on 2013-11-19 at 11:23 said:

No, I was just using language in its figurative sense. I had only read some of it in English thanks to our discussion.

But Evola expresses it at least to my mind more clearly, or maybe they were both equally clear and being able to connect that the two are nearly one and the same allows greater understanding.

I'm really glad you're going to restart the discussion. I often feel like I'm trying to learn to paint beautifully without even seeing the colors and just hearing the sound of the brush. It's pretty much as you said grasping the concept intellectually vs. actualizing it.

Scardanelli on 2013-11-19 at 21:54 said:

@jacob

I know what you mean about theoretical knowledge vs. experience. There is knowing and there is knowing so to speak.

There are a wealth of books to read but very few who can direct you regarding practical experience. I think the discussion list format is the best next step. I'm looking forward to it.

Thomas on 2013-11-21 at 12:21 said:

Thank you for this very interesting extract from Evola. Is there somewhere that we can find "the technique of such a process" either in Evola or elsewhere?

Sigurd on 2017-06-20 at 19:06 said:

To what noe has replied with: is this the Great Work of Hermetic thought? To project the astral body? This passage from Evola seemed quite nebulous to me, being truthful, before I read the comments. The quasi-philosophical wording makes it quite difficult.

2.6 The Purification of the Breath

The way of the spirit is such that it does not exist for those who do not want to follow the path.

JULIUS EVOLA

This is the concluding section of Evola's essay on the metaphysics of purity. Once again, he expresses Eastern doctrines not only in Western terms, but also relates them to actual experiences rather than empty doctrines. He referred to this elsewhere as "metaphysical positivism". This puts him at odds with those who deny the possibility of higher states, but, more importantly, against those of a new age bent who tend to obfuscate these doctrines due to their incomprehension.

Since there now seems to be an audience that can benefit from such writings, I may translate the related chapters of *Essays in Magical Idealism* provided my energy holds up.

It is sufficient to mention the *kundalini* yoga of the *Shakti tantra*, that will permit us moreover to say something about the “purification of the breath”. Roughly speaking, its meaning is the following: there is a force (*kundalini*) in man that is the root of his individual unity and a principle superior to every polarity or duality. It is the Logos (*shabda brahman*) in the body. However in the common man, this force appears only in an extroverted and impure form (impure because it is turned to the other) of the power of animal generation. It is a matter of realizing kundalini in consciousness, of grasping it, of separating it from that extroverted direction and then folding it on itself in a point of mastery and sufficiency. Then kundalini, restored to its true nature, makes itself the instrument for the reaffirmation of the I over all those principles that rule his physical, biological, and mental being and that previously fell outside his power. Now in order to achieve such a conversion it is necessary that kundalini be invested by something already pure and entire in order to communicate these characteristics to him. That may be *prana*.

Prana for the Orientals is the life force connected to the breath and, as one, transcends the material breach with which it can be said that it is in the same relationship as the soul to the body. Moreover, it is necessary to remember that in the metaphysics connected to such disciplines, the highest meaning of creation would be given by the mantra *Hamsah*: *Ham* would be the inhalation, *Sah* the exhalation, therefore *hamsah* is the simultaneity of inhalation and exhalation. Naturally, exhalation is symbolic of *proodos* [progress], of the act of pure, demiurgic creativity; inhalation is the further power, through which the central principle “originated”, is reaffirmed, recognized, and mastered. *Hamsah* has the meaning of an eternal, simple sudden intuition, the synthesis of being and non-being (*sadasat*) in which the Absolute makes use of a pure self-revelation or self-giving to itself. Now *hamsah*, which is that in which all beings “live, move, and are” [Acts 17:28], is present also in man, but in an impure and divided form: in man, life (*prana*) is no longer fixed and

concentrated simultaneously, but rather it comes and goes with alternating inhalations and exhalations, in a fluctuation and a contingency that reflects the ultimate of the first inhalation of the newborn and the last exhalation of the dying man.

The yogi, through the appropriate discipline (*pranayama*), directs himself to dissipate this impurity. The I must seize prana, pulling it out from fluctuation, keeping it fixed in its own body. With such concentrated and total power, he then proceeds to empower kundalini; then it is “awakened”, it detaches itself from the extroverted direction that craving desires and is related in itself; it no longer flows downward, but “upward” (*urdhvareta*) [a yogi who has accomplished perpetual sublimation of semen]. In that animal generation (heterogeneration) yields to that of the gods or spiritual generation (autoctisi) [in the philosophy of Gentile, the act in which the spirit creates itself]. After making itself pure and individual activity, kundalini progressively empowers various subtle centers and changes the dualities in them into actual simplicity; that means: it realizes in the I a relationship of identity and mastery with those spiritual powers that, close to the state of privation and obscurity of the body, is opposed to it as physical nature. At the limit of the process there is the purification of that which was sexual coupling—i.e., pure auto-generation—and, in that way, the supreme liberation (*paramukti*). It is said that for anyone who is elevated to this point neither the body, nor the “other”, nor dissolution, nor destiny of rebirth exist any more (*kaivalya*); he lives in accordance with pure activity that previously he felt as obscurity and privation: the various functions are reawakened and intensified in the original and glorious nature of cosmic power. In particular, the I can generate, he can give himself from himself a body while also maintaining and changing it at will. Lord of the laws of life and death, he is satchitananda, i.e., conscious actuality (*cit*) and insofar as perfect (*sat*), blessed (*ananda*).

Conclusion We believe that this brief essay on one of the most important initiatic doctrines is not entirely lacking interest; and we would certainly be pleased if anyone succeeds in getting from it some idea of the possibility of a consideration of similar topics, that go beyond both the limited attitude of those who, enclosed in rather restricted horizons, only know how to scorn and ridicule, as well as those who, like an octopus, love to muddy the waters and take for mystery and the “occult” what they are unable to understand, which on the contrary they only know how to deform with a great deal of prejudices.: and in this group, we can include almost the totality of those who speak of “occult science”.

There is instead a way to consider initiation, through which it presents a perfectly intelligible content valid in itself, proceeding moreover from a concept of man (*en sarki peripolon theos*) [a god walking in the flesh], of his value, and his task, lofty and magnificent like few others. We will certainly not stop here on this question of the real possibility of similar paths. In any case, we should not neglect how much metapsychics today is little by little verifying as effectively possible for man. On the other hand, it remains in fact that a number of things are impossible only because we do not believe that they are such; and that *the way of the spirit is such that it does not exist for those who do not want to follow the path.*

Posted on 2013-11-15 by Cologero

Prayer and thoughts

3.1 Techniques of Prayer

AÑADIR IMAGEN With the initial disclaimer that (in the Christian religion) one must beware of “over-systematizing” the grace of God into specific techniques, the following is shared for the possible benefit of readers who are interested in esoteric Christianity.

Boris Mouravieff claims that there is a collection of “scripts” called the Golden Book in Orthodoxy, which is the oral tradition (or parallel to it, or a key, or fragments of it), which contain detailed teachings and instructions in the “secrets” of Christianity. I have been unable to locate references to it on the Internet, other than in Gnosis. This was the “teaching of Christ to the inner disciples”.

As I was reading *Unseen Warfare* by Scupoli¹, a Venetian priest who had his book adopted into Orthodoxy and added to by **Theophan the Recluse**, I came across some advice to follow during prayer. Keep in mind that no prayer life will likely be effective without other ascetic practices

¹http://copiosa.org/spirituality/spiritual_combat.htm

(e.g., one can't neglect fasting and expect prayer to come swiftly and easily). That said, and other advice followed (such as maintaining "a spirit of prayer" at all times), Theophan/Scupoli advise the following:

1. Pray in short prayers; these are lightning bolts which move swiftly to heaven, before the mental apparatus can intervene and subordinate the prayer to its own machinations.
2. Learn them by heart. This, contrary to popular belief, does the exact opposite of what opponents claim it does – it protects it from the vain repetitions of the discursive intellect, which stem from the gray matter, and not the body or the heart centers.
3. Focus attention on both the left nipple (the heart) and the throat chakra. This may seem odd, but perhaps some insight from Western alchemy² can help here (and others may have more to add from the East):

According to Sri Aurobindo, the throat center is associated with the externalization of mental forces, and the link between the higher and lower mental spheres. Like in some color scales of kabbalah, grey is associated with this center. In *Serpent of Fire: A Modern View of Kundalini*, Darrel Irving points out that the *Vissudha* chakra is presided over by the dual deities of *Shakini* and *Shiva*. Each is five faced, representing the five Elements, and three eyes, showing physical and psychic perception, or knowledge. *Shakini* is seen as Light itself, and *Shiva*, like the Hermetic ideal, is androgynous, half white and half gold. The center is associated with the purification of intelligence, the psychic substratum or ether (akasha), and hearing. The color given is smoky-purple. As with Sri Aurobindo's color, purple is also sometimes given as associated with the throat center in modern kabbalistic works. Along

²<http://hermetic.com/stavish/essays/lucid.html>

with the remaining upper two psychic centers, these three constitute the only centers whereby *direct psychic perception* is possible. In the West, the Throat center is less well defined, although it shares in all of the above named characteristics. In *Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn*, Pat Zalewski states that the throat center is associated with the thyroid gland and controls respiration. As with yoga, each of the preceding centers is associated with an Element, starting with Earth, Water, Fire, and Air. While not stated, it might be presumed that the Throat center is then the first center to be associated with Spirit, or Quintessence, as in yoga.

Since Christianity focuses upon “the Son” at the heart of the worlds, it is appropriate that the tradition of prayer associated with it would focus upon the two “linking chakras” between the lower and higher worlds. This is something Tomberg points out in *Meditations*.

Julian Lee, who is a “heretic” outside the Church, nonetheless has some very interesting considerations about prayer, Churches, and how Christianity is bhakti-yoga exotericized into a religion for the Western peoples.

Why did my ancestors build their churches this way? Because men and women who think about God a lot get instincts about God’s nature. Thus my grandfathers and grandmothers of Europe designed their Sacred Places (churches) to evoke the thought of infinite space. They may not have done it consciously always, but they did it because they received instinctive knowledge of God through thinking of God. The White Europeans thought about the Transcendental Principle a great deal. They even had a special day reserved — every 7th day — for the thought of God alone. (What an amazing and cosmic-minded people our grandfathers and grandmothers were!) It was natural then that their churches evolved to evoke Akasa, one of the Creator-God’s first evolutes. Just as it was natural for them to build tall steeples representing

the rectitude and straightness of the spine when aspiring for God, and the sublimated sexual energy made sacred by placing it in sacred limits (procreation and family), with the rest sublimated in aspiration for God.

And yet, the neo-pagan crowd in America (many of whom attend services each Sunday and talk a lot of God-talk) are trying to get away from the heritage of church bells, spires, folded or uplifted hands, and any kind of “weird” traditions in Christianity as fast as they can, desperately hoping to modernize and become up-to-date enough to slickly survive the end times. Even if Christianity survives what is coming, what will it look like?

I hope that some reading this can determine to hold onto the riches that God has already dumped in our laps, even at this late hour.

Posted on 2012-09-21 by Logres

3.2 Thought Power

We have often heard from writers on Tradition that the mind needs to be dominated by something “higher”. This is not commonly understood by those who take the standpoint of ordinary life, since, for them, the flow of thoughts is itself the core of their self. Yet that is not how Tradition understands it. The reality is that there is something that transcends, observes, and controls the flow of thought. However, that is not “natural”, rather it is supernatural. It is a skill that must be learned and developed.

Careful observation will reveal several layers of thoughts. There are thoughts related to our desires and their fulfillment. Beyond that, there are thoughts that seem to relate to higher things, but are still indicative of the human state. For example, this may be exoteric religious beliefs, political positions, scientific theories, and so on. Then there are more subtle states beyond those, which begin to approach the “super-human”.

The become visible only as the mind becomes less agitated. Rene Guenon refers to some of these states as angelic. That would be an interesting project for someone to take the angelic hierarchy of Dionysius and relate them to such metaphysical states of being.

Below, you will find several texts from **Swami Sivananda**'s book *Thought Power*. This is not an endorsement of the Swami, if only because I don't know enough about him. However, what he says is helpful and similar ideas can be found in **Lorenzo Scupoli**'s *Spiritual Combat*. I removed explicit religious references to avoid confusing things or bringing in devotional elements. This spiritual battle with the chaotic mind is not optional; victory is seldom quick so it will come only to the persistent. There is no time to waste and no excuses will be accepted.

Thinking and Courage If you have no courage to face the results of your thinking, to swallow the conclusions of your thinking, whatever they may mean to you personally, you should never take the trouble to philosophise. Take up devotion.

Destiny Man sows a thought and reaps an action. He sows an action and reaps a habit. He sows a habit and reaps a character. He sows a character and reaps a destiny. Man has made his own destiny by his own thinking and acting. He can change his destiny. He is the master of his own destiny. There is no doubt of this. By right thinking and strong exertion, he can become the master of his destiny.

Power There is no limit to the power of human thought. The more concentrated the human mind is, the more power is brought to bear on one point. Cultivate concentration, a serene mind is fit for concentration. Keep the mind serene.

Clear Thinking The mental images of the common man are generally very distorted. He does not know what deep thinking is, his thoughts run riot. There is a great deal of confusion in his mind.

It is only thinkers, philosophers and yogins who have well-defined, clear-cut, mental images. Those who practice concentration and meditation develop strong, well-formed mental images. Through right thinking, reasoning, introspection and meditation, you will have to clarify your ideas. Then confusion will vanish. Think clearly, clarify your ideas again and again. Introspect in solitude. Purify your thoughts to a considerable degree. Silence the thoughts.

Deep Thinking Most of us do not know what right thinking is. Thinking is shallow in the vast majority of persons. Deep thinking is given to few. Thinkers are very few in this world.

Hard thinking, persistent thinking, clear thinking, thinking to the roots of problems, to the very fundamentals of the situation, to the very presuppositions of all thoughts and being is the very essence of Vedantic Sadhana.

You will have to abandon an old idea, however strong and ingrained it may be, when you get a new elevating idea in its stead.

Likes and Dislikes The self-controlled man, moving among the objects with senses under restraint and free from attraction and repulsion, attains to peace. The mind and the senses are naturally endowed with the two currents of attraction and repulsion. Therefore, the mind and the senses like certain objects and dislike certain other objects. But the disciplined man moves among the sense-objects with a mind and senses free from attraction and repulsion, mastered by Self, and attains the peace of the Eternal.

Spiritual Combat Control thoughts, avoid imagination or day dreaming. The mind will be annihilated. Extinction of thoughts alone is Moksha or liberation.

The experience of the world illusion is due to your imagination. It vanishes away when imagination is completely stopped.

Victory over thoughts is really a victory over all limitations, weakness, ignorance, and death. The inner war with the mind is more terrible than the outer war with machine guns. Conquest of thoughts is more difficult than the conquest of the world by the force of arms. Conquer your thoughts and you would conquer the world.

Random Thinking All are victims of random thinking. All sorts of loose thoughts of diverse kinds come and go in the mental factory. There is neither rhythm nor reasoning. There is neither concord nor discipline. All is in a state of utter chaos and confusion. There is no clarification of ideas.

You cannot think of one subject even for two minutes in an orderly and systematic manner. You have no understanding of the laws of thoughts. There is a perfect menagerie inside. All sorts of sensual thoughts fight amongst themselves to enter the mind of a sensualist and gain the upper hand. Many cannot entertain a single, sublime, divine thought even for a second. Their minds are so framed that the mental energy runs in sensual grooves.

The Last Thought The last thought of a person will be the thought of God only, if that person has disciplined his mind all throughout his life and has tried to fix it on the Lord through constant practice. It cannot come by a practice in a day or two, in a week or a month. It is a life-long endeavor and struggle.

Posted on 2013-01-21 by Cologero

* * *

scardanelli on 2013-01-21 at 22:16 said:

An interesting and timely post. I just ordered Mouni Sadhu's works on concentration and meditation as an aid in this endeavor. Lately, when practicing, I have noticed the ability of one's stream of thoughts to take the form of "likes" or "interests," those things which one would be the most tempted by, and these are used against us to break our concentration. Victory is seldom quick indeed...

3.3 The Demon of Dialectics

The premise from which the Buddhist **Doctrine of Awakening** starts is the destruction of the **demon of dialectics**; the renunciation of the various constructions of thought and speculation which are simply an expression of opinion, and of the profusion of theories, which are projections of a fundamental restlessness in which a mind that has not yet found itself its own principle seeks for support.

JULIUS EVOLA, *The Doctrine of Awakening*

This premise is the exact opposite of what people believe. They believe in the search for the right opinion, the correct view, the salvific belief. The purpose of this search is to do the impossible: to build a castle in the air. The man engaged in this quest is unaware of this elementary thesis:

We accept the proofs of Hume, Kant, Herbert Spencer, Fuller, and others of this thesis: The Ratiocinative Faculty or Reason of Man contains in its essential nature an element of self-contradiction.

ALEISTER CROWLEY, *Equinox Vol 1 No 2*

To this we would add, from **Gödel**: if a system of thought contains no self-contradiction, then it is incomplete.

While for Beings in the human state, there is necessarily a perspective (see Hermit Crabs and Nietzsche³), it is equally necessary to understand that it is only a perspective, something arbitrary and ephemeral, and unrelated to real knowledge, True Will, Awakening, the Solar spirit. All our opinions on politics and popular culture, our likes and dislikes, our style or dress, are all equally arbitrary and stand as obstacles to Awakening.

Opinion, O disciples, is a disease; opinion is a tumour; opinion is a sore. He who has overcome all opinions, O disciples, is called a saint, one who knows. (Majjhima-nikaya 2:38)

Crowley once proposed an interesting exercise, which we adapt. For one year, be a political liberal. Subscribe to their journals, read their web sites, attend their rallies. The following year, read conservative journals, watch their networks, participate in their demonstrations. Try to understand the worldviews of each, how that affects their opinions on issues, and blinds them to deeper truths. The same could be done with attitudes toward pop cultures or personal styles. Such exercises will loosen the hold that opinions have over us; they will give us more options for action; they will begin the process of awakening our consciousness from the turgidity of ordinary life.

Man has two aspects: his *essence* and his *personality*. His **essence** is who he truly is, what he is born with, beyond the superficialities of opinion. **Personality** is what accrues to him during his life, his opinions and imaginings, or “social constructs”. You will find that what is essential and what is a social construct are polar opposites from what is commonly believed.

³<https://www.gornahoor.net/?p=708>

“Do I contradict myself? I embrace multitudes.” (Walt Whitman)
Go ahead, embrace multitudes. Only thought can contradict itself, “I” cannot.

Posted on 2010-07-31 by Cologero

3.4 Daily Spiritual Exercises

As preparation for the Our Father course, please look at these daily exercises. There is an exercise for each day of the week. Spend 5 minutes in the morning with the exercise, and then throughout the day when it occurs to you.

Monday: Right Word Talking. Only what has sense and meaning should come from the lips of one striving for higher development. All talking for the sake of talking — to kill time — is in this sense harmful.

The usual kind of conversation, a disjointed medley of remarks, should be avoided. This does not mean shutting oneself off from intercourse with one’s fellows; it is precisely then that talk should gradually be led to significance. Adopt a thoughtful attitude to every speech and answer, taking all aspects into account. Never talk without cause and be gladly silent. One tries not to talk too much or too little. First listen quietly; then reflect on what has been said.

Tuesday: Right Deed External actions. These should not be disturbing for our fellowmen. Where an occasion calls for action out of one’s inner being, deliberate carefully how one can best meet the occasion — for the good of the whole, the lasting happiness of man, the eternal.

Where you do things of your own accord, out of your own initiative: consider most thoroughly beforehand the effect of your actions.

Wednesday: Right Standpoint The ordering of life. Live in accordance with Nature and Spirit. Do not be swamped by the external trivialities of life. Avoid all that brings unrest and haste into life. Hurry over nothing, but also do not be indolent. Look on life as a means for working towards higher development and to behave accordingly.

Thursday: Right Habit Human Endeavour. Take care to do nothing that lies beyond your powers. But also leave nothing undone which lies within them.

Look beyond the everyday, the momentary, and set yourself aims and ideals connected with the highest duties of a human being. For instance, in the sense of the prescribed exercises, try to develop yourself so that afterwards you may be able all the more to help and advise your fellowmen, though perhaps not in the immediate future.

This can be summed up as: Let all the foregoing exercises become a habit.

Friday: Right Memory Remember what has been learnt from experiences. Endeavour to learn as much as possible from life.

Nothing goes by us without giving us a chance to gain experiences that are useful for life. If you have done something wrongly or imperfectly, that becomes a motive for doing it rightly or more perfectly, later on.

If you see others doing something, observe them with the like end in view (yet not coldly or heartlessly). And do nothing without looking back to past experiences which can be of assistance in your decisions and achievements.

You can learn from everyone, even from children if you are attentive.

Saturday: Right Opinion Pay attention to your ideas.

Think only significant thoughts. Learn little by little to separate in your thoughts the essential from the nonessential, the eternal from the

transitory, truth from mere opinion.

While listening to the talk of others, try to become quite still inwardly, foregoing all assent, and still more, all unfavourable judgments (criticism, rejection), even in your thoughts and feelings.

Sunday: Right Judgment On even the most insignificant matter. judge only after fully reasoned deliberation. All unthinking behaviour, all meaningless actions, should be kept far away from the soul. You should always have well-weighed reasons for everything. And you should definitely abstain from doing anything for which there is no significant reason.

Once you are convinced of the rightness of a decision, hold fast to it, with inner steadfastness.

Right judgments are formed independently of sympathies and antipathies.

Every Day: Right Examination Turn your gaze inwards from time to time, even if only for five minutes daily at the same time. In so doing you should sink down into yourself, carefully take counsel with yourself, test and form your principles of life, run through in thought your knowledge — or lack of it — weigh up your duties, think over the contents and true purpose of life, feel genuinely pained by your own errors and imperfections.

In a word: labour to discover the essential, the enduring, and earnestly aim at goals in accord with it: for instance, virtues to be acquired. Do not fall into the mistake of thinking that you have done something well, but strive ever further towards the highest standards.

- Turn your gaze inwards from time to time, even if only for five minutes daily.
- Sink down into yourself.

- Carefully take counsel with yourself.
- Test and form your principles of life.
- Run through in thought your knowledge — or lack of it
- Weigh up your duties.
- Think over the contents and true purpose of life.
- Feel genuinely pained by your own errors and imperfections.
- Labour to discover the essential, the enduring, and earnestly aim at goals in accord with it.

Posted on 2022-10-22 by Cologero

4.1 Mind Fasting

In this time of year, many are making sacrifices such as giving up cupcakes or even añejo tequila. While there is a benefit to intentional suffering, it cannot happen in a mechanical way. Too often, it is thought of as the function of “will power”, that is the opposition of one desire (cupcakes) against another (sacrifice). What is really needed is to understand the relationship between personal effort and spiritual reality as we learn in the first Arcanum of Meditations on the Tarot. This is essential because

if one does not understand it (i.e. take hold of it in cognitive and actual practice), one would not know what to do with all the other Arcana.

Tomberg reveals the first and fundamental principle of esoterism:

Learn at first concentration without effort; transform work into play; make every yoke that you have accepted easy and every burden that you carry light!

This is also the key to Yoga as Pantajali tells us:

Yoga is the suppression of the oscillations of the mental substance.

These oscillations are automatic and mechanical: they arise from sensory impressions, inner desires, negative emotions, and thoughts that run on their own and usually have origins from unsuspected sources. Concentration is a free act and must be distinguished from obsession, which mimics concentration, but is not free.

Intentional sacrifice then is training for concentration: we learn to distinguish the state of calm and freedom from the disorder of “desires, the imagination and discursive thought”. To be effortless, the will cannot oppose directly the sources of these disorders. Instead, we need to learn to detach from them, to observe them from a point of silence. Only then will they dissipate. This is the rational order of things, where the intellect is higher than, and dominates, thought and desire.

The season of Advent is the time of preparation for the incarnation of the Logos. Every physical event is the reflection of a spiritual reality and, since spiritual reality is timeless, it returns eternally. Hence, we can revisit the meditation on the second Arcanum as the Word is made Flesh.

There we see that the Logos is made incarnate by the Holy Spirit through the Holy Soul. As we are, the waters of our souls are full of perturbations. An event may create anger or anxiety, resulting in whirlpools that are hard to climb out from. There are tides coming in and out, so one day we say, believe, or vow one thing, and then the next day, just the opposite. Storms blow across the waters leaving them rough and choppy. In an unperturbed soul, the surface of the water is smooth like a pane of glass. Only in that condition will the Spirit be reflected clearly in the



Soul. Otherwise, it gets mixed up with our fantasies and desires, which we too often take to be real expressions of the Spirit.

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception we are reminded that only the Soul without sin can fully accept the Spirit. That Soul is totally free from perturbations. Can we even imagine what that is like? The exercise is worth the effort.

So either instead of, or in addition to, a physical fast, there is a Taoist exercise called mind fasting. If anyone has bothered to observe his thoughts, he will find abundant material to fast from. Perhaps there is a vulgar fantasy he indulges in. Perhaps he replays an event or conversations over and over in his mind. Perhaps he has a persistent anxiety or a worry. Maybe he has some daydream of success or power. Choose one and give it up. But give it up without effort.

Posted on 2012-12-08 by Cologero

* * *

Senko on 2012-12-08 at 22:07 said:

A most excellent post Cologero. Full of theory AND practical advice for one's everyday spiritual life. I find mental fasting much harder than physical fasting. I believe Advent is a most excellent time to prepare ourselves for the birth of Christ in our Heart. Blessings in Christ and Mary!¹

Mihai on 2012-12-09 at 14:43 said:

Great post !

I would say that fasting has three different levels on which it must occur (like everything in the spiritual life, for that matter).

1. Physical: this is known by everyone and, unfortunately, this is where it begins and ends in the mundane mentality of our age.

2. Psychic: just what you described here as "mind fasting".

3. Spiritual: Without increasing prayer, meditation, study of Scripture etc. the whole thing collapses without purpose.

¹<http://senkosmos.blogspot.com.ar/>

I believe that when the fast turns into a petty legalism, limited to abstaining from certain foods and drinks, while ignoring the other two parts, it becomes even diabolical in character. I have seen a lot of people who do nothing but a physical fast and are most irritable and aggressive during such a period.

5.1 Immoral Dilemmas

These are the results of my first experiments in remembering. Behind the temporal succession of the events of life, there is an eternal principle that gives them meaning and an intemporal I that is unchanged throughout.

The common view is that memory has something to do with the past, as when friends or family get together to relive their common nostalgic moments. Phenomenologically memory is bringing the past into the present. Or to put it another way, the seemingly disparate and unrelated events of life cannot be understood as merely temporal succession. As Rene Guenon expressed the goal in *Oriental Metaphysics*:

The person who attains this “primordial state” is still only a human individual and is without effective possession of any supra-individual states; he is nevertheless freed from time and the apparent succession of things is transformed for him into simultaneity. He consciously possesses a faculty which is unknown to the ordinary man and which one might call the “sense of eternity.” This

is of extreme importance, for whoever is unable to leave the viewpoint of temporal succession and see everything in simultaneity is incapable of the least conception of the metaphysical order.

The exercise in remembering should lead to seeing one's life in its simultaneity. The events in their totality suddenly reveal a hidden meaning to life. This meaning is constant, eternal, and above time. What follows are some notes from this exercise. Keep in mind that there are four levels of memory of increasing depth:

1. **Intellectual memory.** The unadorned memory of a past event.
2. **Emotional memory.** A memory that elicits an emotional reaction.
3. **Volitional memory.** A memory that incites to action.
4. **Moral memory.** A moral aspect is added to the memory.

Forgetting is analogous to death so remembering is life giving. Some memories arise spontaneously. Others take some effort. One should not stop at intellectual memory. It may take more effort to expand that memory to deeper levels. This essay has been some time in planning. The events mean nothing to you, but each time I've relived them, there is more intensity. Humor may be used to hide it. Nevertheless, over time, a common thread has been revealing itself to me.

You can avoid remembering now, but your entire life will be exposed at death. There is no point in evading the inevitable.

Posted on 2021-02-12 by Cologero

* * *

Michael M on 2021-02-12 at 10:09 said:

When it comes to viewing memories and the addition of the moral element and a common thread throughout life, the more we untangle those knots looking back and going further and further long those lines does give a different type of perspective or Gestalt of the whole.

Utilizing that theme, would it be more advisable then to look at present / future events in the light of such a theme? Or is that too close to trying to get a specific result from a type of effort? Thereby destroying the whole effort to begin with. The building of a foundational “center” with a common theme that has always been present in life would reasonably seem to be the only true way to have a viewpoint or post for life that would never be carried away by external influences.

Tannheuser on 2021-02-12 at 13:24 said:

“Say it, say it, say it.” Now I knew perfectly well what she wanted me to say, but I just couldn’t say it. I was her one and only love but she was just one of many to me.

Tant pis pour elle. How much pain has unrestrained desire caused in the world? And why does it have to feel so good?”

--

The girl who I couldn’t “say it” to was actually the first woman I had ever slept with, and the most beautiful. Our relationship had started because I wanted to make the woman who I really loved at that time jealous, which worked. Still, for a while she sucked me into a world of immense pleasure that was hard to step away from. She had a very pleasing personality and the sex was incredible, but the whole thing was spiritually suffocating – I felt like Odysseus on Circe’s island.

In the end I only ever said “I love you” to three women, who corresponded in order to the types of ame-soeur, mistress, and wife.

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Michael M: If your life is a unity, then it only makes sense that you take action in the present from that perspective as you become conscious of your own meaning and purpose.

5.2 Birth of the “I”

In *The I Problem and Genius*¹, Weininger writes about the realization of the sense of the “I”, that is, the experience of being an independent centre of awareness. He proceeds to give examples (from Jean Paul, Novalis, and

¹https://www.gornahoor.net/?page_id=12944

Schelling) where they describe their earliest experiences “of the possession of an ego in the highest sense.”

Some men seem to have had a strong experience of that, often from an early age, while others don’t even seem to understand the question. Readers may want to consider this an exercise in self-realization and try to remember their own such experiences. Here are two of mine:

The first shocking memory I recall is when I had just finished a BM. I opened the bathroom door and called to my mother to take a look at it in the bowl. I was dumbfounded when she did not want to look at it and told me to go flush it myself. At that moment I woke up to myself and realized I was on my own.

That had to have been around two and a half years old. The following one was probably a year later:

I tied all my toy trucks and cars together and made a train. As I pulled it around the house, my sister was crawling behind the train and following it. This is my first recollection of the sense of having a “will”.

Posted on 2008-07-06 by Cologero

5.3 **Thanks for the Memories**

you must know, Sancho, if you do not know it already, that with lovers, the external actions and movements, revealed when the topic of their love arises, are reliable messengers bringing the news of what transpires deep in their souls.

Don Quixote

Memory is not mere reminiscing, but is a progress from the past to the present. In Bergson's diagram, the base AB of the inverted cone is the memory. The Self S lives and acts on the plane P, bearing the weight of the past. If you forget your past, you will be driven by unconscious forces. Memory is real and actual only in the present, to the extent that it shapes our perception and understanding of the world.

Plato famously claimed that knowing is remembering. In particular, we have forgotten the world of essences, that is, the ideas in the mind of God; Hence, knowing an essence is just a recall of that which was forgotten. A fortiori, knowledge of the Self, our essence, and our destiny must also be a form of remembering. But memory of the forms takes place in stages. We understand more as we rise up through the states of being. Boris Mouravieff explains:

Memory is a direct function of the *being* of the individual. The higher the level of *being*, the better the memory and the greater its capacity to contain. Loss of memory, which causes the notion of the name and the ensemble that is attached to it to be forgotten, makes a madman out of a normal man: the sense of continuity is no longer present.

The esoteric teaching is that forgetting is analogous to sleeping and to death, as they manifest on different levels. Valentin Tomberg makes it clear:

For our whole experience (outer and inner) forgetting, sleep and death are three manifestations of the same thing —namely the “thing” which effects disappearance. It is said that sleep is the younger brother of death. It is necessary to add: forgetting is the brother of sleep. ... One forgets, one goes to sleep, and one dies. One remembers,

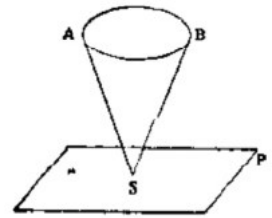


Figure 5.1:
Memory Cone

one awakes, and one is born. Remembering is to forgetting as awakening is to falling asleep, and awakening is to sleeping as birth is to death. ... Natural forgetting reduces man to animality; natural sleep reduces him to vegetality; and natural death reduces him to minerality.

Letter XIII, Death

Yet remembering is not simply bringing an image of the past into the present, since there are levels of depth to memory. You can remember solely with the intellect, with feelings, or even with the will. The highest is moral memory, based on love and all that accompanies it. Tomberg emphasizes the importance of the latter:

It is love which is at work in moral memory when it recalls things from the past. Here it is admiration, respect, friendship, gratitude, affection and a thousand other things which have deeply moved you, which render things from the past unforgettable, i.e., evocable at each instant. The more one has loved, the more one remembers through moral memory.

Moral memory — which can comprehend everything without exception — is all the more effective the less one is morally indifferent. Indifference, a lack of moral interest, is the fundamental cause of the lapse of memory which often takes place in old age. The less one is indifferent, the more one remembers of the past and the more one is capable of learning new things.

Moral Memory Moral memory predominates in old age. The young depend on mechanical memories, which arise spontaneously; this faculty becomes feebler with age. Hence, it must be replaced with intellectual or logical memory. This requires an active effort to remember things. People who neglected to learn how to make intellectual efforts in their youth,

will become forgetful as they age. Tomberg goes even further, explaining that moral efforts are likewise necessary:

People who are able to and who know how to give everything a moral worth and to see a moral sense in everything will not forget anything: they will have a normal, if not excellent, memory to a very advanced age.

Moral memory — which can comprehend everything without exception — is all the more effective the less one is morally indifferent. Indifference, a lack of moral interest, is the fundamental cause of the lapse of memory which often takes place in old age. The less one is indifferent, the more one remembers of the past and the more one is capable of learning new things.

Love and Work

Love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness.

SIGMUND FREUD

To begin the experiment of “remembering”, one must first decide what to remember. If love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness, that is the place to start. When one loves, one cannot be morally indifferent. And our acts — our work, our projects, our adventures — only have significance when they are moral acts. So we turn to our favorite Knight Errant, Don Quixote, who had expertise in both realms, as a model.

Love was constantly on his mind, especially for the one special lady, who was the driving force, the creative force, for his life. He treated women with chivalry. Against men, he was prepared to do battle against iniquity and to protect the weak and helpless. He brandished his cold weapons to make a point. He did not carry around a copy of the constitution nor did he propose to reason with his enemies to make his point. That is why his deeds have been recorded and are remembered.

Pointillism Most people live their lives as an accumulation of points, one after the other. Events in their lives are unrelated to each other since points are unrelated. They are stuck in time and not in simultaneity. If you desire to live your life as a work of art, whom would you commission to paint it for you?

The realist will plan it in advance: he will make a detailed drawing, calculate the perspectives, choose the colours, lighting, etc. The end result is known even before the artist begins. The unsophisticated viewer prefers realism because it requires little or no effort from him.

The better choice is pointillism. As you live your life day to day, it is difficult to grasp it as a whole. Instead, your life appears to you as a series of points of various colours, almost at random, and it may not make sense as a whole at any given time. However, as the points are painted at various spots on the canvas, gradually the full image of your life can be discerned. But this takes more effort — and patience — by the viewer to wait for the points to begin to make sense.

So that is how to start, each memory is a point or set of related points. Over time, as they appear on the canvas of your life, the whole picture of your life should come into view.

Life is Short They say that life is too short. Your memories should be relevant; they should be predominantly moral memories. If your fondest memories are watching TV or hanging out at the pub, then your life is actually too long and you are trying to fill it up with trivialities.

To develop a moral memory, you must live by principles and your acts must have a point. This should be obvious, for the alternative is live a life that is unprincipled and pointless.

Dislikes, Fears, and Accidents The first step in deep remembering is to ascertain one's earliest likes, talents, and proclivities. This exercise is preferable to most people because it seems pleasant. However, one can

gain more self-knowledge by remembering the things you did not like. What events transpired in your life that you did not desire? Can you see what role, however subtle, you may have played in bringing it about?

This applies also to what you most fear. How has the avoidance of this fear shaped your life?

Another consideration is to remember everything that occurred, seemingly by chance or accident. From the human point of view, that may seem to be the case. But can you dig even deeper to see if there is a state of being from which you willed those events.

Meditations like these will often bear great fruit.

Encounters with Others Your life is a world line in the cosmos. And everyone else has his own world line. Mathematically understood, a Point is where two Lines intersect. In other words, the points don't define the line, but the line defines the points that constitute it.

So when I see a Point, I don't ask what it means in isolation. Instead, I look for the two lines. Of course, you are one of them, and the other is a person you encounter. Why are two distinctly different world lines meeting at that point? From that perspective, you can experience the event in its wholeness, all at once, simultaneously.

There are natural reasons, of course, for the intersection of lines: family, jobs, food, love, revenge, and so on, i.e., all the things involved in human life. But that does not exhaust all the possibilities.

Nevertheless, some lines meet for no human purpose at all, yet you can't dismiss it as pointless because the Point is there and is unavoidable. You may choose to look away. That is possible because it is so ethereal. But that decision has its danger, since you may miss one of the most important moments in your life.

How many of those life events have you forgotten? and you may even be glad they are forgotten. How few of those memories will endure through eternity? It is imperative to know what to forget and what to

remember.

Why have some people made an impact on your life and others not so much?

Things forgotten You will find memories best left forgotten. Something that had seemed so important and so impactful at that time, appears now in retrospect to be so distant, so far from your current level of being, that it may as well have been the memory of a different person. It may remain as an intellectual memory, but it no longer has any emotional impact, and it most certainly does not induce you to act.

Posted on 2021-01-31 by Cologero

* * *

Michael M on 2021-01-31 at 10:26 said:

"They say that life is too short. Your memories should be relevant; they should be predominantly moral memories. If your fondest memories are watching TV or hanging out at the pub, then your life is actually too long and you are trying to fill it up with trivialities.

To develop a moral memory, you must live by principles and your acts must have a point. This should be obvious, for the alternative is live a life that is unprincipled and pointless."

You describe exactly my experience lately when I hear someone say "killing time". Internally I watch my cage intensely when I see it in others and am watchful for it in my own domain. Quite insidious a phrase especially when understanding time as part of the compound nature of experience, life, and the unfolding of ideas. Don't want to fall asleep in a dream and dream our life away...

Has anyone found it more difficult at times to remember "facts" (academic / intellectual) memories when focusing on moral memory intensely? Or perhaps there is some type of learning curve or displacement of useless knowledge for rewriting of moral orientation?

5.4 Immaterial Intimacy and Material Catastrophes

Introduction by Cologero

and directing his gaze from now, on towards beauty as a whole, he should turn to the great ocean of beauty, and in contemplation of it give birth to many beautiful and magnificent speeches and thoughts in the abundance of philosophy.

Diotima to Socrates in Plato's Symposium

Diotima was a prophetess and philosopher. In the Symposium, she explains the ladder of love, which comprises the following stages.

1. In youth one is attracted to the physical beauty of the other.
2. At this stage, the spiritual beauty of another person is more important. Therefore, love is now directed towards this person because of her moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualities.
3. The beauty of knowledge itself becomes the focus. This is the love of Wisdom, or philosophy.
4. Ultimately, one reaches the appreciation of Beauty apart from any individual, to consideration of Divinity, the source of Beauty, to love of Divinity.

If Diotima is speaking as a philosopher, those stages make sense. But not if she is speaking as a prophetess of the future since precious few manage to get beyond the first stage. However, in the timeless realm, the notions of past, present, and future are relative. In the Future of Prophecy, Saint Gregory the Great² explains the three tenses of prophecy: future, present, past:

prophecy is not a matter of prediction, but rather of revelation.
That is why there can be a prophecy of the past and the present;

²<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/the-future-of-prophecy>

prophecy uncovers hidden truths, truths concealed by time or by present circumstances. He writes: "Prophecy is present when something is concealed, not by the spirit, but by the absent Word, which however is laid bare by the Spirit."

Sibylle has done her own experiment in making the past present, through the act of remembering. She had been working on those memories for a long time and until recently never figured out what to make of them. Suddenly, their meaning was revealed to her. That is how she became Sibylle.

You can find her experience in the New Decameron at Immaterial Intimacy and Material Catastrophes³.

As you try your own experiment, notice the extent that you have contributed to the events of your life, whether out of ignorance, by accident, or deliberately.

The Chewing Gum Boy She really didn't like the boys in Kindergarten. They constantly bullied her, said mean words, started laughing in her presence. There was one boy especially cruel, quite obscene for a five-year-old. Very blonde, strong and he kept singing Nena's "99 Luftballons" using a huge wooden building brick as a microphone. One day when she went to the supermarket with her mother, they encountered this boy with his mother. The two mothers started talking and he was too embarrassed to look at her. She didn't care because she thought she didn't like him. All of a sudden, the boy reached out and handed her a chewing gum. When he finally looked at her, she knew that cruel boys would never pose a danger to her. They revealed their true feelings by their first glance.

³<https://gornahoor.net/decameron/immaterial-intimacy-and-material-catastrophes/>

Ending up in the Boys Corner On her first day of elementary school, the girls of her class promised each other to stick together in order to avoid sitting next to a boy. When the teacher announced everybody should choose a seat, her best friend ran away to sit with another girl. So she picked a nice window seat next to a long-haired, fair looking girl. Suddenly the girls started laughing at her. When she looked around, she realised she was surrounded by boys. The fair looking girl turned out to be a boy — she spent the rest of the schoolyear by his side, but never figured out what he was either thinking or feeling. He remained completely alien to her.



Figure 5.2: Diotima

The Teacher When she was thirteen, she switched violin teachers. Her father had taught her since she was four and made his daughter the winner of a several local music competitions. Now that she was supposed to win the national youth competition the stakes were high. A new coach was needed: a motivating, inspiring presence who would make her leap to the next level. The Teacher was indeed motivating and inspiring — mainly because she was terribly in love with him. She would have lessons at his home, eat lunch with his parents — he only touched her slightly, she told me that it felt like a breeze on her neck and arms. So she won the competition, everyone was happy except for her. Why? The Teacher was a decent man: winning was nice — but she wanted Love.

Love gone unnoticed After she dropped out of High School when she was 17 to advance her career, she went on a concert tour in the Czech Republic with two very sweet boys, a cellist and a pianist. They were part of a group of prizewinners of an international music competition

playing concerts in Prague and Bohemia. She fell in love with the pianist, spent her evenings kissing him and enjoyed herself until one morning she discovered the ashes of a letter on the doorsteps of her motel room. She had no clue what that was all about. It turned out that the cellist had fallen in love with her, planned to open up to her in a love letter, but found out about her and the pianist. She hadn't noticed anything. She didn't feel sorry for him then. Maybe she does now.

The Tragedy of Napoli and Thanksgiving in Chicago During her first year at Indiana University, she met the Italian. He started calling her by his own last name as if they were already married. In fact they had barely exchanged a kiss. During the summer she went to visit him in Naples. Her parents had rented a house near Pisa for the holiday season and she took the train down to the South. She felt confident, had learned Italian in six weeks and was looking forward to meeting her future husband again. He was very passionate upon her arrival, but fell short of making love to her. Instead he called his best friend, a manic-depressive art student from Bloomington, who was spending his summer travelling around Italy. For the rest of her stay she spent more time with that best friend than with her supposed future husband. Back in Bloomington she kept hearing stories about him — that he had broken so many hearts, sleeping with every girl in town. Just not with her.

On Thanksgiving Day she decided to change the Matrix. Instead of letting things happen to her she allowed a student from Venezuela to take her virginity in a motel room in Chicago. He got mad at her for not telling him that it was her first time. She had simply assumed he wouldn't care and was stunned that he felt responsible for what she had made him do. Her first encounter with wrongly guided willfulness.

Mr. Nice Guy She did not love him at first. But she thought it was time to settle with a “nice” guy and found a seemingly willing partner in a Ger-

man cellist she studied with in Amsterdam. They came from the same prude-protestant background and did everything right. Meeting both parents, spending time with his ersatz father — a highly skilled psychologist who kept emphasising how good she was for him after his ill-fated relationship with his former girlfriend. Still: he loved his ex-girlfriend and no other woman could make him happy. A couple of years ago the nice guy's ex-girlfriend committed suicide.

Another Change to the Matrix She tried another change to the Matrix. She felt trapped and pushed by external expectations and wanted to be left alone. So fifteen years ago she went online, picked herself a husband from a dating site, became pregnant and got married. Her husband was her best friend for a while. But he always seemed emotionally detached. When she finally managed to catch a glimpse of his Anima, she got scared. He was totally unaware of her. Everything she actively achieved by *free movements* seemed like a catastrophe to her.

Some time ago he confessed to her that he is still trying to cope with his first girlfriend breaking up with him 35 years ago. If he had told her that fifteen years ago, she would have never married him.

So mere willfulness is not a strength in itself? I think she knows that by now. She has tried to change the Matrix twice and just created a Matrix inside the Matrix.

Sybil I was conceived spontaneously. Almost accidentally, not willingly. I could have remained silent forever. I don't know why I didn't. She made me write and delete and then rewrite a comment before eventually sending it. She wasn't really expecting an answer, she was just fed up with the passivity of men in her life, had a weak moment and made me comment on some really beautiful and deep thoughts on Love.

But when I think about it — there was more to it than her weakness. She was intrigued by the thought that skin would become an obstacle

to intimacy. Since she had experienced her most intimate moments with little or no physical contact throughout her life, she seemed puzzled by the idea that this could actually be a Path and not a flaw.

Me: But you used to be so sceptical of Diotima's talk.

Her: Yes, but that was before.

Me: Before what?

Her: Before he listened to what I meant instead of what I said. He didn't close the door even if he really wanted to. But he said "Stay with me" instead. By knowing me better than I knew myself he acted like a true Knight.

Me: Now you sound like an overly romantic scriptwriter.

Her: It's better than watching the same old film over and over again.

Posted on 2021-02-14 by Sibylle

Remembrance of death

6.1 Death and the Real I

If we keep the image of death constantly in our minds, we will appreciate with bitter regret the value of each lost day.

Dark Dream I was driving on the highway at night, paying close attention to the traffic. A cop car ahead of me, a few cars in the lanes to my left. I accidentally turned off my headlights but could not turn them back on. Suddenly, the entire highway was pitch black. I continued to drive, unable to see anything ahead. The brakes did not work, yet the car was accelerating. I was weaving in and out, all the time thinking that I would crash into something. I speculated on what crash would occur while continuing to drive.

The ambiguity was clear. Was I heading into the darkness of death? Or was I being guided by



Figure 6.1: Muerte Blanca

unknown forces?

In Chapter V of *Gnosis* Book I, Boris Mouravieff includes a meditation on death, which comprised three exercises. The I of the Personality gives little thought to its own death. Mouravieff explains:

All man can imagine in this respect is to evoke the image of his own corpse: he can never exclude from this representation the observer who contemplates this image.

Only the Real I can contemplate one's death. While the ego looks for the light, the Real I faces the darkness. In most cases, it takes a major event, a boundary situations, to get the ego to face its own annihilation. Examples are: fright, guilt, finality, and suffering.

Exercise 1: Remembrance of death

Death is the only real and unique event which happens to us without fail. In other words, constantly bearing in mind the idea of death approaching nearer every day is a concrete means of facing an implacable reality — before which all the joys and all the worries of the Personality fade. It is thus that one learns that in effect: 'all is vanity and torments of the mind.'



It is insufficient to read this exercise; rather, one must actually do it. The timing is good. During Halloween season in the USA, people decorate their lawns with images of death. Walk around the neighborhood and contemplate the skulls. It is better than candy.

This week: pray for the dead and visit a cemetery.

Exercise 2: The narrow road leading to Life

This is done by introducing a continuous and permanent attachment between the Personality and the passive Real 'I'. so as to render the presence of the latter constant in the field of action of the Personality. Then, with time and according to the intensity of efforts, the situation can undergo a complete change: the more the Real I – like the grain of mustard seed – takes root in the mental life which was until then dominated by the Personality, the more the latter is subjected, little by little, to the will of the judge. Identifying himself with it, man will rediscover his Real 'I' in all its integrity and permanence. For him, life then loses its factitious character, to become logical and factual.

Train the ego, or false I, to become aware of the Real I. The ego lies to himself; it sugarcoats his life. The Real I judges rightly, which the ego dislikes. Ultimately, the goal is for the ego to become passive to the Real I. Learn to distinguish between the speech of the ego and the Real I.

When a person speaks, it is generally easy to distinguish whether his records are playing or whether he speaks from some deeper part of himself. In the latter case, he uses a pictorial, rustic and sometimes awkward language; in the former he speaks in a singing tone of voice.

Exercise 3: The philosopher's stone

The permanent link which must be introduced between the Personality and the real 'I' is esoteric Knowledge. The knowledge and know-how that it permits us to acquire represent the philosophers' stone of the medieval mystics. They are capable of provoking in man the transmutation to which he aspires.

Read the best material rather than wild speculations or useless opinions.

Summary:

- Constantly bear in mind the idea of your own death
- Make the real I the master of the I of the Personality
- Acquire esoteric knowledge

Leaving the I of the Personality Behind

the petty bourgeois is spiritless[.] ... Devoid of imagination, as the petty bourgeois always is, he lives within a certain orbit of trivial experiences as to how things come about, what is possible, what usually happens, no matter whether he is a tapster or a prime minister. This is the way the petty bourgeois has lost himself and God.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD, *The Sickness Unto Death*

Posted on 2019-10-27 by Cologero

* * *

Patricia on 2019-10-28 at 17:05 said:

Your dream reminds me of the dark night of the senses that St. John of the Cross wrote about. The gift on the other side of that "night" erupts in the last sentence of your writing, concerning the moments when joy and beauty suddenly appear. I am so glad you made it through such a difficult medical and spiritual challenge.

Santiago on 2020-10-28 at 13:16 said:

One of my favorite articles on the site. Steps 2 and 3 seem somewhat more difficult!

Regarding step 1, Evola states in *Doctrine of Awakening*, that it's a good practice to witness an autopsy and meditate on the nature of death. The idea being, if I recall correctly, to maintain an awareness that we are more than our physical body. There are many autopsies one may watch on YouTube, and all are quite grotesque, so squeamish viewers should overlook the provided example: <https://www.nsfwyoutube.com/watch?v=nHeFUT-11So> (NSFW)

“Only the Real I can contemplate one’s death. While the ego looks for the light, the Real I faces the darkness. In most cases, it takes a major event, a boundary situations, to get the ego to face its own annihilation. Examples are: fright, guilt, finality, and suffering.”

Is the sensation of ego annihilation typically accompanied by a ‘deep’ darkness and a profound, rapid sense of ‘falling’? I had this experience recently, and it was so overwhelming that I impulsively stood up and gasped for air, ending immediately the experience.

Greg on 2020-10-29 at 14:24 said:

Is death the annihilation of the personality? If you listen to nde accounts it would seem not but I suppose they might be unreliable.

Sparse notes and some guides to life

7.1 Amor Fati and the Heroic Life

My formula for the greatness of man is amor fati — to change nothing, neither before nor after, throughout all eternity. Not only to bear Necessity, and still less to hide it — all idealism is a lie in the face of Necessity — but to love it.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

A happy life is impossible; the highest to which man can attain is an heroic course of life.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

Amor Fati The highest form of Amor Fati is to follow the will of God. The first act of will is the acceptance of the circumstances of your birth. To wish it to have been otherwise, is to wish to have been someone else.

When **Saint Anthony the Great** thought about the depth of the judgments of God, he asked,

Lord, how is it that some die when they are young, while others drag on to extreme old age? Why are there those who are poor and those who are rich? Why do wicked men prosper and why are the just in need?

He heard a voice answering him,

Anthony, keep your attention on yourself; these things are according to the judgment of God, and it is not to your advantage to know anything about them.

The Heroic Life To resist the modern world, embrace what is most despised by the modern world and, a fortiori, also despised by some who fantasize about resistance. Embrace the world that valued:

- Logic, grammar, rhetoric
- Geometry, mathematics, music, cosmology
- True philosophy in the mould of Plato and Aristotle
- Mysticism
- Chivalry
- Art, Poetry, Architecture
- Social Order
- Care widows, orphans, the sick, and infirm

Dante showed the path from the bug life (mere animation) to Union with God. The seven stages are described in their all-too-human detail, not as some lifeless abstractions. This path will lead to results and save you years of fruitless seeking. Do not just read, but actually apply, what is contained in these texts:

- **Richard of Saint Victor**, *De Contemplatione*
- **Saint Bernard**, *De Consideratione*
- **Saint Augustine**, *De Quantitate Animae*
- **Saint Thomas Aquinas**, *Summa Theologiae*
- **Dante**, *The Divine Comedy*

Posted on 2020-08-07 by Cologero

7.2 Last Word

The next task is also the last task and therefore the most difficult one. Four things are necessary to fulfil it.

Live by Principles Research the principles of **Bernard of Clairvaux** for a good life and live by them.

That has been your task from the start. Everybody forgot. Do not forget that amongst these principles most important one is to pledge your life and everything that one owns to the cause, defence, honour and further knowledge of the Christian religion and the Holy Church. That means both Catholic and Orthodox Church each with their own dogmas and respective holy centres and patrons. Neither defamation nor furthering of the schism belongs to the life one has been expected to lead. This task also does not have anything to do with common modern day politics and enmities, daily life and journalism, as such are regarded to be realities of a profane nature, so one should relinquish any attempt to conjoin your task with latter. Such is permittable only in one case, that of utmost necessity and solely that — indeed the same you have been called up for — defence, honour and further knowledge of the Christian religion and the Holy Church.

Basic Training To be able to live up to these principles, you need to acquire a basic training.

The first steps are: the control of thinking, feeling, willing, control of speech, control of action, all these combined. Not in a 10 minute meditation, not in an exercise, one is also not expected to perfect this as everybody comes to a situation sooner or later where one fails this and shows weakness and doubt. In such situations remember also that Our Lord suffered in Gethsemane, find strength in remembering that nevertheless he completed his Mission in the end for all of us. Try then to accomplish what is asked from this training in situations when it is needed and important.

Correct thought, correct feeling, correct word, correct action.

Mutual Respect Observance and Excellence, Education and Culture, Ethics and mutual Respect of other Confessions, as well as always when necessary and possible, mediating a peaceful dialogue between them; furthermore, abiding all written and unwritten laws and mores, national and International — is what is asked from all who decide to follow this path. To achieve these, one should school oneself also in the art of oratory — as a proper expression — so that a man can be considered wise and truthful whether with friends or in the face of adversary, and at both tables he will be respected and well received.

Service All these you must not do to excel and take pride in your achievements when you compare yourself with your neighbour. You do all this to serve. Christ washed the feet of his disciples and he was the First among all. Love your neighbour¹.

¹Updated 13 IX 2020.

This is the last task assigned to me by a dear spiritual friend. As for the materials sent to me, I have been using them, not always explicitly. Those who are supposed to manage them, can't manage.

Posted on 2018-09-13 by Anon

* * *

Cologero on 2018-09-13 at 22:18 said:

Very moving, but we have to take into account human capacities. For example, you alluded to some exercises suggested by Rudolf Steiner. As he points out, however, even 10 minutes may be too strenuous for most people. In *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, he makes this suggestion:

The student must set aside a small part of his daily life in which to concern himself with something quite different from the objects of his daily occupation. The way, also, in which he occupies himself at such a time must differ entirely from the way in which he performs the rest of his daily duties. But this does not mean that what he does in the time thus set apart has no connection with his daily work. On the contrary, he will soon find that just these secluded moments, when sought in the right way, give him full power to perform his daily task[s]. Nor must it be supposed that the observance of this rule will really encroach upon the time needed for the performance of his duties. Should anyone really have no more time at his disposal, five minutes a day will suffice. It all depends on the manner in which these five minutes are spent.

Anon on 2018-09-14 at 03:19 said:

When you finish the material I sent you, tell me what you think about then about this same matter. Who cant manage, cant manage. Things are how they are.

Cologero on 2018-09-14 at 12:22 said:

Well, Anon, if I have to finish the material first then you have not yet said the Last Word.

The goal is to help serve others (i.e., those who read this blog), as you wrote, not to display one's own superiority.

But I need to improve German vocabulary so I don't get slowed down looking up words.

As for oratory, I have new audio equipment. But it seems a lot of work for little reach. I'm not Joe Rogan.

So let's discuss Steiner's exercise from a book that you recommended to me as part of the "material". Why do suppose that 5 minutes do not suffice?

The material also includes this passage:

Pay attention to your ideas. Only think important thoughts. Learn to separate in your thoughts the essential from the inessential, the eternal from the transient, the truth from mere opinion.

When listening or talking to one's fellow man, one tries to become completely silent within oneself and to give up all approval, in particular all disparaging judgments, both in thoughts and feelings.

Does that mean we should withhold disparaging judgments, at least until we are sure we understand?

How does one separate the eternal from the transient? Certainly comparing the human condition from 800 years ago to day might be a prelude to that.

When we consider correct speech, the circumstances need to be taken into consideration. What is appropriate in one setting may not be in another. And when is it necessary to speak out? Would it not be correct speech to point out crimes and injustice? Silence is Consent: *Qui tacet consentire videtur, ubi loqui debuit ac potuit*.

You may have forgotten Point 5: forgiveness. Things are not simply how they appear, as you imply. A person does not acquire all those qualities on a balmy weekend. It is the task of a lifetime, and there will be failures on the way, many failures. Forgiveness ought to follow faults, but it seems to be much easier to err than to forgive.

7.3 The Greatness of the Soul

In *De Quantitate Animae*, the *Greatness of the Soul*, Saint Augustine describes a path that leads the soul from "its vivifying, perceptive, rational and contemplative powers that enable it to move close to God". It is Augustine's understanding of the seven stages of the ascent to God. This work served as one of Dante's main influences.

This path is certainly consistent with other descriptions, so I have modified the names of some of the stages for clarity. It cannot be emphasized enough, this is not theory. In other words, these stages can be

experienced, a fortiori, they must be experienced in order to be properly understood.

1. Animation
2. Sensual Life
3. Rational Life
4. Autarky
5. Ataraxia
6. Theoria
7. Theosis

Animation This refers to the vegetative soul, common to all life. Its characteristics are the nutritive, growth, and reproduction functions. Plants, fungi, and perhaps some lower animals have only the vegetative soul. It lacks consciousness. For higher beings it is the source of will and desire.

Sensual Life The sensitive or animal part of the Soul includes the powers of perception, sensation, and (willful) movement. It includes the external (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) and internal (imagination, common sense, estimation, memory) senses. It is also the seat of emotions.

Rational Life While the vegetative and sensitive souls are connected to the operations of the body, the rational or intellectual soul exceeds the corporeal nature. As such, it is unique to human beings. Its functions are reason, knowledge of universals, ability to choose the good.

Since the rational soul is not a corporeal function, it cannot be natural; hence it is above nature. This, however, does not mean that there is no dependence on bodily functions or brains. It does mean that there is no natural process, e.g., genetics or neuronal activity, that cause the knowledge of universals or virtue. Specifically, it could not have “evolved” by any biological process.

Interlude on sensual and spiritual man

But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged of no man.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-15

The three aspects of the soul do not work harmoniously in humans anymore. People are centred predominantly in one of the three parts of the soul. Even the rational soul is used in service to the needs and activities of the body, not for higher things. These are the characteristics of the three types of sensual people.

- **Vegetative Soul.** This being is attached to sensations, thrills, sex, food, etc. They are usually men of action. His main fault is not using the will for higher things.
- **Sensual Soul.** This being is dominated by emotions, and reacts emotionally. He is likely to be sentimental or romantic. At its worse, he will be angry, malicious, anxious, etc. It is difficult to get him to think logically.
- **Rational Soul.** His focus is thinking, calculating, researching. He is on a constant search for the next big idea, the next book, where

he believes he will find the ultimate answer. He will debate various verbal formulations. His fault is that he is unwilling to commit to a course of spiritual development; he would rather “know about” it rather than actually do it.

Those embedded in the sensual life don’t have a stable I, since it is driven by external factors: new experiences, emotions, new ideas. Most people prefer to live this natural life, unless some boundary situation or conversion experience pulls them out of slumber. At that point, they may be ready to embark on the true spiritual journey.

Autarky

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.

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Once a man has decided to transcend his natural life, the next two stages are critical. If he falters or fails at these stages, he will most likely be worse off than if he had never even begun a spiritual journey.

Autarky means to have dominion over one’s soul. The consciousness of the natural man is driven by forces external to him, so his life is inconstant. The task, then, is to be able to concentrate on one’s True Self. Then the psychological forces originating from below can be observed dispassionately. In the natural state, one’s attention is hijacked by impulses, emotions, ideas, that arise spontaneously. In the concentrated state, one then learns to monitor and detach from such impulses.

Now, the rational soul can exercise its true function. No longer in submission to corporeal life, it turns to knowledge of the universals and virtue. The practice of the virtues, which is basically inner power, will lead to the strengthening of the I.

Ataraxia After Autarky has been achieved, attention can be directed from the world of the senses to the spiritual world. This requires the “Zone of Silence”, which is the reduction, or even elimination, of the perturbations of the soul. These include the automatic movements of thoughts, images, passions, personal desires, and so on. In other words, this is the purification of the mind and will.

Ataraxia is the inner state of tranquility and mental calm. Complete trust in God replaces trust in the world. When the soul is silent, then authentic spiritual experiences may take place.

Theoria This stage is inaugurated when interest in the things of the world is replaced by the desire of knowing what is true in the supreme degree. Meditation is the means. Once skilled in Concentration, Meditation is the next step. Learn to focus on an idea, or image, or some spiritual writing. Block off some time for it. However, you will find that, throughout the day, the meditation will spontaneously come back to you. You may even receive deeper insights about the object of meditation.

Theosis

Contemplation is the science of love, which is an infused loving knowledge of God, and which enlightens the soul, and at the same time kindles within her the fire of love, till she shall ascend upwards step by step unto God, her Creator, for it is love only that unites the soul and God.

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS, *The Dark Night of the Soul*

When even the words and images used in Meditation drop away, the next stage is contemplation. Saint Augustine describes it as the vision and contemplation of truth. As such, it is reason united with divine revelation. Tomberg describes it this way:

Contemplation — which follows on from concentration and meditation — commences the very moment that discursive and logical thought is suspended. Discursive thought is satisfied when it arrives at a well-founded conclusion. Now, this conclusion is the point of departure for contemplation. It fathoms the profundity of this conclusion at which discursive thought arrives. Contemplation discovers a world within that which discursive thought simply verifies as “true”.

This is why we insist that discursive thought is insufficient to understand the highest ideas of our Tradition. At best, discursive thinking gives the illusion of spiritual knowledge and at worse, it degenerates into a Wittgensteinian language game.

Beyond this, I am not in a position to explain more. That is reserved to the Saints that Dante places in the Empyrean: Augustine, Benedict, Francis. They should be your guides.

Posted on 2020-08-13 by Cologero

* * *

Alan on 2020-08-14 at 01:05 said:

“Detract not the king, no not in thy thought; and speak not evil of the rich man in thy private chamber: because even the birds of the air will carry thy voice, and he that hath wings will tell what thou hast said.” = unceasing silence.

7.4 Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives

Cologero had mentioned this book², coincidentally, at the same time that I had stumbled across it myself, so I finally made the purchase, and finished reading it. I found it most helpful; Elder Thaddeus³ is simulta-

²<https://www.amazon.com/Our-Thoughts-Determine-Lives-Teachings/dp/1887904190>

³https://orthodoxwiki.org/Thaddeus_%28Strabulovich%29_of_Vitovnica

neously very strict (insofar as he sets out an arduous teaching⁴) and yet very compassionate, encouraging, and “human”: at one point, the man even had a cigarette problem, which he overcame, while in Kosovo at the Pech monastery. Elder Thaddeus was not a legalistic or judgmental man – what he was, most definitely, was a saint.

Apparently, Elder Thaddeus had several experiences with angels, one while wide awake in prison, in which a very tall man wearing an old military uniform with a strange gold cross came to him to assure him that the Nazis would not be executing him, because God had many in Serbia that needed comfort. He also experienced the prayer “in” or “by” the heart through the Jesus prayer, and attained all three levels of Orthodox mystical experience by the time of his death. At his funeral, the birds, of whom he had often spoken with love and admiration, came in great numbers.



Here are some important points of doctrine gleaned from his essays, topical sermons, and quotes (ie., these are points that are repeated in various contexts and ways).

1. Man is a spiritual being who is dominated by psychic delusion and bodily passions, which convince us that “we” need something that is superfluous.
2. This domination always occurs through the power of aerial spirits, which are fallen angels, who have access to man’s psychic constitution and long experience in manipulating man.
3. These spirits have varying degrees of wickedness, even among their own hierarchy.

⁴<http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/pdf/thaddeus.pdf>

4. They do this because they are lonely, fearful of the coming judgment, envious of man's special and privileged status, and because they also "feed" off the psychic energy derived from man's falling into sin. Each angel or spirit has their own "specialty".
5. Man has the power to resist this, primarily because these spirits cannot access or even see man's inner heart, and because God Himself intervenes very frequently to lead souls back to Him.
6. God knew that the original state of man would "fall", and that we would not be able to maintain our perfection; He therefore wisely and compassionately determined to use His own nature, and ours, in a synergistic way to overcome the fall, to lead back certain souls who remembered Him despite their sins, through their educative process back to a pristine condition.
7. This synergism is most boldly seen in the figure of Christ, who is the archetype or pattern for what will come after.
8. Mary the Theotokos is the pattern for what our love for God should be like. (I will speculate that this is primarily due to the lack of perfection in Christ, and the "feminine" nature of our soul in relation to its higher parts/God). Christ is the eventual pattern for our love, but Mary is chief among the saints.
9. Communion with angels and saints is necessary in order to achieve communion with God.
10. No evil spirit can touch someone who hasn't first harmed themselves. "We are the sole architects of our future".
11. Everyone without exception desires absolute life and love: humans are variously warped in their search for this.

12. Vigilance, eternal vigilance, is necessary to achieve a state of grace, and even to keep it. You must examine every thought that enters your inner heart.
13. Only through the descent of the higher part of the soul, the Nous, into the heart, can a state of illumination be achieved. This state can be prepared for, and God will grant it, but only when the time is right (ie., when someone has a chance of keeping it, and/or not abusing it for evil ends).
14. Obedience and vigilance are greater virtues than fasting and even prayer, unless the prayer comes from the heart (or, greater, is “of” the heart).
15. God will listen to any prayer from the heart, even if someone is very far from Him.
16. The evil spirits try very hard to separate children from parents, because this fracture of Tradition and custom accomplishes the loss of moral knowledge, spiritual truth, and the blessing that naturally adheres to filial obedience.
17. Men are “thought generators and receptors” : our thoughts have power and being – they influence us, and ours influence others:

Your thoughts are burdened because you are influenced by the thoughts of your fellow men. Pray to the Lord that He might take this burden from you. These are the thoughts of others which differ from yours. They have their plan, and their plan is to attack you with their thoughts. Instead of letting go, you have allowed yourself to become part of their plan, so of course you suffer. Had you ignored the attack, you would have kept your peace. They could have thought

or said anything at all about you, yet you would have remained calm and at peace. Soon all their anger would have died down, like a deflated balloon, because of the pure and peaceful thoughts that would have come from you. If you are like that, calm and full of love, if all you think are good and kind thoughts, they will stop warring against you in their thoughts and will not threaten you anymore. But if you demand an eye for an eye, that is war. Where there is war there can be no peace. How can there be peace on a battlefield, when everyone is looking over their shoulders and anticipating a surprise attack from the enemy?

18. Love comes from God, passion comes from evil spirits; men are constantly confusing and mixing the two. When we do this, evil predominates.

Addendum: So as not to cause those of the warrior caste to stumble, I point out that Orthodoxy does not have, as saints, exclusively Brahmins. There are warrior saints as well. There is an interesting tale mentioned by Elder Thaddeus in his book: the Turks once summoned at a parley the Serbs, and reproached them for not submitting to their rule, as their Christian faith should dictate (does this sound like secular humanists lecturing Christians on the faith?). They wanted to know by whose leave they fought, as Christians. The Serbs explained that the Lord commanded them to turn the other cheek as individuals, but that they were given a mission to guard those under their care, their families and small ones, so that by fighting in battle, they were doing double service to Christ in protecting and loving those under their responsibility.

Posted on 2013-04-12 by Logres

* * *

CaseyAnn on 2013-04-13 at 14:40 said:

Please, will you explain what you mean by “the lack of perfection in Christ”? I’m not sure to what you are alluding, but this specifically⁵ comes to mind.

Logres on 2013-04-13 at 22:05 said:

The Orthodox (I think?) would say that since Christ is Deity, we sometimes feel more alienated from Him than we should, due to His exalted condition and our sinful one; therefore, prayers to the saints and angels (particularly Mary) can be made as a way of approaching to Christ. Perfect love casts out fear, so someone who serves God as a son has Christ as an older brother, and is at the top of the three stages of progress. However, there are two others: 2) those who serve for the reward 3) those who serve as slaves, out of fear. The spirituality will look differently for each; on the one hand, all who believe are perfected in potential (and perhaps actually, if we take an eternal view). On the other, St Paul speaks of “Christ being formed in us”, and not wanting that to be marred or taken away prior to its (presumed?) perfection.

So, yes, if Christ grew in holiness, we would expect to have to do the same, to achieve greater perfections, although this is not precisely what I meant. Sinners advance analogously in terms of hierarchy, but not ontology, since He was born flawless to begin with.

But the over-arching analogy is valid, to the degree the difference is seen.

CaseyAnn on 2013-04-14 at 02:28 said:

Ah, I see I completely misread you. I read that as “Jesus Himself lacks perfection,” as opposed to “we lack perfection in Him.” Thank you for the clarification.

And yes, I’ve heard reliance on Mary’s intercession explained, based on Saint Louis de Montfort’s True Devotion to Mary, as that some souls experience shame when turning to Christ for mediation to the Father and, therefore, may seek Mary to mediate between them and her Son. I can understand the sense of being unworthy to approach His holy dignity, but the explanation certainly felt wrong, in terms of lacking.

Does that mean, then, that it is actually spiritually superior to “go straight to Jesus!” (ha), as opposed to through another mediator? Or does that depend on the spirituality (hierarchically) of the individual? It’s a curious speculation, as so many followers of the perverted forms of Christianity never, at any point, seek intercession from the angels and saints above.

Logres on 2013-04-14 at 06:15 said:

Casey-Ann, I would incline to the latter; although certainly the abuses of appealing to saints/angels have been highlighted during the Reformation and by its followers, it never seems

⁵<http://newtheologicalmovement.blogspot.com/2013/01/christ-did-not-grow-in-grace-or-in.html>

to have occurred to them at any point to wonder if the “Jesus alone” could have its own abuses, and if they were (perhaps) on balance worse. 1) Jesus is reduced to microscopic size (you see this in the casual attitude and secularism 2) He now has no family 3) no hierarchy exists. For many, you have to conclude that this is the actual appeal! They also lie and distort the teachings of liturgical Churches: there is a critical attitude with no charity or attempt to see the deeper meaning. This is an even worse sin.

If we follow Protestant logic, it's superior to go straight to God; but then again, it's superior to that to believe in no God at all, go straight to yourself. Of course, all this is is a perversion and misappropriation of Tradition's teachings, or “cheap grace”. In reality, it all depends on the inner state of the individual (which is not “relative” in the modern sense) as to what practices are appropriate to the “hidden soul”.

Thank you for the thoughtful comments.

Caleb Cooper on 2013-04-14 at 17:41 said:

The protestant desire to “go straight to God” makes me think of someone who knows that light is good and necessary for life, so they want to look straight into the the Sun and fly like Icarus directly to it.

St. Paul experienced what happens when one gets too close to the light of the Son; the result would be blindness, sunburn, and eventually incineration far before one even got close to the goal if one persisted in such a foolhardy course. “No one can see the face of God and live.” (though as Logres points out, the most common result for the protestant is that they instead substitute a reduced concept of God)

The Christian/Traditionalist ambition is to forge a spirit strong enough to survive seeing God face to face in love. It's a task more difficult than the analogous one of being able to build a spaceship capable of safely flying/burrowing safely all the way into the center of the Sun (which is an impossible feat for physical engineering).

(My soul apparently can't even reach the heart of God, let alone His beatific face. The height to which the soul can ascend is proportional to its density. When I ascend I can't get past what would correspond to the third chakra in God, because my soul's density is too heavy for it to go further. Such is my soul's current state; there is too much ‘ossified’ energy in my third chakra that interferes with energy rising up to and fully developing the heart chakra (a very common distortion of the soul in the modern world))

I also once had a very interesting experience when my spirit ‘woke up.’ It was very bizarre, seeing a me acting independently of its own volition. It put me in a safe sphere, and then proceeded to do something incredibly stupid; it tried to get forcibly back to Heaven by flying into the Light. Huge amounts of darkness began peeling off it as it ground against some invisible barrier. My spirit was quite persistent, but eventually it reached its limit and fell back down into the dark depths of the waters, which was an extremely unpleasant experience to come out of. It

was kinda funny afterwards though; “Great, my higher soul woke up, but it turns out that while he may be earnest he’s also a total moron.”

“Or does that depend on the spirituality (hierarchically) of the individual?”

As always, know thyself. Even for an individual it can change from occasion to occasion what is the appropriate way to access heaven. The key in all things spiritual is establishing resonance in the heart.

This is another reason besides shame why the saints and angels can be so useful: the distance between us and God/Christ is so great that we can have a hard time coming into resonance with them, while we may be more able to identify with certain saints or angelic beings.

While God’s power is greater, if we fail to tune in it’s less likely that this power will be activated, so it’s better to ask for intercession from a being whom we can achieve resonance with. And in coming closer to them we will eventually become closer to God, our soul slowly becoming stronger so we can some day stand before God under our strength. To throw out the saints and angels is to dispense with a valuable ladder that helps support us in our climb toward heaven.

CaseyAnn on 2013-04-16 at 18:12 said:

“The height to which the soul can ascend is proportional to its density... there is too much ‘ossified’ energy in my third chakra that interferes with energy rising up to and fully developing the heart chakra (a very common distortion of the soul in the modern world)”

Your last comment particularly resonated with my worry that the godlessness to which we are exposed in the modern world “distorts” our souls in an irreversible manner while on Earth. But all things are possible, so this cannot be, right?

I appreciate your lengthy reply.

CaseyAnn on 2013-04-16 at 18:23 said:

Logres, thank you. “Cheap grace” sadly explains it well. I read a strange comment by a Protestant once about Christians not having differing “net grace”; basically, his idea was that we are all equal in the amount of grace because it would be absurd to imagine grace as being granted in amounts, or something to that effect. This is to what he tried to reduce spirituality. And the conversation was about this very topic.

I think it exemplifies the 3 points you made, in that very order: “1) Jesus is reduced to microscopic size (you see this in the casual attitude and secularism 2) He now has no family 3) no hierarchy exists.”

zetjintsu on 2013-04-17 at 12:46 said:

@CaseyAnn: Indeed, have faith; “and Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26)

It is a common feeling that we have become irredeemably damaged goods, but behind this feeling is a rather egoistical belief that shows a lack of faith that God is the Almighty, the belief that our capacity for sin is more powerful than God’s capacity for a love which conquers and transforms all.

“Love never fails.” God’s love never fails. “Beloved, do not forget this one thing... God is not slack fulfilling His promises as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us; He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved.” (2 Peter 3:8) Can God fail to fulfill His will? This question and scripture can be a powerful meditation when you find your faith faltering and worry that your soul could be “distorted” in a manner irreversible by God’s grace.

Pray to the saints that you may have faith like unto theirs. Remember that the church father’s teach that faith is the foundation on which all else is built. Tradition is cooperation between heaven and earth, and faith is what opens our heart to divine grace and discernment of its will.