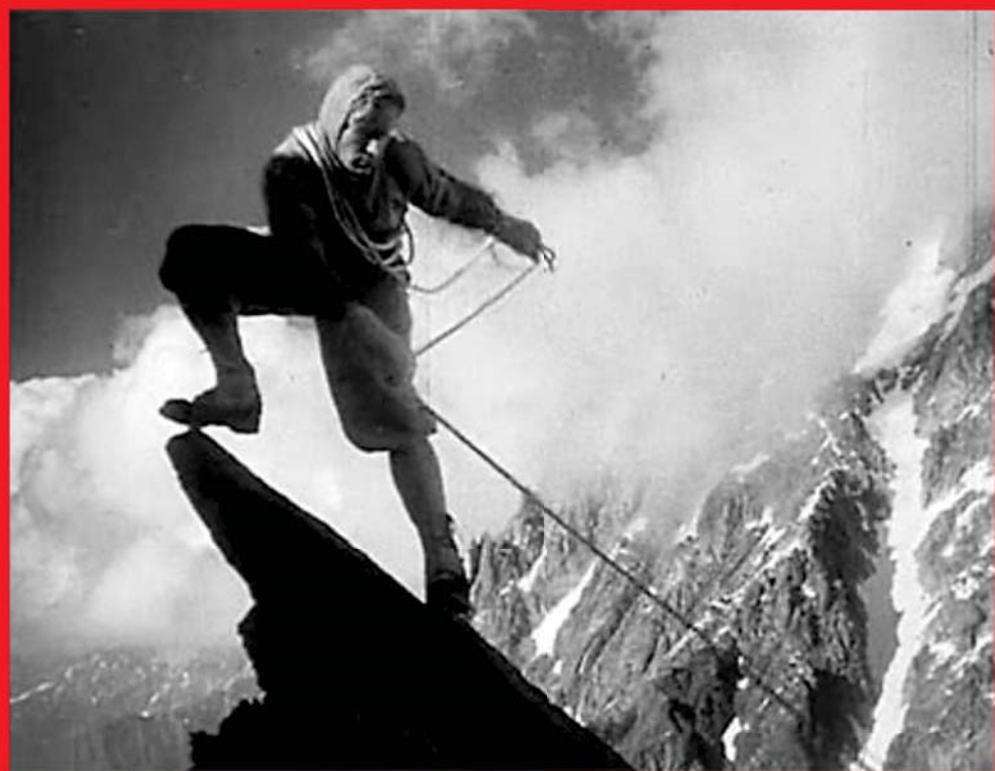


JULIUS EVOLA

THE MAN & THE WORK



ADRIANO ROMUALDI

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BOOKS



Note: For Evola's self-analysis of his own work see "The Path of Cinnabar"

ADRIANO ROMUALDI

Julius Evola: the man and the work

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This essay, published in 1968 for J. Evola's seventieth birthday, was soon sold out - demonstrating the fact that Evola's name, ignored by "official culture", represents something for an ever-increasing number of readers.

This second edition was therefore necessary, improved in form and increased by about twenty pages. I hope that - like the first one - it fulfills its task of guiding J. Evola's difficult and often intentionally misrepresented books.

This is the first and so far only study of Evola's work, which, if on the one hand it may be a source of a certain satisfaction for the author, on the other leads him to melancholy reflections on the fate of a non-conformist thinker in Italy.

This year Julius Evola will turn seventy. A date that no one will remember, which will go unnoticed, without toasts, without celebrations, without echoes in the press and the slightest resonance in the field of culture. Which might appear quite singular if one considers that Evola has twenty-five books to his credit, many of which have been reprinted and some translated into German, French and English, as well as numerous editions, translations, essays and scattered articles, all centered on the problems discussed in the main works.

But, in fact, who should remember an author who is so inconvenient and so isolated, so difficult to label and catalogue, extraneous to all the cliques, mafias and academies that in Italy, by ancient tradition, form "culture"? Not the "intellectuals", these incorrigible ignorant people who think in pigeonholes, and for whom Evola, who doesn't appear in

any pigeonhole, doesn't exist. Not the academics, these technicians of an increasingly short-sighted specialism, a pompous caste jealous of their techniques - almost the caste of the mummy embalmers of ancient Egypt. Not the Right, this Right to which Evola has provided over the course of his entire life an incomparable array of ideas, ideas, suggestions, but which has learned nothing, which does not want to learn anything and which nihilism and indifference, he made his flag.

Since the tragedy of Evola's work - if we want to use this word "tragedy" which would certainly displease the finely detached nature of our author - is that it fell into a deaf human environment, insensitive to its highest tasks and its vital ambitions. This explains how Evola's books perhaps had greater resonance in Germany, where a true Right existed, with not only political but also cultural cornerstones, than in Italy, where under the façade of fascism it continued to exist establish a culture of a liberal-democratic, if not even crypto-Marxist, brand. The "fascist culture", behind a façade of flattering homage to the Duce, to the Regime, to the Empire, remained a mixture of "patriotic" socialism, "national" liberalism and "Italian" Catholicism. With the fall of the Italy-Fascism identity, the traditional concept of homeland collapsed in 1943, the "patriotic" socialists became social-communists, the "national" liberals only liberals and the "Italian" Christian-democratic Catholics.

In reality, the notoriety of an author is linked to more or less favorable circumstances and cultural climates. This is how mediocre and very small artists become representatives of a certain era while important authors can be unknown for a long time. This is how Schopenhauer was ignored for more than forty years in the climate of Hegelian idealism, how Gobineau found his first readers in Germany after his death, how Nietzsche lived in complete obscurity in the leaden climate of positivism German.

In Italy, the lack of a true ideological conscience Right-wing logic has made Evola an isolated person, an author whose books circulate and sell, judging by the numerous reprints, but whose voice finds no resonance in any newspaper, in any academy, in any party.

Except in youth circles. Since this is the new fact, for many years now, while the older generations repeat more and more wearily the formulas of a patriotic, conformist, Catholic-like indifference, the national youth reads Evola. Through the Ghibelline myth it opened a path from the idea of nation to that of empire and Europe; beyond generic nationalism, Men and Ruins gave her a true conservative-revolutionary political conscience; beyond the twilight of Christianity, it projects its faith in that metaphysical realism whose cold splendor shines in the pages of books like Ride the Tiger.

In reality, every idea, every author, has its moment. The advanced minorities of the national forces have felt for years that the time has come for the Right to finally leave the sphere of indifferent sentimentalism to become a Weltanschauung, a vision of the world.

The time for absolute negations and absolute affirmations.

In short, Evola's time.

The youth phase: avant-garde art and poetry

The significance of Evola for the definition of a revolutionary content of the Right is derived from the whole of his work, which only partially contains historical or political formulations, but which in all its lines, in its particular ethos, places itself in absolute contrast with those modern ideas from which liberalism and democracy are deduced

This is not a true autobiographical book - since confession and autobiography are foreign to a man like Evola who has made his uniform a style of impersonality - but rather a guide through his books and the moments in which they were written.

Like other very young people of the years immediately preceding the world war, Evola was initially attracted by that sort of Sturm und Drang that formed around the magazines of Papini and Prezzolini and was associated with Lacerba and Futuristi. From them he draws the first ideas for a polemic against both the bourgeois and democratic as well as the interest for the German mystics, for the occult traditions, ideas that within these groups will remain youthful rebellion, intellectual tasting, fragment, while in him they will mature in synthesis and total discipline.

At seventeen he is mature enough to understand that the motivations suddenly accepted by these groups for calling for war on the Central Powers ("German barbarism", "the defense of civilization") are the quintessence of that bourgeois mentality and \neg democracy that they claimed to fight. He openly declares this to Marinetti, scandalizing him.

Despite his dissent, he leaves for the front and, not yet twenty years old, takes part in the war.

After the war the crisis in his personality worsened. For a nature like Evola, so foreign to the human to human of modern criteria and ideals, the problem is first and foremost that of escaping nihilism.

He wanted a revolt against the petite bourgeoisie, but also the desire to break the reality of the senses, the normal waking experience - the principle of that search for a superior freedom in a different dimension of being - remain as documents early works, poems and abstract paintings.

Evola's scattered poems - all dating back to the years between 1916 and 1922 - waited fifty years before coming out together in the collection *Ràaga Blanda*. They are in Italian or French, and some appeared in avant-garde magazines of the time. These are scattered illuminations, from which an uncommon talent shines through, even if in an amateur setting.

Some fragments give us like distant cosmic resonances (all these black crystals lost in the night - fallen fragments of distant worlds) experiences of the elemental (the metal rises slowly in its forest of white vertes). In others there is a sort of subtle opening towards natural phenomena; the dawn (In the east now the sky is diluted - it has rosy dissonances - while they slowly arrive dusty - fluted sounds), the moonlight on the fences (when the world is drunk by the night you are hypocrites veils still retaining a I remember the nakedness of the name of the moon -, the night (useless light, useless goal, useless will - my night, my bewitched

illness). Some noteworthy female portraits: She was so beautiful, so strong - and her gestures were without shadow - and purple like her eyelids -, or: The blond fire of your hair is the light of these little long lights.

They are, we have said, illuminations, which spread their light on that cultural landscape of the second decade of the 20th century, in which the modes and inflections of decadentism from the outset are crystallizing in a colder chromatism firm, metallic. The next work of Evola will consist in sublimating the yellow fires, blues of abstract art in the white and still lights of the great perennial fires of the traditional spirit.

In the same years, Evola lived the experience of abstract painting.

We write experience, in the most complete sense of the term, because in the eyes of the author, modernity presents itself as a kind of asceticism of the ego. So he writes in the essay *Abstract Art*:

The abstract consciousness, background of the ultimate aesthetics, is in fact linked to another level - almost to another dimension - of the spirit, which with that on which life takes place - from daily practical life and feelings - such to the life that finds echo in the 'great cries of tragic humanity' - has nothing to do; and the road that leads to it is hard and painful because along it it is necessary to burn everything that is usually worth to men as the most intimate and true life. If therefore one were to ask for a term of comparison, one could perhaps indicate it only in some mystics, for example in the atone and coldly ardent interiority of a Ruysbroek and an Eckhart. In abstract art, however, this atmosphere is not, as in these two figures, that of a uniform and solitary light, but

rather emanates solely from an incoherent set of dark, intimate, alarming vital states which, as if lost in a now diaphanous space, torrid hours, in which a sense of dream or delirium gradually transmutes and clarifies until a solar rarefaction, has sounds and motions that are inexplicable in themselves. A logic absolutely different from that of everyday life governs this sphere: in it all the most familiar or glorious lights become pale like the frail vegetation of the underground, the common will staggers there as if drunk, the words themselves give an incomprehensible meaning of a foreign language. It would seem that in it every reality disintegrates, pumped by extreme rarefaction, and returns to an elementary chaos 'dry and ardent, ardent and monotonous'. But to him who has fully penetrated nature of abstract art, it appears that this incoherence, this madness is nothing but an appearance, behind which lives in a metallic luminosity the sense of the absolute freedom of the Ego...

The paintings are framed in the context of the Dadaist movement, of which Evola met the inspirer Tristan Tzara, and which then spread suggestive slogans such as “We seek straight, pure, sober, absolute strength, we seek nothing” or “What is divine in us is the awakening of anti-human action.”

Evola's artistic activity did not go beyond 1921, beyond the age of twenty-three, but it left such a clear imprint that it is still remembered in Italian and foreign works on the Dadaist movement, while a painting by Evola has been recently – carefully placed in the modern art gallery in Rome.

Evola is far from hiding this activity of his as "a sin of youth", but he was keen to point out that "the person who wrote those paintings and wrote those poems is dead".

However, anyone who looks at the paintings or reads the poem *Le parole obscure du paysage intérieur*, written in French for the Collection Dada, will not have the impression of being faced with an unknown Evola. Paintings and poem integrate with each other and contribute to revealing to us the color, the lyrical aspect of Evola's world, an aspect which the author, with the severity towards himself that distinguishes him, has truncated soon every means of autonomous expression but which continued to live behind all subsequent works. It is the silent emergence of symbols and figures on an intellectual horizon that will soon become that of the main books.

There we find that "atonic or coldly ardent interiority" of a Ruysbroeck, of an Eckhart, which Evola indicates in the essay *Abstract Art* as terms of comparison. Globes the color of red-hot iron or magnetically green like copper acetate burn with unreal light under devastated skies; cylinders rotate like workshops blazing in the night; forms of light ascend into the blue while turbid clouds of fire gush from below. It is a powerful vision of the elementary captured through the language of geometric shapes in an invisible space that generates the visible one, similar to the Platonic hyperurium or the Goethean world of mothers. Looking at Evola's paintings - as well as certain testimonies of futurism - one understands how the scenario of the modern world was taken up by certain elites of the early 20th century as a symbol of denudation and purification. They are elites who leave behind the bourgeois rubbish of the nineteenth century and hasten towards a "new objectivity", which they believe they will find in Bolshevism, or in fascism, or in Nazism. The Jungian formulations of *Der Arbeiter* are valid for them: "At least

in certain partial glimpses the 20th century already presents a greater purity and decisiveness of lines... We begin to have a sense of the high temperatures, of the cold geometries of the lights and the incandescence of the metal. The landscape becomes more constructive and more dangerous, colder and hotter; in it the last remnants of the "nice" and cordiality that left there to the soul." Only one painting is not abstract, the portrait of an Austrian prisoner, a memory of the front. The face is geometrized and stylized; the eyes look cold and clear under the fringe of hair that escapes from the cap, the facial muscles appear hardened, almost petrified above the collar of the feldgrau coat. An image that recalls the words of Ernst Junger of the "metallic type" of the fighter of the great war.

The Dadaist poem *La parole obscure du pay-sage intérieure* appeared in 1920 in 99 numbered copies and was reprinted in 1963. Here too we find those illuminations spread in the paintings against the background of an intellectual game of this class.

The poem is recited by four voices, each of which represents a component of the interior landscape. The Ngara element is will, the Lilan element is feeling, Raaga is disinterested contemplation, and Hhah is disinterested abstraction: they are four simultaneous aspects of Evola.

Blood in the formation of hyperbole: this extravagant poetic statement contains the symbolic teaching of this first message from Evola, the message of a human nature that has its roots in a need for transcendence and the whose blood wants to crystallize in a form capable of containing the infinite.

At twenty-three, Evola definitively closed his career with painting and poetry. In reality, he had always considered very modern art not an exhibition but an experience, a descent into the depths of the ego, a journey into the infernal land of the elementary.

Evola's destiny was not that of someone who grows old and becomes rich on "avant-garde" positions, nor his revolt that of the bohemian and progressive of weak spirits in search of dubious Freedom. While the Dadaists and his friend Tristan Tzara grow old in rebelliousness, waiting to end up in the communist garbage dump, Evola will make his nihilistic discipline the basis for the affirmation of positive values.

The philosophical period

I can only say I am absolutely certain of those things whose principle and causes I have within me, as unconditional freedom, according to the function of possession; in the others, only of what in them satisfies this condition. The process of knowing and that of absolute self-realization, of the elevation of the individual to universal lord, now fall into the same point, from which it also appears to be the principle of error and of darkness nothing more than that of impotence.

(“Essays on magical idealism”, pg. 42)

After the artistic period, 1915-1920, comes the philosophical period, 1920-1925. It is a relative chronology, because the drafting of the Theory and Phenomenology of the absolute individual dates back to the war years. Actually that "atone and coldly ardent interiority" that shines through from the paintings and the poem is the reflection of the categories, of the powers, of the states of shadow and light, of privation and sufficiency, which are discussed in philosophical works.

The impulse to give a philosophical form to one's intuition of the world - and with how much rigor, what culture and what seriousness those who have prepared to read the two large volumes of Theory and Phenomenology know - arises in Evola from own eminently logical nature, capable even of an intoxication of lucidity, which however never descends into intellectualism, but tends to become an Olympian will for self-formation.

Then there is the adolescent's meditation on three authors who were decisive for his education: Nietzsche, the poet of the superman,

Weininger, the founder of the concept of virility as a metaphysical essence and Michelstaedter, this tragic and precocious thinker who is still so little known.

The juxtaposition of these last two names immediately shows that Evola's Nietzscheanism is not the easiest and most aestheticizing, but a dramatically serious need to find a more than human dimension to one's dissatisfaction with the world. Anyone who considers that Nietzsche died mad, that Weininger and Michaelstaedter committed suicide at a very young age, approximately at the same age in which Evola wrote about philosophy, will understand what precipices he walked alongside, and how his task was to heal, with a break in level, what in these bold precursors had remained tragic dualism and the experience of the absurd. Finally, there is the approach based on idealism in its German sources, undertaken in controversy with the feeble re-elaborations of Italian neo-idealism, and the resumption of the original requirement of this philosophy.

Evola's philosophy is precisely a criticism of idealism that arises from the same cognitive premises of idealism, considered absolutely valid.

As is known, idealism states that the resistance of an external world, of an object, is not thinkable outside the act of the subject who knows it. Space, time, causality are, as Kant had shown, categories, that is, forms of the mind, and not really existing properties of the world and things. The world, that is, the object, remained as a dark residue, an unspecified "thing in itself", present among the meshes of the forms of knowing. The idealist philosophers went even further, identifying in the object, in the world, an internal limit of the subject, that is, of the Ego, a moment of its development by degrees of consciousness.

It was evident that this Ego could not be identified with the normal Ego of the single individual, who would thus find himself having created the world, a quite ridiculous statement in itself. For this purpose, idealistic philosophy fabricated the transcendental ego, a kind of super-ego of the world, distinct but coinciding with the individual egos, attributing to it, beyond the "abstractness" of the various personal egos, "the concreteness of spirit", "historicity", and the like.

Evola rejects the transcendental ego as a bad copy of the Christian god or nature, and complaint in the forced rationalization of reality, a form of evasion, say "rhetoric", in the sense that Michaelstaedter had given to this term:

While the realist from not being caused by me as an absolute will infers that it is not caused by me in any way, but rather by another, not giving any thought whatsoever except between being caused according to my will and not to be completely caused by me there is a third possible term - being caused by me according to spontaneity; the absolute idealist uses the same paralogism, but to infer from being caused by me according to spontaneity to a being caused by me absolutely, according to free will, which is manifestly sophistical. - It is one thing to represent, another to want; it is one thing to say that the world is my representation, another that the world is my will. One is the negative limit, bound with respect to itself, the other the positive limit, free with respect to itself, of the genre of activity. Instead, the absolute idealist mutates these limits from one to the other, carelessly erasing with that 'differential of spontaneity' whose symbol is the brute necessity and resistance of natural things, the entire interval... How can we therefore not see at the heart of this doctrine the same reason that generated realism, that is: sloth, impotence and

tiredness of the will? Like the realist, the absolute idealist escapes the act. The realist relieves himself of the task by inventing the other and presupposing there the being which he lacks, which is too strong for him; the idealist instead frees himself from it through rhetoric and lies, pretending in the discursive act the real or magical act, in the ego as knowledge the ego as sufficiency and power".

Evola distances himself from both conventional ways with realist objects (God, matter), and from the rhetoric of Fichtian, Hegelian and Gentile idealism. Saying God or nature, spirit or transcendental ego, is all one. For those who have thought deeply about the idealistic adoration of the ego as the only certainty, of which all other "realities" are nothing more than perceptions, images and concepts, these terms are just big questions raised by the practical insufficiency of the ego in most of its representations. Nothing is demonstrable outside of this self from which I view the world: not the God of the priests, nor the matter of the positivists, which - by definition - should occupy space, but be made up of indivisibles (atoms).

Nothing is demonstrable: the contradictions of realism, theological or positive, are insurmountable, but also those of absolute idealism with its ego that freedom and spontaneity at the same time, spiritus sive natura.

And yet Evola holds firm to the cornerstones of idealism: "saying that something is not caused by me is not the same as saying that it is caused by something else... This which is not caused by me nothing more than that it is not caused by me, that is, simply, a privation." And again: "not having said that the limitation of my causality requires a cause... one can instead conceive that what is limited and imperfect already has a degree

of positivity and is at the beginning, and that the absolute is not its negation , but rather the further development, the act..."

The ego must not escape its own insufficiency and deprivation, it must accept the solipsism that lies at the bottom of idealism and take upon itself the weight of the world. He must feel, not abstractly, but as if in a flash that dazzles him to the deepest fibers, that the ego that evoked the world is himself, that the boundaries of his ego are not identical to those of the normal waking experience, that "I am another". He must understand that the world is a crystallized hypnosis to which escaped by awakening from the world of the senses with a discipline of the mind. He must feel that the real will become rational only when the mind has not only the faculty of conceiving, but also of transforming things, since reality is the position of an ego that is not different from me and "the error it is a weak truth and the truth is a strong error.

Mere representative activity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the reality of things, given that these things are referred to an Ego. I can say that I have posed things, but insofar as they are spontaneity, not freedom. Now to say that I, as I and sufficient principle, autarches, cannot recognize myself as the unconditional cause of representations (see of nature), does not mean at all that these representations are caused by something else (by things real or existing in themselves), but, simply, that I am insufficient for a part of my activity, which is still spontaneity - that such a part is not yet "moralized", that the Ego, as freedom, suffers in it a "privation ". Hence realism, as has been said, must be rejected pour une end de non recevoir. When then can the principle of idealism, that the Ego posits things, truly be affirmed? When the individual has transformed the dark passion of the world into a body of freedom, when he has made the form according to which he experiences representative activity pass from spontaneity, from a

coincidence of reality and possibility, to unconditioned, arbitrary causality, to power.

Rationality, certainty, in Evola's thought, is identified closely with power. In reality, I only know what I am the cause of. While I know the reason for my every act free, at the very moment in which I discard every other act, in the face of external events, of other selves, of the laws of nature themselves, all that remains for me is to observe.

We can study the frequencies and modalities of phenomena but even the most rigid law always remains a "habit of things", according to Boutroux's definition, a contingent apparition whose original meaning escapes us. Kant, while not pronouncing on the noumenon, had posited the universality of the categories and the certainty of scientific truths as synthetic a priori judgments. But the anti-positivist criticism, which established itself starting from the end of the 19th century, has undermined the scientific dogmas. Thus, one Hannequin subjected the concept of the atom to revision; Riemann and Lobatschewsky investigated hyperspace and non-Euclidean systems; not to mention Poincaré's non-Euclidean geometries; of the criticism of Boutroux's concept of law of nature; or, finally, of the criticisms of the rationality of the human intellect itself advanced by Rougier and Abbagnano.

There is therefore a whole set of facts that shatters the Kantian "possible experience". Space, time, causality, the laws of nature no longer appear to us other than as contingencies among other contingencies. Evola, challenging the scandal of official philosophy, is not afraid to refer to the results of the most advanced positive analysis in matters of the supersensible. There is a whole series of psycho-physical phenomena, deviating from normality but, nevertheless, studied and ascertained, and

which, due to the fact of resorting to ethnology or psychology copathology, however, are enough to blow up the paintings of the Erfahrung wife.

He cites the Osty study - La connaissance supranormal — inspired by the most austere positivity. Osty tries to portray himself as an individual which brings together the psychopathological phenomena found by science among different people:

His body would be penetrable to consciousness right down to the intimacy of its tissues and the vicissitudes of its becoming. At every instant the succession of events constituting the plot of his individual life, both here and there from the point present, would be representable in the ordinary way of memories. Birth and death, no more than the field of his direct or indirect sensorial perception, would not confine the horizon in space and time. He would know a part of the content of the ground on which he would walk: the human beings encountered with their mere presence would reveal to him their thoughts in the moment, the secret of their intellectual, mortal, organic personality, that of their life of relationships and the knowledge of their environment, beings and things. According to the circumstances and movements of his own thought and that of others, he would reconnect in space with people known and unknown to him and would gain, to a certain degree, knowledge of their personality and their life. He would be aware of the details of a scene taking place at a great distance. By applying his strange psychic power on what we call time, he would trace the course of human generations, approaching any era or scene of the past... He would know the virtuality that the future will realize.. Such a man is a logical possibility, since it would ultimately be nothing other than the multiform manifestation of the latent psychic potential, of which the different phenomenal forms have been found scattered.

The real problem for the ego is that of recovering the scattered limbs of its power. This alone is the criterion of knowledge, of certainty, of morality.

They are inseparable from the presence of the Ego to itself. There is no science without the internal knowledge of the phenomena, nor certainty without the possibility of producing that specific manifestation, nor morality where the Ego cannot make its own law. Everything else is obliquity, rhetoric, obscurity, fear.

Given that the Ego is the absolute Subject - outside of which nothing exists - and that the Object crystallizes through a hallucination of the Ego which fails to itself, how can the Ego redissolve the Object — that is, the world — in the living fire of its combustion?

True rationality is the gradual reintegration of the ego into its profound and original dimension, the education of the ego to find itself through a logic that is no longer philosophical, but physical, psychic, through an ascetic type of discipline: "In the tireless, endless wheel of Brahman wanders, tepidly, the individual because and as long as he feels the lord of the wheel as other than him: but at the point of his recognition in that I who eternally turns the wheel, he immediately realizes the peace of immortality" (Shvetashvatara Upani-shad, 1, 6).

The unconditioned, the absolute, which is dispersed within the limited and the conditioned to unfold its own freedom, perennially rises from it in a story of privation and domination that burns like the Heraclitan fire but is the echo of a still eternity:

The spirit is nothing other than the infinite energy that reaffirms itself on all those forms in which it coagulates and determines undermines its power, it is none other than the Heraclitan purity, the creative and dissolving blaze, which resolves every reality into the absolute, unnameable splendor of the center which entirely possesses itself, of the one who is an entity of power. And since it has been demonstrated that everything can be said to be known according to an absolute knowledge only to the extent that in it one can understand the expression of a gesture of power, the entire system of the world, in its splendors as well as in its series, in the infinity of its becoming vibrated in ever new forms, beyond all space and all time, represents nothing other than the phenomenon of the absolute point of freedom which has been desired in autarky. Such is the absolute Individual, the Persuaded: closed in his simple and immobile unity, he takes pleasure in it and rests there, loving himself alone and creating everything he creates for this solitary love...

Every phenomenon proceeds from him and is consumed in him, as in the transcendent power which, as unconditioned negativity, strikes in the eternal synthesis of absolute possession. This electrocution, is nothing other than this, the individual, from which man, who is insufficient for the terrible splendor of his own center, loves to escape as if from the point of absolute death.

Unfortunately, we must limit the discussion on Evola's philosophical books to these brief notes. But those who have a somewhat hasty opinion of Evola, linked to "mythological" impressions,

"Occultisms" communicated to them by some of the later works, they would do well to take a look at Theory and Phenomenology. They would find there a speculative rigor, a wealth of concepts and solutions that would be the envy of more than one contemporary philosopher.

If you consider that these books were written by a young man of not even twenty-six years old (they were already finished in 1924), the comparison with the young Schelling comes naturally.

They will find there a thought that has fused the systematic needs of idealism with the rich suggestions of French personalism (Lachelier, Secretan, Lagneau), the criticism of the science of a Boutroux and a Renouvier and the theme of same existentialism, then still unknown, without that satisfaction with the crisis that is characteristic of existentialism. One could even write that, from a certain point of view, these books are those in which Evola left the strongest trace of his genius, and certainly he senses a distracting tension behind them.

A small resonance, the philosophical thought of

Evola had it. Croce judged the Essays on Magical Idealism to be "well framed and precisely reasoned" and Tilgher included one of his writings in an anthology of contemporary Italian philosophers. He later had to regret that "he was lost."

But Evola had significantly preceded the Essays on Magical Idealism with this sentence by Lagneau:

Philosophy is the reflection resulting in recognizing one's own insufficiency and the need for an absolute action starting from within. It is to this "absolute action springing from within" that he will henceforth dedicate his efforts and meditation.

Man as power

Now the function of the mind, as the power of knowing, is a restoration of the original identity, it is a reduction to what appears other than itself, it is a resuscitation in things that are nothing more than degrees of consciousness made the light opaque to oneself of the conscience itself which is found in it as if buried or coagulated".

("Man as power, pg. 133)

To understand Evola's subsequent choices, we must keep in mind his nature, which is characterized by an absolute need for coherence and authenticity. It will be worth noting that Evola never conceded anything at all to the surrounding world: he detached himself early from any family affection; he refused to get a degree, despite having completed the corresponding studies, out of contempt for official qualifications; he never married or worked in an office, never belonged to any political party or cast his vote in any election.

From this point of view, he is a person like few others, and all this without any rebellious exhibitionism.

Avant-garde art had been an experience for him, and so was philosophical production: "establishing oneself" as an artist or philosopher was the least of his worries for him. On the advanced lines of the artistic avant-garde, as on the fiery frontier of magical idealism, one could not stop, much less sit, perhaps in a chair and with a salary.

Most identify with a certain position achieved, others want to be more than seem like something, and seek themselves beyond their works. Evola belongs to the latter.

The decisive turning point towards the world of ancient spiritual traditions, of ascetic techniques, the world of mysteries and initiations takes place in Evola due to that aspiration for a greater freedom how human that had manifested itself in him at a very young age. It is in no way a form of escape, but a way of manifesting that impulse towards rationality - that is, towards the conscious dominion of the body and soul that his philosophy had dictated to him.

In fact, for those who have followed Evola's iron logic for the seven hundred, dense pages of *Theory and Phenomenology*, a consequence imposes itself: the Ego must make itself sufficient for the totality of its representation. That is to say: this world that I find myself in front of was not created by any God other than me, nor by "nature" or "matter", which do not exist; therefore I must reabsorb it entirely into my consciousness and my power.

For those who have understood that the World is nothing but an area of the Ego darkened by its ignorance, it is nothing more than “a derivative of which the magical action must make the integral, returning it to the function”.

Evola turns decisively towards this action in *Man as Power* where he studies one of the most important Hindu disciplines: Tantra.

Like all Indian wisdom traditions, Tantras deny any dualism between God and nature, man and world. Tat tvam asi: this is you, the Upanishads had said. This new world, this universe that surrounds you, is identical with Bhraman, the Divinity, and all of this is none other than you, yourself. It is maya, the cosmic illusion, which clouds the Subject with its veil by contrasting it with an Object. In the Object, the Subject no longer recognizes itself, due to that shattering of its omnipotence born from the terror of its infinity itself, or from a denial of its infinitude in which a moment of its pure, infinite freedom is reaffirmed. Every causal explanation is, ultimately, mythical (the "fall") and linked to one of the most fleeting categories: time. It is important to go back through action and reintegration to the internal meaning of this duality.

Hegel had believed he could liquidate the Weltanschauung of India as the stage in which the spirit is still "in itself", "idealism of being" (des Daseins), indifference of spirit and nature. His judgment is echoed in clichés about Indian pantheism. In reality, it is something else entirely: maya is not the amazed indifference of Subject and Object, but a particular condition that the Subject finds itself undergoing. The Tantras, more explicitly than any other school, affirm that the world is maya with respect to brahman with respect to the Divinity but it is reality with respect to the individual. Liberation without power is a joke:

The world, metaphysically, is maya: but this does not mean that it is a pure non-being, but rather that it has the principle of its own existence not in itself, but in something else; it is therefore maya when considered separately as something that exists by its own virtue; assumed instead as a çakti, it is absolutely real, since it expresses that in which the same supreme power is affirmed and benefits. The Augustinian can be connected to this: 'He is in such a way that in relation to him things done are not; do not refer to him, I am; refer to him, they are not'; and,

beyond this, the four dogmatic truths of the Mahayana: ', 'it is not', 'appearance is true', 'emptiness is true', which precisely expresses the idea that, considered in itself itself, the world is not, considered instead in relation to that spiritual principle than in relation to the material plane and factious must be indicated as empty and therefore not considered in itself, but rather as a manifestation, there is a being and it is true.

The criterion of reality is the degree of power, that is, awakening of the spirit. A spirit that has nothing to do with faith, morality, religion. Rather, it becomes identified with an indomitable will that uses a psycho-physical technique.

First of all, the dominion of that phenomenon among phenomena which is the body. It must be achieved starting from the two central ganglia: the breath and the mind.

The dark power of life by which man passively lives is centered in the function of breathing. To breathe is to live, and to stop breathing is to die. Commanding the breath in this all schools agree is practicing taming death: “Just as beasts can only be tamed gradually, so too can breathing: otherwise it becomes deadly for the practitioner” (Candilya -Upanishad). Breathing education, which in some confirmed cases of fakiri leads to the suspension of respiratory function for entire days, is a fundamental preparatory measure.

The recovery of the mind goes in parallel with the education of breathing.

Against the idealistic rhetoric of the <<thinking subject>>, Evola points out that the ego, rather than thinking, is thought by a continuum of images that he does not control. Already perception is nothing but passivity, reception of external impressions. Like samsara, the universal current of becoming drags blinded human creatures with it from desire thus the maya, the bundle of images of which the world of man consists. clouds the mind.

The important thing is to come to understand that external images have no greater degree of necessity than dreams and hallucinations of the mind. The difference is only quantitative: "a reality is a powerful and constant hallucination just as a hallucination is a weak and fleeting reality".

A "reality" only exists relatively to the different stages of being, that is, to the degrees of power of the mind. «Fire burns for those who let themselves be burned»: as ethnology has widely demonstrated, there are primitives who, after having saturated themselves with an adequate psychic charge, pass unscathed onto bras braziers capable of incinerating their feet at the mere contact. On the other hand, hypnotism eloquently shows us how our perception of reality is at the mercy of the modifications of the mind. Wirklichkeit ist wirken, Schelling had said: "the essence is its action". And the Tantratattva (I, 309-10): «All the forms that manifest themselves in life, matter, senses and mind are expressions of atma (the spirit). But âtma (spirit) is çakti (power), and çakti is âtma":

It's just a way of saying that fire has the power to burn. In reality, fire exists as the power to burn and the power to burn is fire. Hence those profound words of Meister Eckart: "You will not say that it is the coal that burns you, when it burns you, but nothingness is the cause of this:

since the coal only burns you as something that you do not possess; if instead you possessed its nature, all the fire that has ever blazed could do nothing to you. This nothingness that is connected to you, this is your imperfection, this is what burns in hell. It is this nothingness that you must purify yourself of.

Evola poses the equation, power = reality = sufficiency. The concentration of the mind contemplated by the yogic disciplines tends to remove it from its condition of passivity.

It must detach itself from things, concentrating at will now on this one, now on that. In this way, perception is removed from its oblique, dark, irrational roots and projected into an absolutely clear and dominated space. To those who succeed in this, the image of the world will increasingly appear as something perfectly free and mastered. Then the dream experience will also re-emerge purified from its conditioned character:

The Ego, having created itself on a higher and indifferent level with respect to that of becoming sensitive, remains conscious even where this perception fails, that is, in sleep. And this is the first magical realization. The epithet of "Awakened One" to the Buddha has not only a symbolic but a literal value. In sleep, reduced to pure, undifferentiated light of knowledge (ananta-jyotih), it later resurfaces, and the world takes shape as a result of samskara, in a new kind of dream, essentially and entirely active, purified and autonomous.

The ego, freed from the hypnosis of the senses, now sees the world as a dream of its freedom. Contemplating it, he understands that phenomenal

reality is nothing but the projection of his hidden powers, and the categories stages of the mind. According to the profound saying of the Kashmir Tantras: "what appears on the outside appears so only because it exists on the inside".

What is required here is a great purity of will and imagination, a capacity for detachment that allows the world to continue to manifest itself as it is, in crystalline light, without the world emerging from the ananta-jyotih being clear. how a full moon is not deformed by subjective decisions that would block the way to further realizations. It is the "translucent" of Kabbalah, a prelude to that re-emergence of the world in its potential that traditions call "astral light". Exteriority is experienced internally, necessity understood as freedom.

But here a new qualitative leap is needed. The Ego must renounce itself, the liberated world, for new goals of purity and freedom.

Since Being, Law, Order are also limits, like Non-Being, Chaos and Disorder. And goodness is not only an attribute of the Divinity, it is also a limit. Evola recalls the characters that Tantrism recognized as belonging to the svehaccari, to the Liberated One, to the one for whom his own freedom is the law. He is the lord of good and evil, the one for whom the supreme value is the indifference of contents in the face of the formal imperative of freedom. In this light, even Evil, even crime take their moment of positivity as proof, an infringement of a norm which is a limit.

The last instance of the Liberated is that background of pure indeterminacy compared to which even God is a non-value since *deitas est do minatio dei* is a burning. It is as the Gnostic master says: "In as

much as you dissolve everything and are not yourselves dissolved, you are the Lords of all creation and of all corruption”:

The possession that in the body of 'signs', of dizzying fixities, is relentlessly grasped by breaking at the root, shaping, liberating, exasperating itself at the pinnacle of itself up to a world in which everything that is motion is in the form of its transcendence, in an immobility saturated with frightening tension, in blazes of ice, in enchanted chasms, in magical spatiality's; -such a pinnacle, in which all the power of the antecedent is burned, such a pinnacle feels its mediation dissolve, free itself, overturn, become an instrument no longer of possession but of appearing, of flashing all around of the kingdom of those who are universals correlative precisely to the new order, terrible powers that fix the individual, almost immense weights in the imminence of precipitation...

This life which is all an overflow, all an incessant coming out of itself in an inexhaustible richness of unexpected leaps, of leaps out of form and identity in the intoxication of ecstasy, of change, of ubiquity like flashes in which however naked and fixes an eternal intoxication; this life without weight, place, support, all new, made of simultaneous acts, immense current of spirit that captivates and transports beings almost in an exaltation that affirms and denies them, this life is the body of the Lord of formative fixities .

He draws himself from the moment of his highest vertigo, where the vortex becomes center, immobile, detached act, identical in extreme intensity, self-transcendence of its movement itself, of mutation itself.

Whoever reads Evola's writings dedicated to ascetic teachings, to the techniques of liberation from the human, will perhaps be frightened by them, will perhaps find that so much heroism is not his, that such a harsh and arduous and implacable discipline, it is the business of a few, and therefore perhaps useless.

But even those who haven't felt it for a long time will not waste their time considering, at least once, this different dimension of the world, as every now and then it is useful to measure the millennia of light and the distant stars with one's gaze. And even if he does not follow the Path, the sense of a new depth of life and being will remain in him:

The masters of ancient times were free and seers. In the vastness of the forces of their spirit the "I" was not yet; and this spontaneity of inner strength gave grandeur to their appearance. They were as cautious as one wading in a winter stream; alert like someone who knows the enemy is around them; elusive as melting ice; rough as unhewn wood; vast as the great valleys; impenetrable like murky water. Who, today, with the greatness of their light, could clear up the inner darkness? Who, today, with the greatness of their life, could reanimate internal death? In those was the Way. They were individuals, lords of the Self, and their absence was resolved in perfection.

This phrase by Lao-Tze, translated by Evola and included as a motto in Revolt against the modern world, communicates to us the sense of a greatness that is perhaps inimitable but which, once sensed, forces us to measure all values against it.

The doctrine of awakening

And he reaches the wonderful path produced by the intensity, constancy and concentration of the will, the wonderful path produced by the intensity, constancy and concentration of the soul, the wonderful path produced by the intensity, constancy and the concentration of the exam and fifthly heroic soul... And this man, having thus become fifteen times heroic, is capable, oh disciples, of liberation, capable of awakening, capable of achieving incomparable security".

(Majjhima-nikayo, LII-II, 26)

His heart suddenly felt pervaded by sacred enthusiasm and his whole mind opened up, pure, clear, shining like the luminous disk of the moon: and the entire truth appeared to him.

(Mahaparinirvana-sūtra, 52-56)

On the path of the spiritual sciences, Evola will stop from time to time to analyze the different traditions, the underground veins in which ancient buried teachings shine.

An evocative document of this excavation work are the three volumes of the Introduction to Magic, a collective work of the members of the Ur Group, but of which Evola is the editor, inspirer and coordinator. This « Ur group >>> which also proposed operational objectives was active in Rome from 1926 to 1929, publishing this vast, compelling overview of its interests in installments. Magic appears there as a "science of the ego", conscious action and operational technique, as opposed to mediumistic or mystical attitudes. It is a collection of great interest which gives a complete picture of the life of the spirit and where, alongside the categories of the conscious and the unconscious, to which the sinister

inversions of psychoanalysis claim to reduce the horizons of the personality, there is room for those forms of super-personal knowledge known to traditional sciences.

Always dedicated to the exploration of the "powers of the soul", is The Hermetic Tradition, a unique study of its kind on that initiatory trend perpetuated in the Middle Ages under the veil of alchemical research. Nigredo, or the killing of normal individuality; the albedo, the ecstatic, lunar opening towards the light that rains from above; and finally the rubedo, the transfiguration into pure fire, pure active force, are the three moments with which the "gold" of the origins is found. The book, translated into French, attracted the attention of C. G. Jung.

The rendering into modern Italian of *Il libro magico de li Heroi*, by Cesare della Riviera, fits into the same context. It is a seventeenth-century text that demonstrates how under the veil certain teachings were perpetuated even in times of strict Catholic orthodoxy. The Heroes" are those who manage to overcome the initiatory tests and become similar to the Gods; mahavira, great heroes is precisely the term that in India was applied to the most sublime ascetics.

A few years later Evola will research the same initiatory thread in the legends of the Grail. Otto Rahn, an enigmatic character, member of the SS, who committed suicide in mysterious circumstances in his *Kreuzzug gegen das Grail*, had already seen the bloody repression of the Albigensian heresy as a "crusade against the Grail". Evola, although not sharing this hypothesis, shows how in the myth of the Grail, elements of Celtic legend and ancient Nordic-Atlantic warrior initiations resurface under a thin veneer of Christian symbolism. In *The Mystery of the Grail* and the Ghibelline imperial idea, the Grail appears as a "secret religion of chivalry" and a sort of mysticism of the Empire against the Church.

Evola's excursions into that domain led to occult tricks and spiritual sciences have offered easy weapons to his adversaries who believed they could discredit him as a fantastic and amateurish spirit. It may happen that you hear Evola spoken of as a "theosophist", a "spiritualist" by people who don't understand much about these things.

Yet, no one has distanced himself as clearly as Evola from any theosophical and spiritualist pathos, except perhaps Guénon in *Le Théosophisme* and *L'Erreur spirite*. He did it in a book that dates back to 1932, but is still relevant, *Mask and face of contemporary spiritualism*.

The defendants are theosophy, with its fantasies; anthroposophy, with its mixture of serious and evolutionary-humanitarian knowledge; spiritualism, with its fearful soul infections, but also psychoanalysis, some < return to Catholicism. all those forms in which a soft spiritualism claims a superior dignity.

Evola shows how spiritualism is nothing more than the refuge of weak souls, mediocre intelligences, fragile and fantastic personalities. The first objection against spiritualism is the human material that it gathers (pensioners, vegetarians, failed artists, men and women out of order) and the all too modern, urban, twilight background of their cenacles :

Man is something that can be overcome. The principle remains, but its meaning is hidden deep inside, and, as we have seen, the tragic fate of the Sils-Maria solitaire seals it with a silent warning for the few who can still understand it. As for the others...

Reading 'spiritualist' works, attending theosophy circles, meditating on Maeterlink's 'unknown guest', doing a good twenty minutes of daily

contraction, full of the moving faith in reincarnation which will allow every soul to continue evolution in a new existence, where she will be entitled to the fruits of the accumulated good humanitarian karma - this is indeed a very convenient way of overcoming.

With the pretext of new openings, spiritualism often removes limits that close, but also protect the personality. None of the spiritualists actually knows what happens in a séance, where the phenomena that manifest themselves - far from being consciously evoked by the medium - literally take possession of him, throwing him into a subhuman trance.

Generally, all spiritualism is affected by a passive, emotional or superstitious attitude that has little to do with true spirituality. Mask and face of spiritualism is an important book, precisely because it allows us to measure the distance that separates Evola's positions from certain traditionalistic ideas where everything consists in receiving symbols, messages, illuminations, where - in any case everything it is already given, assumed and only expected to rain from above. On the contrary, for Evola nothing is already given: immortality, transcendence, divinity... itself only exist insofar as they are realized and "the Way exists only for those who want to walk".

Among Evola's works that illustrate spiritual traditions, particular importance is given to The Doctrine of Awakening, the essay on Buddhist asceticism translated into French and English and which was endorsed by the Pali Society, the most illustrious center of Buddhist studies.

Perhaps no tradition is closer to Evola's sensitivity than Buddhism due to his coldly disenchanted and royally Olympian character. Buddhism - at

least the Buddhism of the origins - is less a religion or a faith than a discipline, a way through which the "sons of kings" bring themselves to the plane of Being.

Evola's relationship with Buddhism was early. In *The Cinnabar Path* he tells us that he came very close to suicide (he was twenty years old at the time), and that he was stopped from doing so by reading a passage from the *Majjhimanikayo*: "Whoever takes extinction as extinction, and, taking extinction as extinction, thinks of extinction, thinks of extinction, thinks of extinction, thinks "Extinction is mine", and rejoices in extinction, he, I say, does not know extinction".

Buddhism is the Arya doctrine par excellence, the creed of a superior race that ignores the punishing god, sin, the "redemption" given to the humble and the plebeians. Only one thing matters to it, the tenacious, virile, unshakable will to escape the human condition:

Strong strength, inflexible; knowledge present, unshakable; the body calmed down, impassive; collected the soul, unified...

Characteristic of Buddhism is the rejection of all intellectualism, the indifference to dogmas, theological rites, even to belief in the Gods and the Afterlife. All these are useless opinions until they become the object of internal experience: "Does Mr. Gotamo have any opinion?" Opinion? This is remote from the Perfect. Vision is this, in the Perfect.

Above all philosophy, and also above all religion, lies the Way, the liberating technique: "The Perfect knows other things well and having this knowledge he does not become proud, he remains impassible... There are, oh disciples, other things, profound, difficult to realize,

difficult to understand, generating calm, happy, not capable of being grasped with simple discursive thought, which only the wise can understand...”.

Truly, no tradition is better suited than Buddhism to express the religiosity of an Evola, the cold will to make the spark flow from the stone, the awareness that "the Way exists only for those who want to walk".

It is a noble faith, founded by an arya, by a prince, a faith of lords, far from hope and fear. It is the religion of he who does not seek asceticism to punish himself, for unhappiness, for inability to live in the world, but who "only goes, like one who renounces his own kingdom, like a proud animal in the forest, calm, without causing harm to anyone."

Through his books, Evola gives us, if not exactly a new religion", at least his religious vision. A religious vision foreign to everything that is Christian and, in general, to the notion of the personal God, punisher and rewarder, typical of religions of Semitic origin.

It is a conception that could be called paganism, where by paganism we mean a doctrine of multiple states of Being where morality appears to be a simple propaedeutic and the value of Good and Evil relative to the degrees of self-realization. "Pagan imperialism", Evola called his first political manifesto. Elsewhere, he had quoted Nietzsche in The will to power:

We few or many who dare to live in a world now devoid of morality, we of pagan faith, are probably the first who understand what a pagan faith is to imagine beings superior to man, but beyond the good and from evil; consider everything above as immoral par excellence. We believe in Olympus, and not in the 'crucifix'.

(The will to power, af. 1034).

This paganism, Evola did not invent it, but he went to find it in that spiritual tradition which embraces the entire Aryan world in all its latitude and which nourishes the Upanishads and the Enneads, the Edda and the Bhagavat-Gita, Plato and Buddha, Seneca and Meister Eckhart. Of this Indo-European religiosity, Evola retains the fundamental elements: the identity between the individual soul and the universal soul (on the level of mysticism, the Upanishads and the Enneads, the Bhagavat-Gita and Meister Eckhart; on the level of mythology the feeling of "consanguinity" between the aristocrats of the Greek, Italic, Indian, Germanic lineages and the "Gods"); unity and multiplicity of the divine principle (the doctrine of the One, among Plato, Plotinus and the Indians, does not conflict with the faith in of the appreciation of the world and the body as manifestations of divine order (the midgard of the Edda, the "middle earth" which sustains itself against the assaults of chaos has its counterpart in the Hellenic idea of kosmos, and in the rita, the cosmic order of Aryan India).

For this aspect, Evola's research arrives at the same shores that Hans F. K. Günther landed in Germany with his Nordic religiosity, (Frömmigkeit nordischer Artung, 1934), Walter Wüst with his «Indo-Germanic faith» (Indogermanisches Bekenntnis, 1942), Walter Otto with his claim of the importance of the religious values of the Greek world for European civilization (Die Götter Griechenlands, 1929; Theophania, 1956). Drieu

La Rochelle had also evoked "the spirits who perpetually watched over the peaks, above the two sides of Aryan thought: the Indian and the Western". Drieu had written "a race affects its measure of the divine: it is the highest measure. This measure had already been taken in full before the birth of Christ."

It is the "Indo-European religiosity", as opposed to Christianity, the former Ovest lux that Evola will ban in Synthesis of doctrine of the race. A "West" that is not defined on the basis of geography but of origin, and compared to which Christianity, of Semitic origin, is the East, and the Aryan doctrines of India, the West.

The West and the East are empty geological terms: what determines is the type of blood that flows from west to east or surrounds it as it sweeps.

(Alfred Rosenberg, Blood and Honor, 1939, p. 272).

It is not surprising that the conclusion of Mask and Face of Contemporary Spiritualism is precisely an exaltation of the values of the classical worldview:

We think that simpler, clearer, more neutral, more free of tendencies elements can be drawn from the classical conception of life, which today's man can make his own to renew and broaden his mentality. This can happen autonomously, without reference to a specific religious confession, theories and philosophies.

In the classical vision of life, demons and gods had their place, that is, the world was considered in its totality including both the subnatural

and the supernatural. At the same time, as perhaps in no other civilization, the sense of personality as strength, form, principle, value, task was alive. It knew the invisible, but at its center it celebrated the ideal of 'culture', that is, of spiritual formation, of the almost enucleation of living and complete works of art. As is known, a concept had a prominent role in classical ethics, that of the limit, which refers precisely to the fundamental need to actively and consciously circumscribe the sphere in which one can truly be oneself and achieve balance and 'partial perfection', pushing away the lure of mystical and romantic paths towards the formless and the unlimited. This is how even with respect to supreme things one could maintain an Apollonian tranquility of outlook. If classical man did not have 'spiritualistic' illusions, if he therefore knew the double destiny of the path to Hades and that of the 'Island of Heroes'... yet at the same time he knew that serenity to which the afterlife created no vertigo and 'fate' no anguish; he knew that intimate state of the soul which cures the insatiable thirst for things that flee, and by virtue of which even those who, like Epicurus, affirmed: 'You are born only once and never return to exist again' and rejected the 'idea of gods caring for men, in leaving he could say that he 'regrets nothing that is missing from a perfect life'. In the essence, it is precisely this kind of clear and calm heroism combined with self-control... that today most people need in their lives to prevent new knowledge from acting in a negative way. It is knowing how to support oneself without any support, but with an open gaze and a soul free from the constraints of superhuman arrogance. It's knowing how to look at rooms, but without vertigo...

It is knowing how to love discipline and limits for themselves, never forgetting the dignity before which we are responsible until a superior, austere vocation in someone is able to gather every power, right down to

the most intimate, most abysmal roots of life, for the impetus it can take beyond the human condition.

These problems of "choice of traditions" already introduce a subsequent phase of Evola's work which opens with Revolt against the modern world. It is a phase of the "struggle for the vision of the world", which raged in Europe in the 1930s, with political implications from which not even Evola could escape.

Revolt against the modern world

Traditional man did not have the same experience of time as modern man: he had a supra-temporal sensation of temporality and in this sensation he lived every form of his world.

(Revolt against the modern world, Pg. 15)

Revolt against the modern world, in the title itself betrays that it is not a simple morphology of history. Interest in the problem of history which Evola, as with the very substance of becoming, had denied any meaning arises in a particular moment, in that climate of great decisions that engulfed Europe in the 1930s. It is in this climate that the idea of a revolt against modern values becomes possible, that is, against democracy and communism, individualism and materialism, in the name of hierarchical and heroic principles. In this sense Rivolta against the modern world fits into the panorama of the so-called "crisis literature" which forms the backdrop to fascism. Fascism, in its European meaning, was in fact the instinctive awareness of the decadence that Europe was facing and the will to remedy it with total and violent means.

On the other hand, Revolt against the modern world has its own particular physiognomy which profoundly differentiates it from Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* and from Huizinga's *In de schaduw van morgen*. The concept of decadence does not have a simple sociological character for Evola but indicates a radical fracture with that world that he calls "of Tradition". Tradition is a term accepted in the particular meaning that Guénon gives it, and designates that strand of supra-temporal truth that runs through all the time granted to the race of men.

Revolt Against the Modern World is divided into two sections. In the first, the world of tradition is studied, as it manifested itself more or less completely within the scope of individual traditional civilizations, that is, in the ancient Egyptian, Iranian, Indian cultures, in the most ancient Hellas, in ancient Rome, as well as in the Aztec, Chinese and Japanese world. In the second we attempt to grasp the overall connection of these civilizations in a great universal cycle.

What separates the traditional world from the modern world is that, while the latter is based on the criteria of utility and time, the former refers to the values of the sacred and eternity. Life, as it was lived in the context of traditional civilizations, draws its light from a higher sphere of Being, which alone gives meaning to the convulsive story of becoming. It is repeated over time of certain actions that are placed outside of time in the climate of myth and ritual and which ensure that those who carry them out participate in non-perishable essences.

Rite, sacrifice, law are the great pillars of the traditional order; initiation constitutes the second birth, the act of transit between the visible and the invisible; contemplation and warrior asceticism are the two great paths of self-realization, those that distance oneself forever from the "way of the mothers", from the "hells", the chaos of the original shadows, to open up "the way of the fathers", of the Germanic Asgard, of the Inca "house of the Sun", of heroic immortality.

Traditional society is inspired from above and directed upwards: it culminates in a heroic and religious aristocracy which exercises not only a political but a pontifical function, in the sense that it establishes a "bridge", a contact between world and superworld. "Whoever is the leader, let there be a bridge" is written in an ancient saga.

They are the patres in Rome, interpreters of the divine signs (*auspicia sunt patrum*), the Hellenic aristoi, students of Jupiter (*diótrefeis*); bhramani and kshatriya in India; the “lords of the fire” and the “lords of the war chariot” in the Iranian world. Even the family is not a merely naturalistic association: the pater is a king and a priest and the gens, the ghénos, the Sippe, is held together by common cults.

The traditional order is like an island of being in the making from which it defends itself with a vivifying contact with more than human forces. It is truly a state in that it exists, consists, is solid. “...The sky is firm and the earth is firm, and these mountains are also firm. The whole world of the living is steadfast, and this king of men is also steadfast”: so it is said in the Aryan consecration of kings in the Rig-Veda.

Hence the conception of the world of men as Order, *kósmos*, Midgard, the recurring idea of a struggle of men and Gods against chaos, as well as the horror of everything that is formless, demonic, unleashed. Hence the traditional symbolism of the mountain, of the pole, fixed pillar of the Order, the Rudra mountain of the Vedas, where the “lord of the wheel” has his seat, the Iranian mountain Cinvat where is the bridge that “joins heaven and earth”, the polar mountain Meru of the Mahâbharata, the celestial mountain himinbjorg of Germanic mythology.

The traditional world presupposes a different experience of the self and the world, of space and time, which is nothing far-fetched or fantastic and which, at the lowest level, is still found among savages, in the unanimous opinion of all the “positive” scholars. Only by leaving the prejudice that there is only one reality, and rising to the understanding that reality varies depending on the subject who perceives it (which, without resorting to metapsychic experiences, is also evident in

hypnotism, or in (the use of alcohol and drugs) can be understood as the internal logic of the traditional world, which is a world where man sees, hears and perceives much more than after six centuries of rationalistic atrophy:

Although it is difficult for moderns to conceive it, we must start from the idea that to traditional man the reality of an order of things much vaster than that to which the word "real" generally corresponds today. Today, as a reality, basically, nothing is known anymore that goes beyond the world of bodies in space and time. Of course, there are those who still admit something beyond the sensible: but since it is always by way of a hypothesis or scientific law, of a speculative idea or of a religious dogma... The true materialism to be accused in the moderns is this: other materialisms, in the sense of philosophical or scientific opinions, are secondary phenomena...

If traditionally what is called reality today was therefore only a species of a much broader genus, however the invisible was certainly not identified with the "supernatural". The notion of "nature traditionally did not simply correspond to the world of bodies and visible forms... There was a vivid sense of an "underworld" world, populated by dark and ambiguous forces of every kind, the demonic soul of nature, essential substratum of all the forms and energies of this one which was opposed by the superrational and sidereal clarity of a higher region.

In the reality of the traditional world, time is not historical time, but mythical time, not a quantitative succession, but a rhythm marked in closed cycles: the Chaldean "great year" and Hellenic, the Etruscan-Latin saeculum, the Iranian aeon, the Aztec "suns", the Hindu kalpas, and so on. Evola insists on the need to consider prehistory as a

qualitatively different time, an age separated from ours not only by a mere lack of documents, but by a real difference in level of being.

In the second section of the book, Evola contrasts the modern idea of progress with the traditional doctrine of the four ages, present in the classical world (age of gold, silver, bronze and iron), in the Aryan world (satya -yuga, tretâ-yuga, dvâpara-yuga and kali-yuga or «dark age»), in Egypt (divine, semi-divine and human dynasties), in the Iranian one (gold, silver, steel and iron), and, in genre, typical of all ancient civilizations:

To maintain, as one must traditionally maintain, that in the origins there existed not the animalistic man of the caves, but a "more than man", and that already the highest prehistory saw not only a "civilization", but rather an "age of the gods" - for many who in one way or another believe in the good news of Darwinism, it means making pure "mythology". However, since we are not the ones inventing this mythology now, the fact of its existence remains to be explained, that is, the fact that in the most remote testimonies of the myths and writings of antiquity there is absolutely no comforting memory to be found. 'evolutionism' and one finds - instead and precisely the opposite, the constant idea of a better, brighter and super-human ("divine") past; that so little is therefore known about "animal origins", that indeed we uniformly speak of an original kinship between men and gods and that the memory of a primordial stage of immortality remains, together with the idea that law of death intervened at a specific moment.

There is an echo of this reality in Cicero (antiquitas proxime accessit ad deos) and in Plato: "Their participation in the divine nature due to the multiple and frequent mixing with mortals began to decrease and human

nature prevailed”(Critias 110 c, 120 d-e) . In fact, the sagas of the origins speak of divine races, of strains of "heroes" who laid the foundations of the Order by fighting demonic, bestial, subhuman races.

They are the Asen against the Elementarwesen, the Olympians and the Heroes fighting against monsters of the night and the earth, the Aryan Devas who chase away the dark Asuras, the conquering Incas who impose the solar law, the mythical ancestors of the Aztecs who came from the North behind the white Quetzalcoatl.

It is the original cycle of light, the << golden >>> cycle that collides with a different reality. Evola accepted Wirth's hypotheses (*Der Aufstieg der Menschheit*, Jena, 1928) regarding the primordial Arctic centre, later destroyed by the movement of the earth's pole, a doctrine which would also have been part of the secret knowledge to which it had been admitted Guénon.

In the Aryan tradition, the memory of the çveta-dvipa, the white island, is alive, as is that of the Ayryanem Vaéyo, "seed of the Aryans", located in the North-West, with two months of summer and ten of winter." In the classical world it is the echo of a Nordic seat where the solar Apollo dwells "with the Hyperboreans", Thule is named after the sun, to which corresponds the Tullan ("land of the sun") of the Toltecs, and Aztlan (white earth) of the Aztecs, all imagined in the extreme North.

The dispersion from this center introduces new cycles, the "silver" one, which corresponds to the "mother civilization" of the Bachofen, and the "bronze" one, a cycle of titans, giants, mythical terms behind which stand respectively a spirituality with a mystical-lunar imprint, with

predominance of the feminine element, and a now deconsecrated virile spirituality, of a Promethean and anti-Olympic type.

In Evola's particular perspective, the meaning of the civilizations that succeed one another in the now historical age, the iron age of myth, is in the struggle of the residual heroic elements against the forces of chaos, breaking in from every side, to force a certain area of space and time into Olympic equilibrium.

They are the "solar" civilizations of the Incas, the Aztecs, Egypt, the "celestial" dynasties of the Far East, with their Uranic pantheon imposed on aboriginal cults, the right, the paternal right affirmed against the original promiscuity, the hierarchical order established over primitive communism. They are the Aryan strains descended from the North with the solar symbols of the circle, the swan, the swastika, bearers of the cult of fire, of the law of the "fathers", against the Mediterranean world of the "mothers". Greece, Rome, with their tables of Olympic values, the sense of form, law, measure, the symbol of victory and that of the imperium, in which the order of the classical world culminates, are, for Evola, expressions of the Northern light.

In this order Christianity infiltrates as something dark and demonic: it is the Semitic pathos of love and sin, combined with the mentality and sensitivity of lower classes and races. The Middle Ages, thanks to the purification of Christianity into Catholicism, and the new Nordic vein that converged with the Germanic invasions, could create a final civilization of a traditional type. It rises again, in figures of mythical grandeur, like a Charlemagne or Barbarossa, the idea of the Empire, while a warrior aristocracy behind Christian symbols, rediscovers, with the Grail, Celtic and Nordic initiations.

The progressive detachment from the Middle Ages Evola places it in the myth of the regression of the castes: a virile and sacral spirituality, culminating in the political-religious symbol of the Empire, is succeeded by a merely priestly spirituality and a nobility whose horizons are limited to honor, to glory, to power. In a world increasingly oriented towards material possibilities and launched towards the conquest of the goods of the earth, the third estate, the bourgeoisie, inevitably asserts itself. The French revolution, the liberal revolutions of the 19th century marked the awakening of the dark substance of the *démos* and prepared the transition from bourgeois materialism, still illuminated by a certain individualistic tension towards honor, success and gloom. collectivism of the fourth estate.

It is the kingdom of quantity, of the masses, of the frenetic rush to production, leveling in just a few decades even the crystallized residues of traditional societies present in other continents. Every qualitative conception, every residue of differentiated life, is overwhelmed by a universal demon of number and masses. In the end, Europe itself, as an "old continent", rests still on national and conservative structures, is caught in the Russian-American pincer and, due to a nemesis of destiny, is overtaken on the level of quantity unleashed precisely by the two gigantic growths of its quantitative fever. It is the end of a cycle, it is the dark age, the Kali-yuga of the texts, when "all the elementary forces will return to their free state". It is, without rhetoric, the end of a world, and if you consider that only eleven years passed between 1934, the year of the release of *Revolt* against the modern world, and 1945, the year of the atomic bomb, one cannot help but consider the book a sign of the times. *Rivolta* ends with the prospect of a catastrophe that will mark the end of the modern world:

When this destiny is fulfilled, this whole civilization of titans, of metropolises of steel and concrete, of polyarctic and tentacled masses, of algebras and machines chaining the forces of matter, of dominators of skies and oceans, will appear as a world that oscillates in its orbit and tends to dissolve from it to move away and get definitively lost in the spaces, where there is no longer anyone. light, outside the left one lit by the acceleration of his own fall.

The individual always has the freedom to act without getting involved, to do what must be done, in a sacrificial disposition of mind, stronger than any fatality, any destiny:

Here we can remember "What doesn't break us makes us stronger" given that we don't take it in the sense of a stubborn strengthening of the ego, but in reference to what truly becomes the strongest force by becoming a spirit. , by finding in the supra-human and the disindividual the true principle of the indomitable and indestructible... It is precisely a heroic vocation to face the most desirous wave with separate destinies and knowing that two destinies are at the same distance: that of those who will end with the dissolution of the modern world and that of those who will find themselves in the central and royal vein of the new current.

So far Evola: and you can follow his logic without holding your breath for the five hundred pages of the book. It is more difficult to realize what the Revolt against the modern world actually is.

Which is in fact not a history book, when by history we mean a positive method, linked to a critical evaluation of particular events. In this sense, the Sunset of the West itself is more "historical", that is, more attentive

to the social, political and artistic dimensions of historical events. Evola's logic ranges across great perspectives and uses symbols, it is the logic of myth, as Bachofen defined it, that is, the mirror of profound experiences of man in the light of the spirit." This procedure risks becoming abstract if rigidly applied to particular cases.

Thus, to give an example, Evola's negative judgment on Napoleon, or on the Risorgimento, is justified from the ideal point of view that, through Napoleon, through the Risorgimento, the ideas of democratic subversion spread. From a more "historical" point of view, it cannot help but appear that Napoleon only tried to replace the now ineffective French aristocracy, or that the Italian princes were the caricature of the "traditional monarchy" and that the Cavour's policy was the only serious one at that moment, also to harness the revolution.

Some historical naiveties also emerge in Evola's later judgments on fascism and national-socialism, where Evola's sympathies are always for monarchical, conservative formulas, and we cannot see, for example, how without the hard will, revolutionary of a Hitler, certain "conservative" perspectives would never have prevailed against the Weimar Republic.

But, as we said, *Revolt against the modern world* is not a history book. It is rather a philosophy of history", as its author called it, that is, a book where we want to set points of reference in the domain of world history. This premise is more respected in the first half, where the forms of the traditional world are described in isolation, almost as a series of categories. In the second it is more on the level of a myth of history, a pagan, anti-Christian, anti-democratic myth that is influenced by

Nietzsche and Bachofen, as well as by German racism, by Wirth, by Rosenberg.

In reality, *Revolt* already denounces the connection with certain European expectations of the 1930s in the title, which implies the possibility of an outcry against modern values. This revolutionary expectation, this desire for violent restoration, for "counter-reform", is fascism, which, in the closing of the first edition of the book, recognized the merit of having removed the ancient and sacred symbols "of the ax and of the swastika against contemporary subversion. Between 1934 and 1940 Evola became increasingly involved in supporting the fascist movement.

Fascism and the Axis

Classicism of action and domination. Clear trust for every abandonment of the soul. Willingness for heroic catharsis. Affirmation of all the values of realism, discipline and pure strength, of the cosmos as opposed to chaos, of what is more than life in the face of simple life, of a clear and luminous vision as opposed to all that is soul darkening, instinctive and naturalistic, form, hierarchy, limit as a sign of an infinite that possesses itself, State, Empire, ideal of ascetic-warrior organization as new Orders, all this lies beyond the North and the South, all this it is 'Aryan' and 'Roman': they are the marks of every great constructive cycle, of all the great races marked in their period of high tension. In such a sign we can march united, we can, united, revive the common symbols of the origins in a new vision of the world, to justify our struggle today and to prepare the supreme consecration for our victory tomorrow.

(“The meaning of Rome for the Germanic Olympic spirit”, pg. 11)

In Fascism and National Socialism, insofar as they assert their mythical-racial axioms, Evola sees the possibility of a new connection of peoples with the world of Tradition, the beginning for the production of an authentic history, for a new legitimization of the relationships between spirit and power, indeed, precisely against the background of Evola's doctrine, what such movements possess most profoundly to determine an era comes to light": thus Gottfried Benn, one of the major German poets, in the magazine *Die Literatur* greeted the German edition of *Revolt* with “introduction to the modern world”. Just above he had written “this book broadens the horizons of all European problems in directions hitherto ignored or hidden and whoever reads it will look at Europe with different eyes”, so that “after reading it, one feels transformed”.

It might seem strange that already in 1935, the year in which Benn wrote these words, Evola's doctrine, which had matured far from politics, appeared to some to be a sort of profound dimension of fascism.

To a superficial observer it might also seem that a kind of contradiction exists between the anarchist premises of the absolute individual and fascism.

Answer to this 'contradiction': the freedom Evola talks about is not the freedom of man, but that of a superman. There is, at the bottom of Evola's philosophy, the logic of "nothing is true, everything is permitted": not even the physical world is true, which is the dream of a stronger mind, and everything is permitted, because there is no God other than the self. But "nothing is true, everything is permitted" for those who have reached a degree of self-realization that takes them beyond the very limits of the physical world. For others, the path to freedom passes through the mortification of instincts, feelings, inclinations, which prevent them from being free, from understanding that "I am another". It is in discipline that one becomes free, gentlemen; the others, those who let themselves go, are only free slaves, people who have no rights, not even that to life.

Military discipline fascinated Evola, who already in the appendix to the *Essays on Magical Idealism*, reported this definition by Otto Braun, a German adolescent who fell at the front: "discipline of the spirit, intimately on fire with passion, but externally rigid and tempered like steel, containing the immensity of the infinite in a magnificent measure." Elsewhere he reported the example of that order from the age of the Crusades in which six degrees were distinguished: in the first four it was necessary to obey (even throwing oneself from the top of a tower at a

signal from the master), in the last two enjoyed a freedom equal to that of the Gods.

After these clarifications it will be easier to understand why Evola ended up finding himself not among the anarchists, but alongside the SS.

While Evola lived in the domain of art and philosophy, Europe was in the twenties "the roaring twenties".

The great war had revealed to the world and to themselves singular mystics of action and political struggle in search of a world where, as the English veteran Oswald Mosley said, "even heroes could live". Lawrence of Arabia, Ernst Jünger, Codreanu, von Salomon, Hitler, Mussolini, Balbo, Muti: men of a world that was no longer that of assemblies, of parliaments, but of soldiers, of assault squads.

In Italy the fascist regime asserts itself and consolidates. Evola, if on the one hand he rejects the qualification of fascist and does not join the party, on the other hand finds himself by vocation alongside the men of the national revolution.

Many things separated him from them, especially nationalistic pathos, but others brought him closer, especially the common anti-democratic matrix. Wasn't that the first attempt to impose on invertebrate Europe the new hierarchy prophesied by Nietzsche as Rangordnung?

Evola's first political outing takes place on Primato, at the invitation of Bottai, his comrade and peer. Evola states in a series of articles that

fascism, to be truly in order with its warrior and "Roman" ethic, must separate its responsibilities from those of Christianity:

We have posed a pure relationship of hypothetical conditionality: if certain premises are accepted, then certain consequences are also imposed. Our scandalous article on Critica Fascista began like this;

The assumption is that fascism, in its purest strength, identifies with the desire for empire; that his re-enactment of L'Aquila and the Fascio may not be merely rhetorical; that, in any case, this is the condition for it to represent something new, not a laughable revolution, but a heroic resurrection.

To those who, assuming these premises, do not wish to violate logic, we repeat, with absolute indifference to any other possible outcry from the Catholic-Christian side, the same conclusion of the said article:

If fascism is the desire for empire, it, returning to the pagan tradition, will truly be itself, it will be able to burn in that soul which it still lacks and which no Christian belief will ever be able to give it.

It is an imprudent step: we are on the eve of the Concordat, and sabotage is even suspected. Faced with protests from the Osservatore Romano, Bottai had to disavow Evola.

Pagan Imperialism is then published, translated in Germany, where it serves to make Evola known as the leader of a "pagan" current of fascism.

A second article, with the magazine La Torre, was no better successful. Evola wrote there: "We are neither fascists nor anti-fascists, anti-fascism is nothing", and also: "We would like a more radical, more intrepid fascism, a truly absolute fascism, made of pure strength, inaccuracy. - subject to any compromise". A base maneuver orchestrated by some mediocre people, protected by the party card, was enough to get the magazine banned in its fifth issue.

Evola obtained a kind of immunity within fascism thanks to Farinacci, of whom he was a friend, and whose loyalty and honesty he always praised. Farinacci was not precisely an "intellectual", but he was an intelligent man, and he understood that Evola could be useful in the battle he had chosen, that for a more intransigent fascism, less conditioned by the Court, by the Vatican, closer to National Socialism. Evola obtained a page of Regime Fascista to discuss "problems of fascist ethics".

On that page an interesting meeting of collaborations took place for years which brought together the most disparate names such as Othmar Spann and A. E. Günther, the Prince of Rohan and René Guénon, the Jew Karl Wolfskehl, exile from Germany, and the head of the SS Himmler. But, overall, the echo caused by Evola in Italy was minimal. Under Gentile's protection, a neutral, implicitly bourgeois culture was perpetuated with no ideological right-wing awareness.

In Germany a different climate reigned created by the so-called "*Konservative Revolution*" which accompanied the rise of Nazism. There was a Spengler with his anti-progressive morphology of history, the myth of Caesarism and that of militant Prussianism. There was a Jünger, with the idea of total mobilization and the dream of a "Prussian,

Spartan, Bolshevik" human type. There was the Vienna Circle, which promoted the idea of an organic state and a hierarchical system of knowledge. Finally, there was National Socialism, with racist, neo-pagan currents, with the SS, a Nazism within Nazism, shaped according to the image of the Teutonic Order.

In this area there was also no lack of interest in the occult sciences, as can be read in the book *Le matin des magiciens*, full, however, of daydreams and exaggerations. It is precisely Pawels and Bergier who define Nazism as "Guénon + the armored divisions".

Evola was above all close to conservative circles, to the Herrenklub, where he held conferences, and to some SS groups, such as that of the Ahnenerbe, which studied race and Aryan origins. He became friends with Heinrich von Gleichen, with Ferdinand Clauss, with Johan von Leers, as well as with Franz Altheim. *Heidnischer Imperialismus* and *Erhebung wider die moderni Welt* were read, reviewed, discussed and obtained a attention very different from that granted to them in Italy. It was possible to start a discussion for which in Italy even the cultural premises were lacking.

Evola's action in Germany was not political, even if it contributed to dispelling many misunderstandings and preparing an agreement between Fascism and National Socialism. It invested the meaning of those traditions to which the regimes in Italy and Germany referred, the Roman symbol and the Nordic myth, the meaning of classicism and romanticism, or of artificial contrasts, such as that between Romanism and Germanism.

Beyond the humanistic rhetoric of "German barbarism" and the opposite and equivalent rhetoric of "Roman formalism", Evola underlines the original unity of the Aryan races. Rome is not a myth for Italian and Latin literati, but an expression of the same Nordic positivity that created the Prussian style. Beyond the fable of a bureaucratic Rome used by Neapolitan lawyers, and the Germanism of the manner of the Teutomans with the two-horned helmet, lies the reality of Rome << elitism, Olympic and heroic reality, order, light, pure virility, pure action and the Olympian reality of the ancient Nordic world.

Günther, in the essay *Humanitas*, had reminded those of his compatriots who wanted to Germanize the school to the detriment of Greek and Latin, that precisely in the Greek and Roman world that style of noble calm, severe demeanor and interiority is expressed. measure precisely to the blond Indo-European races descended from the North. Evola reemphasizes the Nordic-Aryan character of Rome, for which the recovery of certain Nordic, "Prussian" elements by the Italian people, and of a certain classical, "solar" balance by the German people, represent not a closure, but a reconquest and integration.

The meaning of Rome for the Germanic Olympic spirit is precisely the title of a conference held in German in various cities in Germany. In it, after a clarification of the concepts of State and Empire, the contrast between romanticism and classicism is transcended in the vision of the meeting of the two lights, the light of the North and the light of the South:

In history, the North and the South have been the object of a dual nostalgia that has rarely reached a balance. In this regard, the nostalgia for the South has a predominantly 'physical' and sentimental character,

that for the North has had a predominantly metaphysical and spiritual. Even today, the man of central and northern Europe is nostalgic for the South either as a humanist, or as someone who seeks sun and physical refreshment and a certain picturesque environment that is, for him, exotic. The nature of the nostalgia for the North that sometimes appeared among the ancient Mediterranean's in the classical era was different... In the North, the midnight sun offered them the physical symbol of the highest mystery of Mediterranean antiquity, that of the inner light that it rises where the sensitive one sets. The North, with the phenomenon of a day almost without night, finally seemed to them to be the land closest to that of perennial light...

But even for the man of the North the light of the South can become a principle of awakening, when it takes him beyond the unilateral perspectives of a "tragic heroism" in a romantic and nocturnal way:

According to Voluspa and Gylfaginning after the ragnaröker a new sun and 'another race' arise; the 'divine heroes', or Asen, return to Iclafels and find gold which symbolizes the primordial tradition of bright Asgard and the original state. Beyond the mists of the 'Selva' therefore a higher light reigns. There is something stronger than becoming and perishing, than tragedy and fire, than frost and death. Remember the words of Nietzsche: 'Beyond the ice, from the north, from death - our life, our happiness'. This is truly the extreme profession of faith of the Nordic man, a profession of faith which, in the final analysis, can be said to be Olympic and classical... Even the nostalgia of the Nordic soul for Mediterranean clarity can then overcome the plane of aestheticism and naturalism and acquire the deepest sense of a spiritual impulse which in the domain of physical reality already seeks to grasp the premonition of a metaphysical reality.

Evola's action took place not only in Germany. He undertook a series of trips to get in touch with personalities of the national movements. It was in Paris, where he met Monsignor Mayol de Lupé, future "bishop" of the SS Charlemagne Division; in Bucharest, where he met with Codreanu and Mircea Eliade, then part of the Iron Guard.

Codreanu is the fascist personality who most deeply affected Evola. He received him in the Green House built with their own hands by the legionaries themselves, offering him water and jam according to the Romanian tradition of hospitality. Then he explained to him his concept according to which Italian fascism took care above all of the body (the State); the National Socialism of the blood (the race), the Iron Guard of the spirit. Upon leaving he gave him the legionary badge with the grate: "They will be the bars of the prison" with a smirk. Shortly thereafter he was imprisoned and strangled on the orders of Carol and her Jewish advisors.

One may wonder why Evola's action never exerted too profound an influence. In reality Evola was seriously involved as a writer and propagandist, but he never gave up his main interests, which are of a spiritual and individual nature. Just as it had been inconceivable for an Evola to waste time in universities trying to get a chair as a "philosopher", so it was inconceivable for an Evola to spend long hours with the hierarchs to patiently plot "his" politics. Add to this the lack of real discussion within the fascist party, the prevailing conformism and the easy weapon offered to its detractors by its "magical" interests.

The real Evola is the one who disappears for months in the frozen snow to write a book, which alternates beautiful women (and there were many) with those mountaineering ascents that serve to keep his spirit in training:

The mountain is spirit for all that it implies such as discipline of the nerves and the body, lucid courage, contempt and at the same time exact measure of danger, spirit of conquest and, in short, impulse to pure action in an environment of pure strength.

He is the one who distributes his free time between the tabarins of Vienna and the alpine cloisters of the Cistercians, to whose harsh discipline the traveler submits for months when visiting the Green House and the Ordensburg Crössinsee among the lakes of Pomerania. He is a man who cannot sacrifice experience to advertising, soul searching to success.

However, Evola's notoriety slowly grew, until we reached the so-called "defense of the race" which seemed to mark the moment in which Fascism wanted to commit itself alongside Nazism also in the struggle for the vision of the world. and of life.

The myth of race

Pure races in the absolute sense do not exist today, except in the form of a few scattered specimens. This does not prevent the concept of pure race from being taken as a point of reference, however, in terms of an ideal and a final purpose.

(Synthesis of race doctrine, pg. 35)

The race campaign was decreed in 1938 with the aim of aligning Italy with Germany in the Jewish question. It was badly improvised, without knowledge of the facts, in that climate of superficiality and ease that unfortunately characterized the last years of Fascism.

From one day to the next, writers and journalists discovered themselves to be racists" and began to fill their articles with words such as "race", "lineage", "lineage", without even having an idea of the theme elaborated in Germany on these topics. An "Italian race" was discovered (evidently non-existent, because Italians, like any other European people, are a mixture of Mediterranean, Nordic, Alpine elements, etc.) and anyone who was not Jewish had the welcome surprise to wake up "Aryan" even though his appearance was more similar to that of a Moroccan than that of a European.

Evola, who had already published a history of racist theories, *The Myth of Blood*, a year earlier, was the only one who could deal with the subject competently. And in fact he did so, in *Sintesi di doctrine of the race*, which was praised by Mussolini, translated into German and accepted as a "fascist doctrine of the race", at least abroad.

For abroad, because internally, the more comfortable line of *La di fesa* was preferred to Evola's thesis, explosive against all the racial and spiritual debris that prevents the Italian people from rising to the Aryan normality of the European peoples. of the race, the one that exalted the "Italian race" without questioning anything or anyone. The only result was that Evola found himself labeled "racist" without having had any

part in the racial laws or in the world in which they were applied. And, since he never denied anything - also because what he had written was very measured and responsible (De Felice in his History of Italian Jews during Fascism places Evola among those who « having taken a road, knew how to travel it with dignity and even with seriousness"), it was his fate to appear as the only Italian "racist", while certain occasional anti-Semitic sycophants, such as Guido Piovene and Luigi Chiarini, cloaked themselves in anti-fascist respectability.

Race appears in Evola as a myth capable of bringing clarifications within Fascism, provoking a true Kampf um die Weltanschauung.

It is, first of all, an anti-democratic myth that rediscovers the values of order and differences:

According to racist doctrine, humanity, the human race is an abstract fiction or the final phase, imaginable only as a limit, but never entirely realizable, of a process of involution, disintegration, collapse . Normally, human nature is instead differentiated, a differentiation which is reflected, among other things, precisely in the diversity of bloods and races... Racism, in this regard, presents itself as a will that could well be defined classical - of 'form', of 'limit', and of individuation. It urges us not to consider essential everything which, representing the generic, the shapeless, the not yet identified, actually counts as a 'less', as a residue of matter not yet formed... That racism, in this way , strengthens nationalism in its positive aspects, is very evident. Both represent a healthy reaction against both the democratic and collectivist myth, against the myth of the proletarian mass without a country and without a face; they have a meaning of affirmation of quality against quantity, of

the 'cosmos' against chaos, and, as has been said, of form against the formless.

Racism is then an instrument of struggle against any liberalistic residue: it builds on a person "who is no longer the human atom of individualism but an organic entity defined by the values of blood, character, 'breed' honor. It also goes beyond the abstract conception of "culture" as something that can make any human matter equal and rediscovers knowledge as the education of a human type already predisposed by deep forces of the blood. It is a qualitative, aristocratic idea, which goes against every progressive myth, against the very logic of evolutionism, as it presupposes greater purity and nobility at the origins.

Evola is keen to differentiate his conception of racism from the unilaterally biological one.

In this regard, remember that the ancient Indo-Europeans conceived man as a triad of body-soul-spirit: corpus, anima and mens (or animus) among the Romans, soma, psyché and nous among the Greeks; stûhla-, linga- and karana-carîra among the Indo-Aryans. The compact materiality of the body contrasts with the widespread spirituality of the soul, still linked to the animal principle, to the world of becoming, of instinct. The Indian notion for the soul, linga-çarira, corresponds in fact to that of "subtle body". The spirit contrasts with the soul as an active element, virile to the sentimental, feminine, as a "solar" component to a "lunar" one. It represents what is properly Olympic and divine, above not only the body, but the soul and psychic dispositions. German racism had limited itself to showing the correlation between a certain physical

appearance and the internal appearance: for example between the dry slenderness of the Nordic type, the cold light of the hair and light eyes, and a corresponding coldness, phlegm, thoughtfulness, or between the slender and petite agility of the Mediterranean and a corresponding liveliness and inner mobility. In this regard, Rosenberg had written: «We agree neither in the preposition that the spirit creates the body, nor in the converse, that is, that the body creates the spirit. Between the spiritual world and the physical world there is no clear border: “both constitute an inseparable whole”.

For Evola, this statement is not enough and, in his opinion, leaves the door open to misunderstandings naturalistic. He reiterates his fundamental conception according to which everything that appears in the sensible world is a way of manifesting energies of the spirit. In this sense, even birth is not a coincidence, as Plato had already said in the Republic: “It is not the demon who chooses you, but it is you yourselves who choose the demon for yourselves”. Behind the races there are invisible formative energies: behind the Nordic race the Hyperborean cycle, the solar race of sidereal men whose symbols are ice and fire; behind the Mediterranean race lies the maternal cycle, the lunar race of the Goddess, the silver men of the Great Mother.

Evola frames the classifications of racial science in that particular mythology of origins outlined in *Revolt against the modern world*:

...race and inheritance are not to be conceived as naturalistic determinisms, but essentially as forces, as potentialities, as formative energies from within and, to a certain extent, even from above... It is the super-biological element of the race that awakens and acts here, which is not a pure polemical reason or a list of 'characteristics' from classificatory natural science or a hereditary mechanism, but the living

race, the race that truly it carries in the blood, indeed much more than in the depths of the blood, since it communicates with those 'divine' metaphysical forces, already foreshadowed by the ancients in the various symbolic entities of the gentes and the lineages.

It would make little sense to define Evola's racism as "racism of the spirit", because race is first and foremost a psycho-physical fact. It is rather an analysis of the racial fact integrated into a deeper dimension. That this broad perspective allows us to say very insightful things about the Jews, who are not an anthropological race, but who define themselves as a mixture held together by certain spiritual characteristics, by a race of the soul. Although the physical form of the Jews may differ from place to place, a dominant one is always recognized, and the characteristics of the Jewish spirit are always the same: a marked intelligence, but in a more critical-mathematical sense than organic and constructive; a spiritual mobility that borders on morbidity combined with a thirst for riches and sensual pleasures; a secret pleasure of soiling, of demolishing (Schadenfreude) which reaches its peak in the upside-down vision of the world of a Marx, a Freud. The defense against the Jews, as Evola conceives it, does not have a discriminatory character against individuals, but is intended to be a denunciation of the Jewish mentality that is subjugating the West.

The great mixing of bloods in 20th century Europe prevents us from finding considerable nuclei of individuals in which the body-soul-spirit components correspond perfectly. Not only are there frequent types in which a certain external appearance does not correspond to an adequate internal appearance, but almost all of them now bear the traits of two or three, if not even of all the European races: the Nordic, the Mediterranean, the Alpine, the Dinaric, the Eastern Baltic and the Phallic.

In Germany there was an inclination to encourage greater prolificacy of the Nordic race to repeat what had already happened at the time of the Germanic and Indo-European invasions, an affirmation massive influence of the Nordic element on other lineages. Evola does not have much faith in the possibility of renewing a race with eugenic measures. For Italy, also due to the limited availability of the Nordic type, he limits himself to proposing a certain human ideal, which he calls the Aryan-Roman type. The evocation of a certain human image is the spiritual canon of a community. Thus, Greek art elevated Nordic beauty to a symbol of classical harmony. Thus, today, some art movements have chosen the black sun as their symbol, which expresses very well the Corybantic chaos and the filth they carry within themselves.

Evola proposed to crystallize around the Aryan-Roman type the best racial components present in Italy and to begin a selection process according to the principle: "Like awakens like, like attracts like, like rejoins the similar":

As for the particular conditions, they can be reduced to the following: first of all, a heroic climate is needed, that is, one of high spiritual tension; secondly, an idea-force is needed, which galvanizes and shapes the emotional forces of a given community in such a profound and organic way, like the suggestion or image of a mother which can imprint itself as a biological reality in the child; finally, an exemplary human type must be in the foreground, as an incarnated ideal, as a tangible expression of that idea, but, at the same time, also as an approximate recovery or return, of the superior primordial type of the pure race . And then a process of evocation, formation, awakening of profound powers begins. This process will end up involving the biological reality itself and will overwhelm foreign elements; with the continuation of the action, it will cause the compliant type to appear in subsequent

generations in an increasingly distinct way. The 'pure race' will be resurrected.

The Aryan-Roman type, as Evola describes it, is not the true Nordic type, but a type with a Nordic imprint, the one that already existed in the ancient Italic stocks and in Rome. It is connected to the <<Hyperborean>> cycle: in 1940 Altheim had highlighted the similarities between the rock carvings and solar symbols of Valcamonica, accompanied by inscriptions in a proto-Latin language, and the rock carvings of Bohuslän (Sweden South-western).

This last Indo-European migration, characterized by the rite of incineration, penetrated not only into Lazio, but also into Greece, with the Dorians. Rome and Sparta are two parallel creations and Roman, Spartan and Nordic ethics are one.

Those Italians who use their Latinity as an excuse for their intolerance for German "rigidity" and "hardness", demonstrate that they do not have a single drop of blood from those ancient Nordic Latins who created Rome, but that they are rather Italiots, Mediterraneans, or slaves who came from Africa and the East. Faced with the Romans, with their "militarism", with their taciturn severity, they would have felt uncomfortable, just as they did with the Prussian mentality.

The task of Fascism, as Evola describes it, is not to cultivate a myth of Roman glories that serves as an alibi for everything in Italy that is not Roman, but only Italian, but rather to pass through the scrutiny of the Roman everything that in Italian customs is neither serious nor Nordic:

Just as it is certain that in the Italian race there are important nuclei of the Nordic-Aryan race in the spirit, in the soul and in the same body, so it is equally certain that there exists, close to this, the Italy of small and black types, with features and feelings altered by centuries-old crossbreeding, of sentimental, gesticulating, impulsive types, profoundly and anarchically individualistic, an Italy of 'dolce far niente', with rhymes in 'heart and love', with jealous southern husbands, with 'ardent' women but barred by bourgeois prejudices, with puffins, macaroni and songs... Fascist Italy rather wants to be and have value as a new world of hard and tempered forces, as a heroic world permeated with ethical awareness and creative tension, opposed to any abandonment or disintegration of the soul, having as its symbol not the tarantellas and the moonlight on the gondolas, but the powerful iron squares of that Roman pass, which has its precise facsimile in the rhythm of the Prussian parades.

These last words are read not without a certain ironic bitterness. They constitute Evola's greatest concession to Fascism, to fascist hope, and were destined to be soon disappointed.

In fact, Fascism had created an atmosphere of enthusiasm and sacrifice, an ideal whose light remained as if crystallized in the white structures of the Foro Mussolini or the Palazzo della Civiltà. But we know today that this enthusiasm rested on fragile foundations: behind a few hundred thousand true fascists there were, even within the Party, millions and millions of "Italians" ready to celebrate Italy "liberated". "Evola would later write freed from the task of giving himself a shape, a responsibility, a destiny".

No one can say what would have happened if the war had been won. It is certain, however, that with Synthesis of doctrine of the race Evola, for

the first time, managed to have one of his thesis accepted as the official thesis of Fascism. We can imagine that Germany's victory, marking the end of clerical and bourgeois resistance, would have opened up new possibilities for action for an Evola. At the outbreak of the war against Russia, Evola had asked to leave voluntarily. The response was delayed, and arrived just as the armed groups were being withdrawn from the front. It became known that the delay was due to the fact that Evola was not a member of the fascist party.

On 8 September he found Evola in Germany. He is in that small group of Italians who, with Pavolini and Farinacci, welcome the freed Mussolini to Hitler's headquarters. He sides, as is necessary, with the Social Republic, even if the name seems to him suitable only to confuse the already confused ideas of many fascists. Having returned to Rome, he should remain there to establish a network of political contacts behind the Allies' backs. But they have him on their lists and he fortunately escapes arrest through a back door. After passing the front, he settled in Vienna, where he worked in contact with SS circles. More precisely, he was given Freemasonry documents seized by the Gestapo in European capitals to examine.

During the war it had been his motto "not to avoid, but rather to look for dangers, almost in the sense of a tacit questioning of fate".

Among other things, he didn't go to the shelters during the air raids. This habit almost proved fatal to him: a few days before the Russians entered Vienna, he was buried under the rubble. He emerged with a spinal cord injury that caused paralysis of his legs. The war, which had overwhelmed so many lives and so many hopes, also marked a clear break in his private life for Evola.

Men Among the ruins

The highest and most real legitimation of a true political order, and therefore of the State itself, lies in its anagogical function: in its arousing and nourishing the individual's disposition to act and think, to live, fight and possibly die in function of something that goes beyond its simple individuality. This provision is so real that not only its use, but also its abuse is possible...

(Men among the ruins, pg. 60)

In 1948 Evola returned to Rome. Here he finds a world of forces in turmoil, a courageous and impatient youth: it is the world of the first Italian Social Movement, still full of so much hope.

To that world, and especially to the young people who gather around him, he dedicates a book of political doctrine that can be used for the reconstruction of the State: Men among the Ruins.

Men Among the Ruins aims to be a "reactionary" book, in the positive and legitimate sense of the term, the book of those who react, and harshly, against the filth of the democratic-Marxist world.

It's time to realize, writes Evola, that since the French Revolution onwards, European society has found itself on an inclined plane that leads to the subversion of all values. The bourgeois there who in the 19th century demolished the idea of aristocracy had to give in to the demagoguery of politicians and parties and these, in turn, by undermining every idea of discipline, hierarchy, military honor, prepare the way for revolution and communism. Today, one might add, communism itself

risks being overtaken by the anarchy of beatnik hooliganism (the fifth estate", whose advent terrified the bourgeois). It is the logic of "freedom and equality" that claims its rights, it is the demonic essence of the demos which, once evoked, can no longer be mastered.

Faced with this logic of subversion, one cannot appeal to the lying and reassuring fable of "progress", nor hope that the Pope or the Eternal Father will fix everything at the last moment, nor believe in the "national pacification" of imbeciles of patriotism: we must react, we must, says Evola, reversing the evangelical maxim, do to our adversaries what they want to do to us, but do it to them first.

This reaction will be revolutionary and conservative at the same time. Revolutionary, because it is determined to sweep away the rotten democratic structures, and conservative, because it is favorable to a revival of the aristocratic and qualitative idea in all domains.

First of all, principles must be established that are completely detached from the ideologies of subversion.

All liberal, democratic, communist conceptions cultivate the prejudice that the State is developed from society, which is an expression of society naturalistically understood and which receives its legitimation from the representation of the material interests of individuals. Indeed, Marxism, which coherently thought the bourgeois and Enlightenment myth of "civil society" to its core, even places as the final stage, after the dictatorship of the proletariat, the abolition of the State, considered as a superstructure created by social inequality.

In reality, the birth of the State, as ethnology also shows us, is something else. Originally the State is not identified with the naturalistically conceived society, with the sum of men, women, children, of everything that, in one way or another, has a human appearance. The State is the "society of men" (Männerbund), the group of men fit for arms, of which one becomes part with rites of passage that consecrate this new virile quality. This society of men is a world unto itself, which has its own values, honor, loyalty, courage superior to any interest of the community. All normal states, until the French Revolution, identified themselves with a ruling minority, holder of greater rights, but also greater duties, and which physically embodied political, warrior and religious values.

Political values are not a consequence of economic ones, nor is the State the "superstructure" of a certain society, but belong to a different world, in which the pleasure of fighting, of obeying, of commanding, of following a boss or an idea:

The political sphere is defined with hierarchical, heroic, ideal, anti-hedonistic and, to a certain extent, also anti-eudemonistic values which detach it from the order of naturalistic and vegetative existence; true political ends are largely autonomous (not derivative) ends, they are linked to ideals and interests other than those of peaceful existence, pure economy, physical well-being; they refer to a higher dimension of life, to a distinct order of dignity. This opposition between the political sphere and the social sphere is fundamental.

The State, bearer of political values, not only is not identified with, but rather is opposed to society, like man to woman, or like Man spiritually understood to the simple human animal.

The ancient Germans distinguished a “molten side” from a “sword side” of existence. Indeed, economic values, well-being, the peaceful growth of society have as their background that raising, caring for, nurturing which is typical of women, while the political and military world is a male world. A true State knows something that is above budgets and programming. It wants to be a creator of history and spiritual values.

The true State will identify itself with a party which, above the moods of society, embodies the political will that creates history.

Not a mass party, but an elite party, an Order that gathers in its ranks a true political aristocracy. It is the conception of the State as an Order, which was already part of the SS. This State will not be totalitarian", that is, invasive, leveling, disrespectful of the privacy of the individual, in which case it will degrade into an instrument of that process of massification called "modernity".

It will be the organic State, which around a stable center, around an animating idea, leaves a large sphere of autonomy in the private sphere. The organic State is omnia potens, not omnia facens, it recognizes the freedom of the individual in everything that does not pertain to political leadership, in private life, in economic life. It is not even an "ethical state that presents itself as a drill sergeant or a pedagogue with a whip in his hand: it is not a question of disguising the petty bourgeois or the scoundrels as heroes who, in the end, will always remain what they are; but to demand political heroism at the top, from the members of the party-Order that embodies the ethos and will of the State.

The organic State is neither capitalist nor communist, because it does not identify with economic systems, but puts them at its service. After all, even in the fascist state itself, it was Hitler who commanded and Krupp who obeyed, Valletta who proposed to Mussolini who dictated. The true State has an instrumental conception of the economy, seeing it as a means to achieve extra-economic goals:

Nothing is more evident that modern capitalism is as subversive as Marxism. The materialistic vision of life that underlies both is identical; qualitatively identical are the ideals of both, identical, in both, are the premises linked to a world whose center is constituted by technology, science, production and 'performance'...

The starting point should instead be the clear denial of the principle, formulated by Marxism, which summarizes the whole of the subversion indicated above: 'The economy is our destiny'. It must be stated without half terms that everything that is economy and economic interest as the satisfaction of material goods and their more or less artificial appendages has had, has and will always have a subordinate function in a normal society, which must differentiate itself beyond this sphere an order of superior, political, spiritual, heroic values, an order that does not know or even admit merely economic classes, that knows neither of 'proletarians' nor of 'capitalists', an order, only in function of which the things for which it is truly worth living and dying must be defined...

The true antithesis is therefore not that between capitalism and Marxism but is that which exists between a system in which the economy is sovereign, regardless of the form it takes, and a system in which it is subordinated to extra-economic factors within a much vaster and more complete order, such as to give human life a profound meaning and to allow the development of its highest possibilities.

In this light, the anti-bourgeois rhetoric of communism falls, which belongs to the bourgeois world, with which it shares the corporate and material, linguistic myths, and which would only like to see them more widely realized.

The proletarian is only he who has not yet become bourgeois. He is, the bourgeois without a collar as Jünger suggested in the 1920s. Not that the organic State wants to set itself up as the defender of economic privilege: it only wants to reduce the pathos of the so-called “social question”. We must do everything humanly possible to improve the conditions of the people, but we must keep in mind that this is not the highest moral requirement. To clarify his ideas, Evola quotes this phrase from Nietzsche: *One day the workers will live like the bourgeois, but above them, poorer and more simple, the upper caste. It will possess the power.*

The social question will deflate by itself when industrial society is able to produce consumer goods for everyone. Hence the ridiculous hysteria of the communists against “neo-capitalism”, capable of satiating, and therefore of bourgeoisizing, the masses. Hence the ideological inconsistency of the “new revolutionary spirit” of China and other underdeveloped countries. Here too, no real heroic alternative: only the fanaticism of millions of poor people against those countries that have already sat down at the table, including Soviet Russia itself.

The true antithesis to the bourgeois world is not the proletariat or, worse, the sewer aestheticism of the artists who flirt in the crossroads of bourgeois fame, but, if anything, the military spirit. The true State does

not claim to transform society into a barracks, but ensures that a certain military ethic with the cult of honor and loyalty, with the pleasure of courage and physical discipline is affirmed to all levels, and particularly among young people. It is only through a certain soldierly severity that one can escape the fate of becoming bourgeois.

Borghese is the rebellious scalp who needs society to be noticed; the "anti-conformist" who bends his back in the face of pacifist and anti-war conformism is bourgeois; the narcissistic, individualistic anarchist is bourgeois, profoundly incapable of disciplining himself.

The antithesis to the bourgeois spirit is not the left-wing living room or the existentialist bar, not the square of Spain or Saint Germain de Prés, but the field, the gym, the solitude, the mountains.

The true State can only be born from a radical anti-bourgeois revolt, which sweeps away even today's anti-bourgeois attitudes as bourgeois:

The worst evil in Italy is still the bourgeois: bourgeois-priest, bourgeois-peasant, bourgeois-worker, bourgeois-'lord', bourgeois-intellectual: almost sawdust, a formless substance, in which there is no neither a 'high' nor a 'low' anymore. Away with all that, should be the watchword. Only if it can be followed will the motion in the other direction not prevail....

The possibility of revolutionary-conservative action essentially depends on the extent to which... the opposite idea can act, that is, the traditional, aristocratic, anti-proletarian idea, enough to give rise to a new realism

and to give shape, acting as a vision of life, to a specific type of anti-bourgeois man, as the cellular substance of new elites, beyond the crisis of any individualistic and unrealistic value.

Men among the Ruins ends with a chapter on Europe. In fact, the reconstruction of a political order, the very formation of a new elite, is closely intertwined with the possibility of building a united Europe, a barrier and bulwark against American democratism and Russian communism.

It is a question, first of all, of detaching ourselves from petty nationalism, of recognizing that the homeland, the nation are, ultimately, merely naturalistic, "maternal" associations. Secondly, it is a question of conceiving a supranational political symbol with a virile, "paternal" character, rising to a European imperial perspective. This is ultimately implicit in Evola's entire conception of history, which is exquisitely Ghibelline, and which educates to the patriotism of the Empire, of the Reich, rather than that of the nation. Thirdly, it is a question of crystallizing the elites of national movements around this European imperial idea, removing them from sterile rancor and sterile nostalgia.

On a strictly political level, it would then be necessary to overthrow the democratic governments born from defeat. This is naturally difficult, and even more difficult is to build something that can readily replace the Atlantic Alliance, NATO, without which Europe would be handed over to pro-communist neutralism by playing the part of useful idiots:

To move towards a One Europe, the first step should be the collective exit of all European nations from the UN, from this hybrid, bastard and

hypocritical association. An equally obvious imperative would be the emancipation of Parsi in every respect and equally from America and the USSR. However, this would require a very subtle and prudent political art for which it is not at all certain that qualified European statesmen exist today. In fact, a notable interval between the rejection of American and 'Atlantic' protection and the actual establishment of Europe as a unitary bloc capable of defending itself (where this is possible) could be enough for a Europe that is still semi-defenseless materially and spiritually fell prey to communism and the USSR, following internal upheavals and external aggression. Thus an entire preparatory work should precede initiatives of this kind.

Even in a subject that he merely touches on, such as political practice, Evola, with just a few words, manages to define the essential and grasp all the nuances of a problem.

One might ask what influence Men among the Ruins had on the environment of Italian Social Movement. Great on the young and very young, none on that ruling class that closed the party to every breath of discussion and renewal. The crisis of the party emerged in 1957, the old youth current, the M.S.I., was dispersed and disbanded. he increasingly fell back on merely nostalgic and patriotic positions. Above all, it was not possible to establish a serious discussion on Fascism and the responsibility of calling oneself a fascist: on the one hand, there were those who confused Fascism with bourgeois and papal conservatism; on the other, certain sleazy "socials" who mistook Mussolini for Pietro Nenni and Fascism for a sort of tricolor social democracy.

Everywhere, few ideas, little culture, no imagination.

On the other hand, those young people who left the party soon closed themselves into sterile small groups, contributing with their absence to the deterioration of the party.

Faced with this situation, Evola, while continuing to give his help to those forces who, outside and inside the MSI, fought for a renewal of the national environment, gradually moved away from the political perspective.

Ride the tiger

Whoever rides the tiger cannot get off.

(Eastern proverb)

The stagnation of the Italian internal situation at the end of the 1950s pushed Evola towards personal solutions to the problem of life. His interest was in if it moves towards those individual paths along which one can cross the petrified forest of the modern world unharmed.

Riding the Tiger is not in contradiction with *Of Men and Ruins* or other previous books. Evola's conception is always the same: only the perspective changes. This perspective is no longer social, but individual, not optimistic, but pessimistic.

Riding the tiger is the breviary of those who must live in a world that is not theirs, without being overwhelmed, thanks to their invulnerability. In this sense, it reminds us of the manuals of a Seneca, an Epithet, a Marcus Aurelius, born in the same climate of decadence and marked by the same spirit of stoic unshakability.

The backdrop of *Ride the Tiger* is the collapse of the modern world, desolate in the final forms of its crisis, but not devoid of possibility as "the negation of a negation". It is not necessary to be a follower of this or that particular vision of history to agree that the contemporary era presents the characteristics of an era in dissolution.

Irruption of masses, shapeless cities that expand, social instability, the demon of gold and sex, ephemeral and feverish myths, taste for the gigantic and certain feeling of the provisional: these are the distinctive signs of times gone by. in which man, rather than living, is experienced by collective and instinctive processes that he only controls to a minimal extent. The modern world is a wild tiger but, "he who rides the tiger cannot get off", warns an oriental proverb. One might as well stay on the back and wait for the tiger, exhausted, to collapse to the ground, since the elementary forces reawakened at the end of time "due to being devoid of connection with any higher principle, have, after all, the measured chain".

In the meantime, given that certain social and sentimental contents will be inexorably burned in the phase of self-consumption of the modern world, it will be good to distance ourselves in time by detaching ourselves from what is perishable and settling on what instead, by its nature, it cannot be destroyed. Because, in times of collapse, the less you lean, the less you fall.

One of the first things to be destroyed was the Christian feeling of life. That Christianity survives as an organization and as social morality is a fact. It is an equally certain fact that the divine, the religious sense of life no longer means anything to a society launched into the conquest of material goods. "God is dead" Nietzsche announced ninety years ago. If at the end of the century this feeling of the deconsecration of the world was the drama of a few clairvoyants (Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Rimbaud), after the First World War, and even more so after the Second, the sense of the absurdity of life has gained vast masses. Phenomena such as those of teddy boys, beatniks, halb starkers, existentialists, angry men are, for Evola, clearly indicative of a sense of emptiness that spreads throughout society.

Marxists claim to fill this void with what Evola calls "the economic-social myth". But, even beyond the low stupidity of this myth, the incontestable fact remains that precisely where the masses have achieved the greatest well-being we find ourselves faced with the spread of nothingness.

In the world where "God is dead", where a rule of action consecrated by tradition or habit is lost, man finds his misery, his danger and his greatness in drawing a law from himself.

This situation found a dramatic echo in Nietzsche who, in times when a superficial atheism celebrated the termination of religious bonds, protested that it was not enough to be free from something, but it was necessary to be free for something. With this arose the need to rediscover a center of being beyond the concepts of God, Good and Evil typical of religions of Semitic origin. But Nietzsche found his limit in a substantially naturalistic mentality. He, as Evola highlights in the course of a penetrating criticism, ends up giving us a naturalistic good and evil, which are respectively a more of life (the strong) and a less of life (the weak), presupposed - positing life as something continually ascending, while daily observation too often shows us that it is only eager to preserve itself as best it can.

In reality, one cannot look for a criterion of morality, freedom or value in life, which has no meaning other than self-preservation.

But only the theist will believe that this value can only be found in dogma, in faith. There is a root of metaphysical freedom that is innate, there is something uncreated, unconditioned in man, of indestructible. It

is this dimension of being that needs to be evoked by imposing a discipline that has its justification in itself and whose aim is the removal of what is spontaneous, accidental and the awakening of what is free. , necessary. We must learn to act for the action itself, without looking at advantages. We must make of this action a small cosmos, perfect in itself, free from hope and fear. We must learn to live in the timeless dimension of life, as if every day were the last. We must be ready to be eventually destroyed without being vulnerable thereby “to grasp the meaning of a super-life from this sacrificial disposition”.

Those who have reached this level, and not everyone, will also be able to throw themselves into the most swirling whirlpools of modernity "riding the tiger":

...confident in having being as the essential center of the person, and not life, he can face everything, he can abandon himself to everything and open up to everything without losing himself: therefore accept every experience, now no longer to try and to know each other but to develop all one's possibilities, in view of the self-transformations that can occur, of the new contents that can thus offer themselves and reveal themselves.

...the ability to open up without losing oneself, especially in a period of dissolution, is of particular importance. It is the way to overcome any possible transformation, including the most dangerous ones: the ultimate limit can be indicated in that passage of the Upanishads which speaks of the one against whom death can do nothing, because it has become part of his being.

There is therefore the coexistence of a detachment with fully lived experience, the recurring union between calm being and the substance of life. The result of this union is, essentially, a very special, lucid, we could say almost intellectualized and magnetic of intoxication, completely opposite to that which derives from the ecstatic opening to the world of elementary forces, instinct and 'nature'. In this very special subtlety and confusion we must see the vital nourishment necessary for a free existence in a chaotic world abandoned to itself.

Anyone who has managed to activate this different current of living within themselves will understand transcendence not as a dogma, but as an experience. What fades is a particular religion, Christianity, but the metaphysical reality is not affected in the slightest:

...a set of concepts that in the Christian West have been considered essential and indispensable for any 'true' religion: the personal god of theism, the moral law with the sanctions of heaven and hell, the restricted conception of a providential order and a moral and rational finalism of the world, the attitude of faith on a predominantly emotional, sentimental and sub-intellectual basis, all of this may instead go beyond a metaphysical vision of existence, a conception which is universally attested in the world of Tradition ... The moral skin of a God who had ended up acting as an opiate and as a counterpart to the small morality replaced by the bourgeois world for the great morality falls away. But the essential nucleus, given by metaphysical doctrines, surpasses any dissolution.

Having outlined the traits of "the man whose freedom does not mean ruin", Evola, after a masterly critique of existentialism, considers the processes of dissolution of the dominion of personality.

Here too, what is threatened is bourgeois-type individualism, freedom, wealth, culture, with whatever positive, but also fragile, aspects it might have had.

It may be that the ongoing leveling processes will shatter many "personalities", many "beautiful souls", many hearts in self-admiration, and, of course, what will result will be an opaque squalor of the masses. But here too the destruction threatens something accidental, peripheral: the nucleus of the Ego, for those who know how to withdraw into it, remains free.

The problem is to conceive a positive anti-individualism and to restore within oneself the typical, formative image, which dominates the individual with his smallness. It is not a question of going below, but above the personality, towards what is "typical", eternal.

The superior man that Evola describes does not bundle up, does not flatten himself, but is ready to get rid of many hesitations just as someone who enlists in an army renounce not only clothes and baggage but many habits and many frivolities of the individual. Active impersonality: this is the formula with which one rides the tiger» when it rushes to tear apart every personal intimacy. Not "passive impersonality", suffered, the "brain pile" of the communist herd or the promiscuity of the pack of beatnik monkeys. Having a personality, but being ready to overlook it, ready to get rid of many feelings like a heavy backpack that cannot be carried under enemy fire. In this sense, Evola's teaching is also a philosophy of total war, this typical manifestation of advanced modernity, the necessary counterpart of its monstrous growth.

Looking at the problem from this perspective, the bourgeois pathos of the "soul", of the "individual". If the graceful, the sentimental, the psychological fade, reality gains prominence and, as in primordial times, the world is "cold and clear, calm and stable".

A new sense of nature is awakened, conceived as that which is firm and objective, in an almost metaphysical evident. The holographic, the picturesque no longer speak to the soul capable of intuiting a new dimension of the world:

If for the bourgeois generation nature was a kind of idyllic Sunday interlude in city life, and if for the most recent generation it is the scene where its obtuse, invasive and contaminating bestiality erupts, for our differentiated man it is a school of the objective and the distant, it is something fundamental in the sense he has of existence and presents a total character. In this way, what was said above appears clear: we can speak of a nature which in its elementary nature is the great world where the stone and steel panoramas of the metropolis, the endless straight streets, the complexes functional industrial districts are on the same level, for example, as immense and solitary forests in the sign of a fundamental austerity, objectivity and non-personality... there will not be landscapes more beautiful than others, but landscapes that are more distant, more boundless, calmer, colder, harder, more primordial than others: the language of things, of the world, is not captured among trees, streams, beautiful gardens, in front of holographic sunsets and romantic moonlight, but rather in deserts, rocks, steppes, glaciers, black Nordic fjords, implacable suns of the tropics, great currents, in fact everything that is primordial and inaccessible.

Having clarified the line on which the dissolution of the individual can be left behind, Evola addresses the problem of the dissolution of science and art.

Science, which positivists saw a hundred years ago as a vain heir of philosophy, has gone through radical rethinking (non-Euclidean geometries, quantum theory, etc.), so that it presents itself as a construction site of working hypotheses that are practically effective but powerless to give us any general truth. There is, at the bottom of science, an absolute nihilism because, if it places ever greater material forces at man's disposal, it is not for this reason capable of making man stronger, or more self-confident, while the very new hypotheses exclude that science can ever tell us anything about the ultimate truths of life and death. Even if someone may have had illusions, the fundamental inability of science to give us a vision of the world remains.

Since, according to what one of the greatest physicists of our time, Heisenberg, declared, "the object of research is no longer the object itself, but nature as a function of the problems that man poses".

"The system of science", writes Evola at the end of his acute examination of the scientific myth, is a network that increasingly tightens around something that, in itself, remains incomprehensible, for the sole purpose of being able to subjugate it for practical purposes".

Alongside the dissolution of knowledge, which affects few interested parties, there is the dissolution of art which sensationally affects the tastes of the general public. Evola's position, also due to his refined

knowledge of modern art, cannot be that of a philistine who clings to certain terminal forms of the bourgeois world.

That the novel disintegrates, that intimacy that it ends up in filth, that psychology ends up in morbidity, it is logical, just as it is logical that democracy ends up in communism. The traditional world knew art as an objective expression of a vision of the world; as a temple, cathedral, as a sculpture or fresco integrated into a larger complex. He knew art as a manifestation of organized spiritual life, not split, private, intimate art, the museum, the academy, the literary salon. Faced with the extreme, polemical forms in which bourgeois art dissolves, faced with vulgarity and advancing cretinism, there will be no need to get more upset than necessary.

The differentiated type that Evola deals with passes unscathed between the dissolution of science and that of art because it asks neither art nor science for its certainties.

Riding the Tiger ends with a chapter on death. In fact, death is a possibility to always keep in mind in an era that has opened and will close amidst chaotic upheavals. And it is - as already in Stoicism - the verification of one's freedom.

The prospect of death cannot have anything dramatic for those who, beyond the idea of a personal God and the correlative idea of atheism, know that man's being does not begin with birth and does not end with the death:

In general, but especially in a chaotic and dissolving era like the current one, it can be difficult to grasp the meaning of the appearance of the being that one is, in the guise of a person so and so determined, who he lives in a given time and in a given place, going through these experiences of which this will be the end: it is like the sensation of confusion that one encounters during the night journey, where only occasionally brief scattered lights make some stretches of the landscape crossed visible. However, the feeling or premonition of someone who, having gotten on a train, knows that he will get off, and that when he gets off, he will also see the entire journey traveled must be maintained; and it will go further."

The problem of death contains the problem of suicide which, in its time, within the framework of a Roman, virile, non-Christian religiosity, such as the Stoic, was considered permissible. Here too Evola reaffirms the freedom of man freed from passions on all the acts of his life, including death.

But, while he reaffirms this freedom, he senses the contradiction inherent in the act of taking his own life. In fact, since the ego and being are the same thing, being born, being here, is always, in a certain way, an act of free choice of the ego.

The point is precisely this: to go back to that invisible act of our will and not stumble upon its effects as in anything extraneous, casual, irrational:

...feeling within oneself any impatience, any intolerance or even any tedium would perhaps not attest to the presence of a too human residue, of something not yet resolved in the sense of eternity or, at least less, of

the great non-terrestrial and non-temporal distances? And if this were the case, wouldn't we be obliged, in front of ourselves, not to act?

*...Rise beyond what can be comprehensible in the light of human reason alone and reach a high interior level and an invulnerability that would otherwise be difficult to achieve are perhaps possibilities which, through adequate reactions, are offered precisely in cases where traveling at night leaves almost nothing to be seen of the landscape you are crossing, where it would appear to be the theory of *Geworfenheit* is true, of an absurd 'being thrown' into the world and into time, as well as into a climate in which physical existence itself cannot fail to present a growing insecurity. If one wanted to allow the mind to dwell on a bold hypothesis which could also be a leap of faith in a superior sense once the idea of *Geworfenheit* has been rejected, once one has conceived that living here, now, in the world, has a meaning to always be the effect of a choice and a will, one could even believe that precisely the realization of the possibilities mentioned above that are more covered and less conceivable in different situations and more desirable from the purely human point of view, from the point of view of "person" is the ultimate reason and the meaning of that choice on the part of a being who in this way wanted to measure himself with a difficult measure: precisely in living in a world opposite to the one in conformity with his nature, that is, opposite to the world of Tradition.*

This is the recurring idea in Evola, the one that emerges from the first philosophical books, and which, significantly, returns in these last pages of the last important book: existence is the stump of a sword whose other half it is "Being" and which can only be recovered by accepting "Being" as the other half of ourselves.

It is the central node, the one that gives or takes away meaning from everything. Not a doubt that is resolved by the light of logic, but a knot that is untied with an "act of superior faith", as with the cutting with a blade.

Whoever can do this will find the lost stump of the sword by welding immanence and transcendence. Then the district glimpsed among the lights of the night will resolve itself into sunlight and the meaning of the journey will be clear.

"We westerners of this complex age, monks in our body's cell", wrote Lawrence of Arabia who was, as well as a soldier, a man aware of the difficulties of the times.

Of course, the differentiated man of Evola, ready to live in the very heart of the modern world and to use its poisons - drugs, sex, anarchy as counterpoisons - may appear to a superficial eye to be a little monastic. But he will have to know how to live on the line of extreme vigilance, which is monastic and military, he will have to continually overturn the negative values of the modern world by making his relationships with it a pure exercise of strength.

He will have to act without getting involved, strong in that interior nakedness in which Meister Eckart saw the characteristic of the man of God so that "the door slams, but the hinge remains firm".

Overall look at Evola's work

Greatness means giving a direction.

Nietzsche

Riding the Tiger is one of Evola's most important books and one of the most misunderstood.

It is in no way an invitation to let yourself be carried away by the current (or, worse, by fashion) nor to fold your arms and wait for "the cycle to end".

Unfortunately, the fragility of the human material that emerged in these years of counter-selection was also revealed in the circle of Evola's readers: weakness is always looking for alibis, and it finds them everywhere. In reality, anyone who "rides the tiger" is not a friend of the tiger. It's simply a man determined not to let his soul be hurt by certain collapses that will occur around him, to ensure that "what I can do nothing about, can do nothing about me".

It is true that Evola goes so far as to say that "it might even be appropriate to contribute to the fall of what is already wavering and belonging to yesterday's world, rather than trying to prop it up and artificially prolong its existence" but adds immediately afterwards: "The risk of such behavior is very evident: it is not certain who will have the last word." Above all, one should never forget the initial premise, where Evola expressly states that *Riding the Tiger* is not a book for everyone, but for an exceptional man, "for those few said Nietzsche of whom

sometimes there is none”: "There are truths that cut like sharp blades: they must be kept in their sheath."

But the misunderstandings around Evola don't just come from *Riding the Tiger*.

There were others who drew from other books as a pretext for "reactionary" attitudes belonging rather to folklore than politics, for "Bourbon" or "medievalist" exhumations. They should remember that Tradition is not identified with any content but is reincarnated in ever new forms.

The same argument must be made to those who have drawn "Catholic traditionalist" response from Evola. It is true that Evola, beyond his natural reservations towards the type of Christian spirituality, recognized medieval Catholicism as a tradition within Tradition. But, while explicitly writing that, if Catholicism was capable of creating a new Middle Ages, it should be accepted, he also stated that this is a pure hypothesis and that the Church of today, with its "social" charge, is democratic and egalitarian, and is therefore practically an instrument of subversion.

Still others there were who took Evola's books dedicated to the techniques of spiritual realization as a pretext for the most absurd "magical" ambitions and, without even having achieved mediocre human perfection, believed they could aspire to a divine perfection.

These would do well to re-read some of Evola's sentences such as: "Personality today is in most cases just a task, something non-existent, in order to tend towards what lies beyond it".

In fact, no one is more ridiculous than those who, without even having solved the problems of this life, fixate on those books by Evola that pose the problem of a super-life.

The same argument also applies to those who, lacking an adequate historical perspective, have confused certain forms of religious exoticism that flourish on the margins of decadent civilizations with a new principle. The fashion of Buddhism, of Zen, the various mysticisms in vogue among the hippies or the beatniks, belong to what Spengler called "second religiosity", not the virile religiosity of the origins, but the twilight mysticism with which a humanity of the weak he takes drugs while waiting for the end. The hippies, who between one marijuana cigarette and another talk about Zen, they fit into the same panorama of decadent Rome where lustful matrons, between one orgy and another, flirted with oriental cults and Christianity.

Evola took a stand against this soft spiritualism in *Riding the Tiger*:

... there is no doubt that the vast majority of facts interpreted as a prelude to a new spirituality simply have a 'second religiosity' character. They represent something promiscuous, fragmented, sub-intellectual. They are like the fluorescence that manifest themselves in cadaveric decomposition... we can well speak, again with Guénon, of 'cracks in the great wall', of dangerous failures of that protective belt which, despite everything, preserves in ordinary life every normal and clear-minded

individual by the action of real dark forces hidden behind the facade of the world of the senses and below the threshold of formed and conscious human thoughts. From this point of view, neo-spiritualism therefore appears to be more dangerous than materialism or positivism itself, which, if nothing else, with its primitiveness and its intellectual myopia strengthened that belt, limiting yes, but also protective.

Above all, anyone who wanted to mix Evola with certain murky novelties of the most recent Western customs would demonstrate that they have understood nothing of the severe and contemptuous ethos behind his teaching, an anti-modern and anti- intellectual to the highest degree. The same goes for those who harbor illusions about suspected "returns to nature" cherished in the usual heat environments. Here too, we are dealing with regressive phenomena, which do not represent any "beginning", but the end of the end, the collapse of an ancient culture into the chaos of original instincts. But, once again, Evola spoke clearly:

...generally, the misunderstanding must be blamed on the formula of a 'return to the origins' confused with a return to 'Mother Earth' and, precisely, to 'Nature'. For the fact that it has often been misapplied, the teaching of that theology is no less correct, according to which a purely 'natural' state has never existed for man; from the beginning he was placed in a 'supernatural' state from which he later decayed. In fact, for man in the proper, typical sense, it can never be a question of those 'origins' and that 'Mother' as a function of which the single does not overcome promiscuity, not only with his peers, but also with animal species. Every return to nature (a formula which, generalizing, can also include every protest in the name of the rights of instinct, of the unconscious, of the flesh, of life inhibited by the 'intellect' and so on) is a reactionary phenomenon.

In reality, Evola has always spoken clearly, and those who have misunderstood him have only themselves to blame. This clarity, this logic that does not allow errors or loopholes, is precisely one of the greatest educational energies contained in Evola's work.

Which presents itself as an organic construction, complete in its parts and in which, from every side, an orientation can be drawn for an anti-democratic, anti-Marxist, anti-Enlightenment vision of the world.

Antidemocratic, not only because it is contrary to political democracy, but because it is in favor of a revival of the aristocratic and qualitative idea at all levels.

Anti-Marxist, as a revolutionary denial of all materialism and the desire to restore, above the economy, the pure political principle, so that the economy is no longer our destiny. Anti-Enlightenment, for its rejection of the progressive myth and for its awareness of the inability of simple reason to represent the spirit.

This is why Evola's work is also anti-rationalistic, not because it indulges in forms of irrationalism, but because it ridicules a reason incapable of commanding the body and phenomena. Hence also Evola's anti-historicism according to which, behind every historicism, there is a "cunning of reason", not in the Hegelian sense of the term, but insofar as the abstract reason of professors and philosophers astutely poses as creator of what happened without her. Even psychoanalysis emerges badly from Evola's criticism, which does not deny the facts described by psychoanalysis, but frames them in an infinitely broader and deeper vision of the human psyche:

It is known that waking up a sleepwalker walking over abyss is the best way to make him fall. Ignorance, in some cases, is a force: once it has been removed to overcome some pathological form of the conflict between the ego and the subconscious, it is not possible to recall it in all other cases in which the personality is left with an illusion of self-autonomy would be healthy, because this illusion can be pragmatically effective, and, given certain premises, can serve as the basis for higher development. Furthermore, the attention psychoanalytically called and concentrated on the roots of the will to pleasure together with all the suggestions of a demonic-sexual order produces a true fascination, which multiplies the ways of access to the already undermined recesses of the 'I welcome the emergence of the darkest and most contaminated influences lurking in the "subliminal". The strength of these statements increases when psychoanalysis becomes a state of mind which, as has happened in certain environments where it has become fashionable and has been taken up by certain extemporaneous literature, already has a collective feel. Apart from some very special cases of psychotherapy, psychoanalysis is a danger when it does not allow itself a discipline aimed at forming a spiritual unity, a true personality in place of the external and inconsistent one created by social conventions...

In reality, it is difficult to find a problem that Evola has not considered. Even those that seem to fascinate contemporaries the most, such as drugs, or sex, on which there is the Metaphysics of Sex, which appeared in '58 and was immediately translated into French and German. In it Evola invests the profound meanings of being a man and being a woman, showing a vast knowledge of the literature on sex, and not only this.

One could also define Evola's work as anti-romantic, if by romanticism we mean, in the current sense of the term, any form of anxiety and sentimentalism.

But if by romanticism we mean that spiritual current that arose in Germany at the dawn of the 19th century as a reaction to the ideas of the Enlightenment and as nostalgia for the past, for the sacred, for the heroic, Evola's work could appear as the culmination of the romantic need and, at the same time, the "classical" limit of romanticism. In fact, Evola has never denied his links with a Schelling, a Novalis, a Baader. There is a line that runs from early romanticism to Evola which is not just anti-modern polemic, but the desire to create a new order in the spirit of the origins, and which finds a very clear formulation in Evola.

It is certain that Evola's speech is broad enough to set up a "civilizational alternative".

It should therefore not be surprising if the far-Right youth looked to Evola as their master, with veneration, sometimes with sectarianism. In fact, everything that was seriously thought of in that environment, the attempts made to overcome the patriotic and Catholicizing banalities in which they wanted to imprison the legacy of Fascism, bear the traces of Evo's teaching. there. And the trial of the neo-fascist youth of 1950, the one in which Evola was dragged into the dock as an "instigator", still has its symbolic value.

Only the intelligent stupidity of many "intellectuals" of the Right, people who write in the newspapers and listen to the problems rather than study them, prevented Evola from openly recognizing his rank. One can

disagree with Evola on many points, but one cannot fail to recognize the strength, coherence and overall logic of his orientation.

A coherence which is also unity of tone, of style, which reaches right down to the choice of words, themes and colors.

Those dense thematic words “starry”, “Olympic” return in Evola, suggesting distant atmospheres, a cold and radiant dimension of the soul and the world. There are those clear, lucid sentences, sometimes deliberately harsh and neglected, but always full of ethos, of style. That style which inspired Albrecht Schaeffer's criteria for translating Homer: to give "the height of the distant, the different, the foreign", to highlight "not the episodic and the sentimental, but rather a laconic monumentality, rigid more than moving, enigmatic rather than familiar, dark and heavy rather than smooth and polished". In fact, a careful reading of Evola opens up an aesthetic understanding of those clear, immature, Homeric tones which are typical of the primordial and original.

This internal rhythm, and the sober and severe images like the colors of valleys in which winter lasts longer, have an evocative character. They refer to the region described in *Revolt against the Modern World*:

The other region, the world of the state of "being", of what is no longer physical but metaphysical "intellectual nature devoid of sleep" - and of which solar symbols, uranic regions, entities of light or of fire, islands and mountain heights were traditionally the figurations.

This unity of thought, tone, style is, properly speaking, Weltanschauung, "vision of the world", a feeling of life that translates into an ideal perspective.

Evola possesses to the highest degree this genius of vision of the world", the sense of wholeness, of totality, which he defined on a page of *Men Among the Ruins*:

The vision of the world is not based on books, but on an internal form and on a sensitivity, having a character that is not acquired, but innate. It is essentially a question of a disposition and an attitude, not of theory or culture, dispositions that do not concern only the mental domain but also affect that of feeling and wanting, inform the character, manifest themselves in reactions having the same certainty as 'instinct, give evidence to a significant side of existence... 'culture' in the modern sense, it ceases to be a danger when those who use it already possess a vision of the world. Only then will we be active with respect to it: precisely because then we will already have an internal form as a sure guide as to what can be assimilated and what must be rejected - more or less as happens in all the differentiated processes of organic assimilation. All this is quite evident, but it has been systematically ignored by liberal and individualistic thought...

If the fog lifts, it will become clear that it is the vision of the world that, beyond any 'culture', must unite or divide by tracing insurmountable frontiers of the soul: that even in a political movement it constitutes the primary element, because only a vision of the world has the power to crystallize a given human type and therefore to give a specific tone to a given community.

This is the final lesson that can be drawn from Evola's work. The Right remains with the task of making it its own and of rising, beyond indifference and nostalgia, to a vision of the world and of life.

Evola's leave

Anyone who went to Evola to meet an inspired person, a prophet, or to hear sentences and enigmatic sayings, would be disappointed.

Likewise, those who were greedy for precious, refined or, in any case, remote from the ordinary attitudes. You would only find there a gentleman with hair that is not yet white, with a figure, despite his forced immobility, still imposing, a distinguished and affable feature, a curious, intelligent, attentive face.

More than a holy man, an aristocrat and, almost, for a certain refinement of *ancién regime* ways, a figure of an eighteenth-century philosopher and traveler.

Yet, with a little observation you could notice that that attentive expression is the indicator of perpetual vigilance, of a personality that watches over itself with continuous discipline, an "intellectual nature deprived of sleep".

This discipline shines through in some details, in the rigid division of the day, in the commitment to do, hour by hour, "what must be done". At any cost, perhaps even a few hours after a serious operation, on a hospital bed, in impossible conditions. This is a way of earning, day by day, a glimmer of eternity, of giving every occupation, even the most modest, a character of completeness, of making the fragment whole and the curve straight."

It is the path described in Ride the Tiger:

... measuring oneself in a special contemplation of death, living every day in a present, as if it were the last day, the direction to be given to one's being like a magnetic force that may not even manifest itself in this existence with the complete rupture of the ontological level typical of 'initiation', but which will not fail to trigger at the right moment, to take us further.

Few elements for the visitor's curiosity: the room on the top floor of a building in the center of Rome, where the traffic noise is muffled; the youthful paintings on the walls with their bright colors; some oriental figurines; the housekeeper, with whom Evola speaks German.

Personal, biographical, the bare minimum. There are just a couple of photographs of Evola. The bonds of kinship are non-existent, or invisible. What Porphyry wrote about Plotinus could be repeated about him: "He did not like to speak of his origins, his relatives, his homeland: nor did he ever allow a painter or sculptor to paint his portrait, almost as if he were ashamed of having a body".

A thin but continuous stream of visitors passes by Evola, almost every day, as if without touching him.

If Evola had his desired vanities, he could have around him, his good group of disciples, disciples who called him "master". But this term, which someone often applies to him, he politely but decisively rejects. And no one was ever authorized by Evola to consider himself his disciple not even the person writing these notes. For the fire of the zealous and the enthusiastic, Evola always has cold water ready, a bit of

that irony that is always present in his conversation. Once, while hearing about a group of his zealots who dedicated Monday to reading Men and Ruins, Wednesday to La Rivolta and Friday to Ride the Tiger, Evola interrupted them by mischievously asking “And what day do they dedicate to the Metaphysics of Sex?”.

Nonetheless, although he shuns the idea of the "cenacle", Evola exerts an influence on those who come into contact with him. An indirect influence, which manifests itself with an aura of seriousness, objectivity, and distance, which is difficult not to be affected by.

He once wrote of those who sit at the banquet as stone guests, who are here, but belong to other worlds. It is not Evola's last merit that he has committed himself so seriously to orienting those who must live here, and now, while his interests gravitate rather towards other vast, cold regions.

Evola's solitude is great, but in this solitude, there is so much security, so much authenticity that it is difficult not to be fascinated by it. It is one of the few authentic things we have left in these days when even non-conformism has become a trend.

“If Tartufo returned to the world, it would be against Evola”: so someone years ago, paraphrasing the famous phrase. Of course, Evola's ideas are such as to irritate the livid Tartufi of anti-fascism while at the same time leaving those on the right perplexed.

And this is one more reason to make them known. It would be truly unforgivable to miss out on the satisfaction of simultaneously attracting the incomprehension of fools and the wrath of imbeciles.

But, above all, it would be unforgivable to leave unused those teachings that Evola communicated to us and which, critically rethought, could constitute the ideal buttresses of a political Right.

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