The Radical Subject: Alexander Dugin on the Origins of His Philosophy

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The New Metaphysics in the Situation of Postmodernity

On the Article “Übermensch”

The New Metaphysics, which describes the ontological situation of extreme despair and the completely God-forsaken world, took shape in my consciousness in the early 1980s under the impression of my grasp of Traditionalist thought (Guénon, Evola, Schuon, etc.) and under the conditions of late Sovietism. Being attracted to the Hermetic tradition, I went to a chemical shop and asked for sulfur, mercury, and salt, to which the clerk replied with scant courtesy that they did not have any of the above, and that everything could only be distributed on approved ration coupons anyway. I didn’t have any coupons, nor any permission. Thus, for the first time, I laid out the approaches to the “New Metaphysics” in an unpublished article written in 1985, Sverkhchelovek (“Übermensch”). The essential point of this article boiled down to reflecting on the Nietzschean definition of the Übermensch, as described in detail by Evola in his Ride the Tiger.

“The Victor over God and Nothingness” – I interpreted this formula as the essence of a special metaphysical program. “God is dead,” exclaimed the madman in Nietzsche’s work, “and we have killed him, you and I!” Man defeated God, and God retreated. This is desacralization. The sacred left. What is left? Nothing. After all, the sacred was the essence of everything, the center of being. After the death of God (victory over God), nothingness or “modern nihilism” (Nietzsche) was discovered.

The Übermensch is he who takes two steps forward to overcome – to overcome God (as an external absolute) and to overcome nothingness, that is the space of godless, desacralized, void reality which discovered its entropic status after the disposal of being. The Übermensch can take these two steps only by interiorizing the Absolute, by discovering the source of the sacred in himself – and this sacred is not borrowed nor participated in, but is spontaneously and sovereignly established through the experience of total emptiness and by passing through nothingness.

The end of the age of God is the transition from pre-modernity to modernity. The overcoming of traditional society yielded modernity. Afterwards, nothingness was exposed. This nothingness is modernity and its action directed against being as the center of the sacred, for there is no other being. Overcoming nothingness – the second step – gives rise to the Übermensch. The latter is a special quality which is to be found neither in Tradition nor in modernity. From this analysis it follows that the Superman is a figure of postmodernity – a key one at that, if we look at postmodernity not through the eyes of postmodernity itself, but through the eyes of Tradition which, albeit powerless, extremely accurately cognizes the meaning of the shifts which take place along the scale of Premodernity-Modernity-Postmodernity.

In essence, the article “Übermensch” was and remains the foundation of my metaphysical program for the past 20 years.

A bit later, in 1986-1987, I decided to develop the main provisions of this article into a more detailed work, Templars of the Other. This book ended up being too concentrated, and as a simplified, explanatory introduction to it in 1988 I wrote The Ways of the Absolute, and then as an explanation for Ways of the Absolute and as a projection of various individual provisions applicable to more specific fields, I wrote all my other books, all the way up to my current cycles of political science articles and remarks on Russian pop music (such as on the group Tatu, and so on). All of this was already implicit in my first article, “Übermensch.”

In the book Templars of the Other, the New Metaphysics was described in greater detail, but in a quite cumbersome manner and in a brutally heavy tongue completely devoid of any elegance.

The harsh theses of the article “Übermensch” flowed into a metaphysical picture.

The Content of Templars of the Other in Brief

We live in a world of Confusion which arose because the connections between the Cause and effect have been distorted and perverted. This gives rise to nihilism, the disposal of the Sacred, and de-ontologization. Things, torn from their roots, are distorted beyond recognition. Modernity is the finale of degradation, and there is almost nothing left.

The masculine element – that which generates, preserves, and destroys – has disappeared from reality. The hero is dead. There is only Tragedy in the world.

But how did the Cause allow these consequences to take off? How did God allow himself to be killed? How did the sacred agree to be removed? After all, there is no higher than the highest…Nevertheless, everything is as it appears to be as long as everything is developing as it is.

This mysterious, highest authority, which is higher than the highest itself, issued the decree for the trajectory of desacralization, ordered being to belittle itself, and sacrality to disperse itself. This authority was interested in the depth of being, in which it sought the mysterious, secret pearl. In order to find this, it was necessary to evaporate the sweet waters of life, to extinguish the heat of the ontological rhythm. This is what happened, and this means that a secret, mysterious hand guided from the highest height the world’s whole path towards Confusion, Perversion, and Degeneration. The End of the World was conceived even before it began. In other words, in the very heart of being there is a strange will to create a territory free from itself. This territory, the nothingness of the modern world, has been created. Post-ontological conditions have set in.

Everything was carried away by the flow of entropy into non-being, oblivion. Everything lost its mind. The only thing that has not lost its head was a seed in snow-covered Moscow with a few volumes of Guénon and a few books of Nietzsche, compressed beyond bearable density, not existing, unknown, totally excluded, and with a being no larger than a match head. In this small point kindled a cold guess as to the Superman and the New Metaphysics, as to the fact that everything is not so coincidental.

By determining the operative parameters of nothingness, the New Metaphysics began to develop in the opposite direction. The thought of the Radical Subject confidently appeared.

The Awakening of the Radical Subject

The Radical Subject is the actor of the new Metaphysics, its pole. The Radical Subject appears when it is already too late, when all others and all else has disappeared. The Radical Subject cannot appear, because he is not planned. He is awakened by the Post-Sacred Will. The Post-Sacred Will is that something which does not coincide with the sacred, but does not coincide with nothingness. This is the main attribute of the Superman. Outside of the sacred, there is only nothingness. This means that there is no Post-Sacred Will. And yet such exists. Only in this mode can it exist.

Post-Sacred Will awakens the Radical Subject, and his awakening creates the Impossible Reality. My book The Knights Templar of the Proletariat described in sufficient detail how this awakening happens, how the Impossible Reality is created, and what moves the Radical Subject is to accomplish. In some ways, the Radical Subject restores the sacred and returns being, but in some ways does not. All determinations of the New Metaphysics balance on blades. A certain frenzied thought and enraged will are clearly pumped up in such, but cannot be simply seized and deciphered.

Here is not the place to describe nuances. It is not yet time. Perhaps today these basic concepts of the New Metaphysics – the Radical Subject, Post-Sacred Will, and Impossible Reality – should be appended with more impressive, yet equally imprecise concepts, such as the Infinite End (Pan-Eschaton) and the Frantic Kingdom (Ecstatic Empire), which expand the synonymic chain of the Impossible Reality.

The New Metaphysics and Postmodernity

It is obvious, or almost obvious, that the metaphysical description of the situation of postmodernity somehow clearly resonates with the parameters of the New Metaphysics and its basic concepts.

The culture-transmitting cycle ranging from the commentaries attached to the article “Übermensch” through the books Templars of the Other, The Ways of the Absolute, Mysteries of Eurasia, the issues of Sweet Angel and Elements, the books The Metaphysics of the Gospel, The Conservative Revolution, The Foundations of Geopolitics, The Knights Templar of the Proletariat, The Russian Thing, and The Evolution of the Paradigmatic Foundations of Science, up to The Philosophy of Traditionalism and The Philosophy of Politics, has been fundamentally completed, although each of the themes and sub-themes addressed therein might freely be appended with explanatory expositions. In general terms, the Opus is finished, and everything has been based on the radical diagnosis given in the New Metaphysics. For such realities, 20 years is no time at all, mais quand meme…The return to the topic of “Übermensch” is ongoing.

The New Metaphysics resonates precisely with postmodernity. Between the New Metaphysics and postmodernity there is a deep connection. It is clear that such is not a sub-product of postmodernity, just as it is clear that such is no synonym of postmodernity. We can speak about the connection for sure, but the nature of this connection has to be clarified. Some operating modules are clearly available, but the elements of postmodernity demand heightened attention. Until its paradigm is fully clarified, describing and investigating it again and again will not be superfluous.

In so doing, we will come closer to the New Metaphysics, not directly, but spirally, rotating around its axis, whether we call such straight or not. Under the surface, it [the New Metaphysics] has been with us all these years. Evidently, it will be for centuries ahead and has been for centuries before, if not perpendicular to these centuries.

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The “Victor over God and Nothingness” as the Axis of My Philosophy

Yet Nietzsche says that the “Übermensch is the victor over God and nothingness.” Why does this figure of Übermensch, who does not at all fit into the Traditionalist context, arise? Tradition reveals the figure of the Savior, the victor over the end times. But this is not the Übermensch, because the ontology of the Savior is undoubtedly transcendent and does not germinate from the “dissipating” subject. This is something other than the subject dissipating in the Kali Yuga…it is something fundamentally different from the main line of development of human history. Human history goes towards nothingness, and nowhere further, ending at this point. So who is this figure of the Übermensch which Nietzsche spoke of?

For 26 years I have been reflecting only on this phrase. I wrote my first programmatic article, “Übermensch”, about it in French. Then as a commentary to this article the unpublished book Templars of the Other was born, and then as a commentary to this unpublished work appeared the book The Ways of the Absolute; then I thought that everything would be quite clear, and yet everything appeared to be extremely complex. Then I wrote a commentary to each of my previous books. For example, the ironic cultural book Pop-Culture and the Signs of the Times was a commentary to The Foundations of Geopolitics and The Philosophy of Traditionalism, then The Russian Thing (the first half being from The Knights Templar of the Proletariat) was a set of remarks concerning National Bolshevism as an extravagant version of the Conservative Revolution. The book The Conservative Revolution, in turn, illustrated the application of Traditionalist ideas to socio-political ideologies. The Philosophy of Politics systematized The Russian Thing in its political science dimension, while Civics for the Citizens of the New Russia brought all of these ideas to the level of Russian schoolchildren. Conspirology was a step into the realm in which Traditionalism intersects with political conspiracy theory, while The Hyperborean Theory studied the symbolism of Tradition and the theory of the “Nordic origins” shared by Guénon and Evola. The book Mysteries of Eurasia applied the principles of sacred geography to the spaces of Russia, while The Metaphysics of the Gospel clarified how Traditionalist ideas correspond to the Orthodox religion. All of these intersecting, circular commentaries, clarifications, and developments of certain topics and returns on different levels to original intuitions and plots, in one way or another (explicitly or implicitly) center around the topic of the Superman and the article of this name authored in my early youth. To this day, I am still streamlining, developing and commenting upon this small text written in French 20 years ago, interpreting it and providing additional testimonies and chains of reasoning…