

THE ESOTERIC ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES



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The reader will not fail to notice that in one particular point among others, the esoteric teachings have a distinctly counter-current character: this is in regards to “evolution”.

Evolution is a type of obsession of the modern mind. It is a true psychological complex that, in the middle of the “logic of the subsoil” about which Iagla [Evola] wrote (Vol 2, ch 2), directs the minds of many of those who presume that they were using the “scientific method” and objective research. Here it would be necessary to be convinced of what is also of value for many other things: or else that certain possibilities of understanding, seeing, and controlling are the effect of a certain change of attitude: and not vice versa, as rationalism would like.

Regarding evolution, it could, for example, have caused surprise about what we said about the hyperborean tradition. In effect, the idea that previously in the interglacial and paleolithic period, a great unitary civilization existed, to which the fundamental symbols, the roots of language, and the graphism are related to the oldest cultures — a similar idea must arise as revolutionary in respect to modern opinions, which are believed to have been proved once and for all on a positive basis. And it is not only a question of simple evolutionism in the history of civilization: even parts of science begin to be touched where, in one form or another, the Darwinian hypothesis on the origins of the species and on the descent of man from animals is current even now.

So the problem must be confronted as a whole. We will therefore mention what the esoteric teaching say about it, without going into details that could take me rather far: beyond the extent it can be usefully discussed in this journal.

Although not stopping myself here, I have to emphasize first of all that in the same field of profane science today it is no longer about the evolutionism that Darwin announced in his time. The Darwinian hypotheses, ever since, has undergone numerous criticisms, and real difficulties, previously not seen, have compelled it to be modified.

Where it is especially shown to be weak, is in its attempt to deduce the variety of the species from an almost automatic play of material conditions of the environment, of natural selection, and of inherited transmission of acquired characteristics. The vitalistic point of view, which asserts precedence and an excess of vital energy over all the conditions, must instead acquire a greater significance. Bergson is among those who have come into play in strictly scientific terrains against Darwinian evolutionism, showing through its insufficiencies that have left the field free for the hypothesis of an evolutionism of a no longer bio-materialistic, but of a creative, character.

The same biologists after all recognized how much the variety of species resists the attempt of that simple and linear deduction, the one from the other, that Darwin conjectured; they were led to admit “quasi-jumps” from some species to others, so that the hypothesis most in vogue today is that of De Vries, who appeals to unpredictable and essential internal mutations precisely to explain those jumps within the scheme of evolutionism.

This, nevertheless, is one hypothesis like any other, which is of interest only for the difficulty that it calls attention to, and that in a great part exists even after the introduction of enigmatic concept of mutation. I note in passing that the difficulty finds an exact comparison in what physics has recently chanced upon, when, with the theory of quanta (Planck) and the principle of indeterminism (Heisenberg), it has had to stop in the face of finite quantities of “action”, without being able to explain, and without being able to point out a continuous process that leads from one to the other.

Moreover, since the evolutionistic hypothesis continues to be in force in biology as far as it has been modified and revised, it is necessary to examine its general foundations. We know the impressive bounty of facts Darwin and his school have gathered in the field of morphology, embryology, paleontology, and even geology. No one would consider denying these facts. What there is to discuss, and to indicate as arbitrary or, at least, as one-sided, is in the interpretation, through which in Darwinism these facts become proofs to support the materialist evolutionistic concept. Without postponing any longer, I will go directly to the fundamental argument.

When they had just succeeded in establishing a continuity of forms and rings, permitting the passage from one species to another, up to man, with that, one line remains simply established, and no one tells us in what direction it has traversed. Hence, a priori, every fact adopted to uphold evolutionism could be simultaneously adopted to sustain the opposite thesis: the involutionistic thesis: neither more nor less. As true that the lower species are the levels preceding the higher—it is as true that they are instead degenerative involutions of the latter. The presence of intermediate stages (when they are also transitional stages)—and not from crossbreeding or from selection: other possibilities that the evolutionists don't consider) cannot tell me, by themselves, in what direction the march happened.

That is the fundamental point. Let's now see what can be added to it.

Let us begin with the peoples called backward from the point of view of their mentality and their civilization. Who tells us that they represent the primitive states of present humanity rather than involutive forms and residues of an even older humanity? The fact that the backward peoples are more likely to disappear than to “evolve”, should make us reflect. Besides, one must consider that an even more ancient humanity could have been different, as much from not leaving traces where forms of civilization closer to us were successful and superimposed: from leaving instead traces of them precisely in their degenerating origins, but only of the same trunk. Modern ethnological studies on presumed “primitives” have ascertained in them not a lower level of the same mentality, but rather of another mentality, another civilization. From them, through integration, one can reach back to an even older humanity. Modern explorers of prehistory, like Frobenius and Wirth, for example, have followed this method.

Moving from primitive man to the anthropoid and the ape, and presuming the jumps are surmountable, which therefore must be made in order to reach the other animal forms according to transformist models, we can say the same thing: as far as being able to consider many animal species

as degenerations or degradations of still older non-animal forms. Our point of view is exactly this: Man does not derive from the animal but, if ever, it is the various animal species that derive from man, in a sense that we now try to explain.

The principle difficulty that this point of view encounters lies in the fact that the traces of man end at a given geological period: while the traces of prehistoric animals continue up to a much older period. But this same fact is susceptible to different interpretations, for those who can consider the idea of transformations with sufficient breadth: that the mineral traces of man are more recent, could mean only that man was the last to come into that process, under a certain involutinal aspect, through which it is precisely possible that they exist as fossils and therefore those traces are retrievable.

The misunderstanding about “cavemen” comes from not thinking that it is natural that certain very old traces are still found in the caves, because, for multiple factors, they have not been preserved elsewhere. The idea of the recent appearance of man on the earth is based on a lack of vision of the same type; I certainly am not asking anyone to admit the fall of man from the sky: it is enough to surpass the mineral, but not the material, concept of corporality; it suffices to think of the possibility of a body whose most physical element (which today is the skeletal system) was composed by a substance unsusceptible to self-conservation through the process of fossilization—to remain indifferent in the face of the fact of the lack of traces in the most remote geologic periods, and to be able to admit the existence of primordial human stocks (of which the anthropoids would be the first degenerating materializations) coexisting among more driven forms of the involutive process, which would be represented by the oldest animals of prehistory. This concept has nothing absurd in itself. Analogically, every manifestation has of necessity an inversive character: whatever stands more to the origin, more to the internal, more to the center, can only be the last to appear in the movement toward the external;. And at the center and at the origin, according to esoteric teaching, would exactly be Man.

NOTE: What happens to the rest in every finalistic process: the goal, the end precedes as idea all those conditions that are necessary to actualize it, and as reality it appears as the last, after them.

This Man naturally does not correspond to the man of today: but he corresponds to them in the sense that man of today can be considered as the most approximate manifestation and the most direct lineage of primordial Man. As such, he represents the origin, the axis, while the other species represent lateral or divergent directions, if not to say, byproducts.

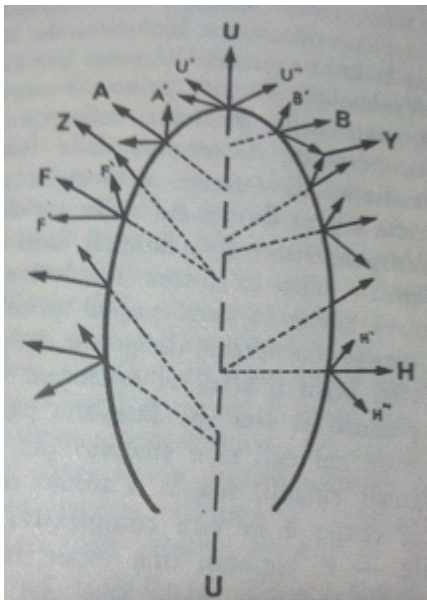
With an image previously used by “Ea”, I can perhaps indicate better what otherwise would require a long detour of concepts in order to be understood.

Let us imagine something like an assault, like an undertaking of conquest. A group of tightly unified forces confront the danger, they approach the goal. A battle is undertaken. On the defenseless front some begin to fall back, others advance. The resistance is met, the clash begins. The empire bends. Few succeed in maintaining the original direction – like the wake of a boat, they leave behind them,

dispersed, stopped, sacrificed or beaten, the greater part of those, with whom they were together at the beginning of the undertaking. The group of survivors hold firm, advance again: always fighting, they succeeds in opening a way, they finally reach the position that it was the goal of the undertaking, they conquers it, they maintain it, they planted their own banner in it. In all the other directions, the aborted, frustrated, arrested attempts of the same will lag behind on the way without exit.

We mean now by “conquest”, the achievement of the physical state of existence in the conditions well-known to us today; we mean that those who have reached the end are men and others who were defeated or have deviated, are the various animal species. Man, as known today, expresses the form in which the stock of a primordial humanity is conserved and still standing in the conditions of materiality, in which various animal species were included in the beginning, certainly not in the forms that appear to us today, but rather in the principles of them, which have taken their origin biologically from a degenerative specialization, from a ramification of the original direction into divergent directions, each one expressing the exhaustion of an attempt, the arrest of a surge of assault from which those who have “broken down” are separated and that they left behind themselves.

It is interesting to notice that ideas of this type were also put forward at the fringes of modern culture, without a connection with traditional teaching. In the works of Edgar Dacqué [Leben als Symbol, Umwelt, Sage und Menschheit] I find, for example, a rather similar conception, and an illustration that makes very clear the concept discussed above



In U, where it runs in the central direction, there is man as we know him. A, B, etc., can be considered as the nearest attempts, e.g., the diluvial man, the anthropoid, the ape-man. Further down and backward in time, there are the other, more elementary and divergent, attempts, the first to appear in the completely “densified” form of existence that we know, accessible to paleontology and whose region extends to the outside of the circular line marked in the figure. The individual points of exit on

this line from which then a group of vectors and secondary deviations starts in turn, represent the “types” of each species; and these secondary deviations (which are, in the figure, the vectors $U'U$, $A'A$, $B'B$, $F'F$, etc., in respect to the directions U , A , B , F , which also continue to the outside the vector that comes from the axis) are the transformation that each species has undergone in a partial battle, in the middle of adaptation, selection, etc.: that is to say, in the middle of the factors to which Darwin wanted to reduce the whole. Instead, the passage from one species to another does not happen at the periphery: at the periphery only hybrids (as in Z and Y) can be verified, erroneously interpreted by evolutionists as “transitional forms”. The “passage” is instead determined by the issuing and from the emerging of a new branch that departs from the central direction (which goes toward man) to the head of a new impulse, at the failure of what preceded.

Here we can also take into account the true meaning of another of the facts that would seem to prove evolutionism, summarized in the idea that ontogeny repeats phylogeny. That man, in his development from the embryo, through a series of phases which have a certain resemblance with the animal forms of life, from our point of view, means only this: that each human realization includes in brief and retraces the attempts, whose possibility was included in the original stock: but to retrace them exactly on the base of the original impulse, that goes beyond them all; something evident in itself, insofar as an embryo stopped in any phase you want, always remains just a human embryo, not that of a fish or another animal species.

It is in a very special sense, not material and not valid for biological consideration, that one can say that to the extent the central line UU passes through the origin of the various types of animality, man, before appearing as such in this world, lived in the hierarchy of animal forms. It is not a question, moreover, of any of the animal forms that are terrestrial and historical manifestations anterior to man: instead it is about that which corresponded to the “sacred animals” in the ancient mystery traditions. In the cult of such “animals”, that in an involutive and restricted form often are found again in certain primitive peoples, that conceal the record of this knowledge, of this co-essentiality, being related to other planes or states of existence. The sacred animals are powers of life that made up part of primordial man, and from which he separated to go beyond; they are not individual animals, but the “group soul” [anima di gruppo], daemons, whose body is the total life of a given animal species—and, each one, a transcendent experience, used up and abandoned in the wake of the past through a type of catharsis or purification. But, as I said, they were in origin parts of universal man, and terrestrial man was the most direct expression of the origin the relationships, the hidden correspondence, will remain: those that esoterism considers as marking the limbs, the functions, and the energies of the human body with the zodiac symbols or other equivalents.

Our figure corresponds, more or less, to the model of a branched tree which should be conceived in its external part as a continuous movement of expansion and return, similar to that produced by a heart: that, in order to indicate the appearance of the individuals of each species and their reabsorption into the original stocks to which they belong, and in which the dark will is conserved that continues to be blindly asserted in the dead-end efforts that constitutes it.

And as each one of these efforts constitutes, less a factor of fall and deviation, an approximation of the central will that reaches its realization only in man; equally humanity itself is an endless reiteration of attempts and approximations that achieves a perfect realization of the type only in very rare men. In a certain way, the battle expressed in the preceding image is still open: if man represents, at least on earth, the last conquered position, as the most advanced position, is the most difficult to maintain.

The drifters, the fallen, the deserters, those who are overwhelmed by animal passions are again aspirated and redissolved in forces that bring them back, through contacts with the hidden forces of animality, are without number.

The doctrine of metempsychosis comes into play here in its correct light. It is true in the sense that the possibility of an involutive process is real, for which there is not—as in the vulgar interpretation—the passing of the soul of a man into the body of an individual animal: but there is instead its reabsorption into the being or archetype that constitutes the form of the animals born of a given species, whose hidden direction is similar to what informed the whole life of such a man.

Recalling what was said many times in these pages, we can moreover think that, also apart from such “sacrifices” of men to “sacred animals”, other possibilities exist and places of reabsorption. In general, the measure in which the human life receives collective influences, likewise indicates that of the reabsorption and the refoundation in the matrix of humanity, the individual serving as the material for other attempts, other blows, that more or less can happen at the center of the target.

In this regard, many things could be said to clarify the esoteric view about conditioned immortality and reincarnation, if only to interpret phenomena correctly, like those of certain “inheritances”: which—I give it a quick look—do not have for their basis the transmission from individual to individual, but instead a type of “habit” picked up from the “genius” or “manes” of a given stock: from where every individual who is enucleated in it brings, at the most, a determined characteristic attribute that refers back to a collective influence.

Perhaps I will give myself the opportunity to add something about this. Here, I will conclude by mentioning that the Aristotelian-scholastic terminology, through which the “genus” is the matter and the individual is the form—the more there is individuation, the more there is form and perfection—it is that which best reflects our ideas.

Everything in life that is still collective, shows how much there is in man that is still unaccomplished. Separating himself from all that is not himself, individuating himself absolutely from being only himself, and only himself, man goes beyond the destiny of rebirth, because he accomplishes the goal of that very rebirth. Without further variations and deviations, he then incarnates the pure central vector by “not having more daemons” and by doing a single thing on earth with his “idea” and his “Name”.

