

RADICAL



TRADITIONALISM

Selections of Julius Evola

BERSERKER

BOOKS



A New Man for a New Civilization

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] When we talk about racism, most people think of anti-Semitism; in other words, they refer to the mere anthropological and biological domain: only a few have an idea of the meaning that this doctrine may have from a practical and formative point of view and even of its political importance. However, here I will state only what is relevant to the specific order of ideas that we are discussing.

First of all, we must note that in modern racism the race is not considered within the context of those general classifications that school textbooks refer to as the white, yellow, and black races. The race is conceived as a more elementary and specialized unit; thus, within the white race there are several races. These elementary races are defined in terms that are not merely biological and anthropological, but psychological and spiritual as well. To each of the racial components there correspond various dispositions, forms of sensibility, values, and views of life which are also differentiated.

There are actually no civilized peoples or nations composed of pure individuals belonging to the same single race. All peoples are composed of more or less stable racial mixtures. We go from the theoretical domain to the practical one, or to "active racism," whenever we take a position before the racial components of a given nation, refusing to acknowledge to all of them the same value, the same dignity, and the same right to impart the tone and form to the whole. At that point a choice, an election, and a decision are necessary. One of the components must be given preeminence, by referring to the typical values and the human ideals that correspond to it.

In the case of German populations, the racial component that is superior to the other ones with which it is mixed has usually been identified with the Nordic element. When we consider Italy, the superior component is identified with the Roman element.

First of all it is necessary to overcome the frivolous pride of some nationalists, according to whom the ultimate criterion consists of having the same fatherland and a common history; hence the Italian habit of indiscriminately exalting everything that is "ours." The truth is that just as with any great historical nation, and likewise with Italy, despite a certain uniformity of the common type, there are different components. It is important not to create illusions but to objectively recognize that which, although being "ours," hardly corresponds to a higher calling. As we can see, this is the counterpart of what I

discussed in chapter 8 about the political-cultural domain, in regard to a "choice of traditions."

The creation of a new State and of a new civilization will always be ephemeral unless their substratum is a new man. [...]

A True Empire: Form and Presuppositions of a United Europe

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

In order to head toward a united Europe, the first step should consist of a concerted exit of all European nations from the United Nations, which is an illegitimate, promiscuous, and hypocritical association. Another obvious imperative should be to become emancipated in every aspect and in equal measure from both the United States and the USSR. [...]

[...] Here I will only hint at what concerns the form and the spiritual and doctrinal presuppositions of a united Europe. [...] The only genuine solution must have an organic character; the primary element should be a shaping force from within and from above, proper to an idea and a common tradition. [...]

[...] As I have indicated in another chapter, the concepts of fatherland and nation (or ethnic group) belong to an essentially naturalistic or "physical" plane. In a united Europe, fatherlands and nations may exist [...] What should be excluded is nationalism (with its monstrous appendix, namely imperialism) and chauvinism—in other words, every fanatical absolutization of a particular unit. Thus "European Empire," and not "Nation Europa" or "European Fatherland" should be the right term, in a doctrinal sense. In the Europeans we should appeal to a feeling of higher order, qualitatively very different from the nationalistic feeling rooted in other strata of the human being. [...]

The scheme of an empire in a true and organic sense (which must clearly be distinguished from every imperialism, a phenomenon that should be regarded as a deplorable extension of nationalism) was previously displayed in the European medieval world, which safeguarded the principles of both unity and multiplicity. In this world, individual States have the character of partial organic units, gravitating around a *unum quod non est pars* ("a one that is not a part," to use Dante's expression)—namely, a principle of unity, authority, and sovereignty of a different nature from that which is proper to each particular State. But the principle of the Empire can have such a dignity only by transcending the political sphere in the strict sense, founding and legitimizing itself with an idea, a tradition, and a power that is also spiritual. The limitations of the sovereignty of the single national units before an eminent right of the Empire have as their sole condition this transcendent dignity of the Empire; as far as structure is concerned, the whole will appear as an "organism composed of organisms," or as an organic federalism similar to that realized by Bismarck in the second

German Reich, which was not acephalous. These are the essential traits of a true Empire.

What are the conditions and the opportunities for the realization of such an idea in Europe today? [...] Because what is needed is an organic unity, the premise should rather be the integration and consolidation of every single nation as a hierarchical, united, and well-differentiated whole. The nature of the parts should reflect the nature of the whole. [...] What matters is the synergy and the opportunity for every common action.

Every organic unit is characterized by a principle of stability. We should not expect a stability of the whole, where there is no stability guaranteed in its very components. Even from this point of view, the elementary presupposition of an eventual united Europe appears to be the political integration of the single nations. European unity would always be precarious if it leaned on some external factor, like an international parliament lacking a common, higher authority, with representations from various democratic regimes; such regimes, because they are constantly and mutually conditioned from below, cannot in any way ensure a continuity of political will and direction. [...]

What is required is not to impose a common regime on every European nation; however, an organic, hierarchical, anti-individualistic, and antidemocratic principle should be adequately implemented, even though in various forms adopted to different circumstances. Thus, the preliminary condition is a general antidemocratic cleansing, which at the present appears to be almost utopian. Democracy, on the one hand, and a European parliament that reproduces on a larger scale the depressing and pathetic sight of the European parliamentary systems on the other hand: all this would bring ridicule upon the idea of a united Europe. In general, we should think of an organic unity to be attained from the top down rather than from the bottom up. Only elites of individual European nations could understand one another and coordinate their work, overcoming every particularism and spirit of division, asserting higher interests and motives with their authority. [...] A well-established "center" should exist in every nation; as a result of the harmony and the synergy of such centers, the higher European unity would organize itself and operate.

Overall, what should be promoted is a twofold process of integration: on the one hand, national integration through the acknowledgment of a substantial principle of authority that is the basis for the organic, anti-individualistic, and corporative formation of the various sociopolitical national forces; on the other hand, supernational European integration through the acknowledgment of a principle of authority that is as super-ordained toward that which is proper of single units (individual States), as it is toward the people included in each of these units. Without this, it is useless to talk about an organically united Europe.

Having put the problem in these terms, there are serious difficulties regarding the spiritual, not merely political, foundations required to implement this European unity. Where should we find these foundations? [...]

Obviously, it would be a pure Utopia to yearn to oppose in practical terms all the material aspects of modern civilization: among other things, this would involve surrendering the practical means that are necessary today for every defense and attack. However, it is always possible to establish a distance and a limit. It is possible to enclose that which is "modern" in a well-controlled material and "physical" domain, on the plane of mere means, and to superimpose upon it a higher order adequately upheld, in which revolutionary-conservative values are given unconditional acknowledgment. The Japan of yesterday demonstrated the possibility and the fecundity of a solution of this type. Only in that case could Europe represent something different, distinguish itself, and assume a new dignity among world powers. [...] The first European detoxification should concern this obsession with "antifascism," which is the catchphrase of the "crusade" that has left Europe in a pile of rubble. However, we cannot side either with those pro-European sympathizers who can only refer to what was attempted in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany before the war, toward the creation of a new order. These groups fail to recognize that Fascism and National Socialism were movements and regimes in which different and even contrasting tendencies coexisted; their development in the right, positive, revolutionary-conservative sense could have occurred only if circumstances had allowed for an adequate, further development, which was stricken down by the war they ignited and by their ensuing defeat. This is how we should at least proceed to a precise distinction, if we want to draw reference points from those movements.

Besides doctrinal difficulties, which I have examined, a radical European action finds its major obstacle in the lack of something that could represent a starting point, a firm support, and a center of crystallization. Before 1945 we could at least witness the wonderful sight of the principle of a supernational European Army, and the legionary spirit of volunteers from many nations who, having been organized in several divisions, fought on the Eastern front against the Soviets; at that time the foundation was the Third Reich. Today the only concrete, though partial, European initiatives of various governments are taken on a mere economic plane, without any deep ideological and ideal counterpart. Those who are sensitive to the idea of a united Europe in a higher sense are only isolated individuals, and not only are they not supported, but also they are even opposed by their own countries; and much more so, let me add, if their necessary antidemocratic and anti-Marxist profession of faith is openly declared. In effect, a European action must proceed in parallel with the rebirth and the revolutionary-conservative reorganization of the individual European countries: but to recognize this also means to acknowledge the disheartening magnitude of the task ahead.

Despite this, we could suggest the idea of an Order, whose members would act in the various nations, doing what they can to promote an eventual European unity, even in such unfavorable conditions. The enthusiasm of young militants who conduct an active propaganda should be commended, but it is not enough. We should count on people with a specific qualification, who occupied or intended to occupy key positions in their own nations. What kind of men could be up to this task? Assuming bourgeois society and civilization as a reference point, it is necessary

to win over to the cause and to recruit people who neither spiritually belong to the bourgeoisie nor are affected by it, or who are already beyond it. A first group should be composed of members of ancient European families that are still "standing" and who are valuable not only because of the name they carry, but also because of who they are, because of their personality. It is very difficult to find such men but there are some exceptions, and even during and after the last World War, some of these figures emerged. Sometimes it is a matter of awakening something in the blood that has not been entirely lost but still exists in a latent state. In these elements we would expect to find the presence of congenital, "racial" dispositions (racial in the elitist and non biological-racist sense of the term) that guarantee an action and a reaction according to a precise and secure style, free from theories and abstract principles, in a spontaneous and complete adherence to those values that every man of good birth considered obvious before the rise of the Third Estate and of what followed it.

In regard to a second and more numerous section of the Order, I have in mind men who correspond to the human type shaped here and there through selections and experiences of an essentially warrior character, and through certain disciplines. Existentially speaking, this type is well versed in the art of "demythologization": it recognizes as illusion and hypocrisy the entire tenacious legacy of the ideologies that have been employed as instruments, not to bring down this or that European nation, but to deal a deadly blow to the whole of Europe. These men harbor a healthy intolerance for any rhetoric; an indifference toward intellectualism and politicians' gimmicks; a realism of a higher type; the propensity for impersonal activity; and the capability of a precise and resolute commitment. In the past, in some elite fighting units, today among paratroopers and analogous corps (e.g., Marines and others), some disciplines and experiences favor the formation of this human type, which displays the same traits in various nations. A common way of being constitutes a potentially connective element, beyond nationalities. By winning over these elements to the European cause, we could constitute, with a "force at the ready," the most active cadres of such an Order. If direct and integrating communications were established between these two groups (which is not as difficult as it may first appear), the foundation would be laid. For these men, the most important concerns should be the European idea in terms of values and of worldview, followed by the Order and then by the nation.

Naturally, the personality of an authentic leader at the center and head of the Order is of the utmost importance. Unfortunately, no such person exists today: it would be dangerous and rash to see him in any of the figures who are currently working here and there, albeit with the best of intentions, selflessly and bravely, to form European groups. One has to consider here that no one could have detected in advance the potential of any of the men who later became leaders of great movements. Nevertheless, it is easy to see the great advantages in the case where such a man, in whom authority and status now became manifest, had been there from the beginning.

We do not need to repeat what the basic requirement is for such a European action to mature and bear any results. One must first get rid of

the political class, which holds the power in almost all European countries in this time of interregnum and European slavery. This would be immediately possible if a sufficient mass of today's peoples could be reawakened from their stupefied and stultified condition that has been systematically created by the prevailing political-social ideas.

But the greatest difficulty for the true European idea is the deep crisis of the authority principle and the idea of the State. This will seem contradictory to many, because they believe the strengthening of that principle and that idea would bring in its wake a schismatic division and thus a rigid, anti-European pluralism. We have already shown why this is not at all the case, when we were speaking of the Männerbünde and indicating the higher level that characterizes the idea of a true State and its authority, in contrast to everything that is merely "folk" or "nation." For the individual, true political loyalty includes, besides a certain heroic readiness, a certain degree of transcendence, hence something not merely nature-bound. There is no break, but rather continuity when one crosses from the national level to the supernational: the selfsame inner readiness will be required as in the times of Indo-European origins and of the best feudal regimes, in which it was also a matter of the voluntary union of free powers, proud to belong to a higher order of things that did not oppress but rather embraced them. The real obstacles are only fanatical nationalism and the collapse of society and community.

In summary, let it be said that breaking through into more thoughtful minds is the idea that in the current state of affairs, the uniting of Europe into a single bloc is the indispensable prerequisite for its continuation in a form other than an empty geographical concept on the same materialistic level as that of the powers that seek to control the world. For all the reasons already explained, we know that this crisis involves a dual inner problem, if under these circumstances one hopes to establish a firm foundation, a deeper sense, and an organic character for a possible united Europe. On the one hand, an initiative in the sense of a spiritual and psychic detoxification must be taken against what is commonly known as "modern culture." On the other, there is the question of the kind of "metaphysics" that is capable, today, of supporting both a national and a supernational principle of true authority and legitimacy.

The dual problem can be translated into a dual imperative. It remains to be seen which and how many men, in spite of it all, still stand upright among so many ruins, in order that they may make this task their own.

A Verifiable Existential Truth - the Doctrine of Two Natures:

Tradition's Foundation - Divine Kingship & Initiation

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] I identified the foundation of the world of Tradition with the doctrine of two natures, a doctrine based on the notion of the existence

of two opposing orders: a physical order and a metaphysical. The latter order represents the superior realm of 'being' opposed to the lower realm of becoming and of history: an immortal nature opposed to the perishable. The man of Tradition does not perceive this doctrine as merely a 'theory', but rather as a directly verifiable existential truth. Each traditional civilization is thus characterized by an attempt to lead man from the lower order of reality to the higher, along various stages of approximation, participation and effective realization.

Originally, at the centre of each traditional civilization, stood 'immanent transcendence': the concrete presence of a non-human transcendent force embodied in higher beings possessing the highest authority. Perhaps the chief expressions of this idea are ancient forms of divine kingship. The most common means of passing from the lower nature to the higher has always been initiation. Contemplation and heroic action represent two great paths based on an approximation to the higher order; loyalty and ritual, two means of sharing in such an order. The higher order of reality has always found a support in traditional law, with its objective and supra-personal character, and has symbolically been expressed by the traditional state or empire: a worldly and historical reflection of that which transcends the world. Such, then, are the foundations of traditional hierarchies and civilizations. [...]

Absolute Life & Absolute Actions:

the Path of the Other & the Path of the Absolute Individual

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] 'Just as fire can affirm the will of fuel to live and blaze, so the "I" which wishes to be sovereign unto itself has the power to absorb its own non-being as the matter from which, alone, the splendor of an absolute life and of absolute actions might spring forth.' In philosophical terms, such an approach left two paths open: the 'path of the other' and 'the path of the Absolute Individual'. [...] In Buddhism, the 'path of the other' (which I also termed 'the path of the object') corresponds to samsāra, the inferior world of becoming, which arises from thirst and greed; in the ancient Mysteries, this path corresponds to the 'cycle of generation' or necessity. The opposite path is described as the path of the Awakened or Liberated in Buddhism, and as the path of the consecrated in the ancient Mysteries. [...]

About Germans

(from "Revolt Against the Modern World")

[...] As far as the Germans were concerned, since the times of Tacitus they appeared to be very similar to the Achaean, paleo-Iranian, paleo-Roman

and Northern-Aryan stocks that had been preserved, in many aspects (including the racial one), in a state of "prehistoric" purity. The Germanic populations just like the Goths, the Longobards, the Burgundians, and the Franks were looked down upon as barbarians by that decadent "civilization" that had been reduced to a juridical administrative structure and that had degenerated into "Aphrodisiac" forms of hedonistic urban refinement, intellectualism, aestheticism, and cosmopolitan dissolution. And yet in the coarse and unsophisticated forms of their customs one could find the expression of an existence characterized by the principles of honor, faithfulness, and pride. It was precisely this "barbaric" element that represented a vital force, the lack of which had been one of the main causes of Roman and Byzantine decadence.

The fact that the ancient Germans were "young races" has prevented many scholars from seeing the full picture of earlier antiquity; these races were young only because of the youth typical of that, which still maintains contact with the origins. These races descended from the last offshoots to leave the Arctic seat and that therefore had not suffered the miscegenation and the alterations experienced by similar populations that had abandoned the Arctic seat much earlier, as is the case with the paleo-Indo-European stocks that had settled in the prehistoric Mediterranean.

The Nordic-Germanic people, besides their ethos, carried in their myths the traces of a tradition that derived immediately from the primordial tradition. The fact that during the period in which they appeared as decisive forces on the stage of European history these stocks lost the memory of their origins, and that the primordial tradition was present in those stocks only in the form of fragmentary, often altered, and unrefined residues, did not prevent them from carrying as a deep, inner legacy the possibilities and the acquired weltanschauung from which "heroic" cycles derive.

The myth of the Edda spoke about both the impending doom and the heroic will opposed to it. In the older parts of that myth there remained the memory of a deep freeze that arrested the twelve "streams" originating from the primordial and luminous center of Muspelheim, located at the "far end of the earth"; this center corresponds to the Ariyana Vaego (the Iranian equivalent of the Hyperborean seat), to the radiant Northern Island of the Hindus, and to the other figurations of the seat of the Golden Age. Moreover, the Edda mention a "Green Land" floating on the abyss and surrounded by the ocean; according to some traditions, this was the original location of the "Fall" and of dark and tragic times, since it was here that the warm current of the Muspelheim (in this order of traditional myths, the waters represent the force that gives life to people and to races) met the frigid current of Huergehmir. Just as in the Zend-Avesta the freezing and dark winter that depopulated Ariyana Vaego was conceived as the work of an evil god opposed to the luminous creation, likewise this Eddic myth may allude to the alteration that precipitated the new cycle; this is true especially if we consider that the myth mentions a generation of giants and elemental telluric beings, creatures that were defrosted by the warm current, and against whom the race of the Aesir is going to fight.

In the Edda, the theme of ragna-rok or ragna-rokkr (the "destiny" or the "twilight of the gods") is the equivalent of the traditional teaching concerning the four-stage involutive process; it threatens the struggling world, which is already dominated by dualistic thinking. From an esoteric point of view this "twilight" affects the gods only metaphorically; it also signifies the "dimming" of the gods in human consciousness because mankind loses the gods, that is, the possibility of establishing a contact with them. Such a destiny may be avoided, however, by preserving the purity of the deposit of that primordial and symbolic element -gold- with which the "palace of the heroes," the hall of Odin's twelve thrones, was built in the mythical Asgard. This gold, which could act as a source of good health so long as it was not touched by an elemental or by a human being, eventually fell into the hands of Albericus, the king of the subterranean beings that in the later editing of the myth are called the Nibelungs. This clearly shows the echo of what in other traditions was the advent of the Bronze Age, the cycle of the Titanic-Promethean rebellion, which was probably connected with the magical involution in the inferior sense of previous cults.

Over and against this stands the world of the Aesir, the Nordic-Germanic deities who embody the Uranian principle in its warrior aspect. The god Donnar-Thor was the slayer of Thym and Hymir, the "strongest of all," the "irresistible," the "Lord who rescues from terror," whose fearful weapon, the double hammer Mjolmir, was both a variation of the symbolic, Hyperborean battle-axe and a sign of the thunderbolt force proper to the Uranian gods of the Aryan cycle. The god Woden-Odin was he who granted victory and who had wisdom; he was the master of very powerful formulae that were not to be revealed to any woman, not even to the king's daughter. He was the eagle; he was the host and the father (1) of the dead heroes who were selected by the Valkyries on the battlefields; it was he who bestowed on the noble ones that "spirit that lives on and which does not die when the body is dissolved into the earth"; and he was the deity to whom the royal stocks attributed their origin. The god Tyr-Tiu was another god of battles, and the god of the day, of the radiant solar sky, who was represented by the rune Y, which recalls the very ancient and Northern-Atlantic sign of the cosmic man with his hands raised.

(1) According to the original Nordic-Germanic view, the only people to enjoy divine immortality were, besides the heroes chosen by the Valkyries, the nobles, by virtue of their nonhuman origin; apparently, only heroes and the nobles were cremated. In the Nordic tradition only this ritual, prescribed by Odin, opened the doors of Valhalla while those who were buried (a Southern ritual) were believed to become slaves of the earth.

One of the motifs of the "heroic" cycles appears in the saga concerning the stock of the Wolsungen, which was generated from the union of a god with a woman. Sigmund, who will one day extract the sword inserted in the divine tree, came from this stock. In this saga the hero Sigurd or Siegfried, after taking possession of the gold that had fallen into the hands of the Nibelungs, kills the dragon Fafnir, which is another form of the serpent Nidhoog. This serpent, in the action of corroding the roots

of the divine tree Yggdrasil (its collapse will mark the twilight of the race of the gods), personifies the dark power of decadence. Although Sigurd in the end is killed by treachery and the gold is returned to the waters, he nevertheless remains the heroic type endowed with the tarnkappe (the symbolic power that can transfer a person from the bodily dimension to the invisible), and predestined to possess the divine woman either in the form of a vanquished Amazonian queen (Brynhild, as the queen of the Northern Island) or in the form of a Valkyrie, a warrior virgin who went from an earthly to a divine seat.

The oldest Nordic stocks regarded Gardaríke, a land located in the Far North, as their original homeland. This seat, even when it was identified with a Scandinavian region, was associated with the echo of the "polar" function of Mitgard, of the primordial "center"; this was a transposition of memories from the physical to the metaphysical dimension by virtue of which Gardaríke was also identified with Asgard. Asgard allegedly was the dwelling place of nonhuman ancestors of the noble Nordic families; in Asgard, Scandinavian sacred kings such as Gilfir, who had gone there to proclaim their power, allegedly received the traditional teaching of the Edda. Asgard was also a sacred land, the land of the Nordic "Olympian" gods and of the Aesir, access to which was precluded to the race of the giants.

These motifs were found in the traditional legacy of Nordic-Germanic populations. As a view of the world, the insight into the outcome of the decline (ragna-rokkr) was associated with ideals and with figurations of gods who were typical of "heroic" cycles. As I have said, in more recent times this was a subconscious legacy; the supernatural element became obscured by secondary and spurious elements of the myth and the saga, as did the universal element contained in the idea of Asgard-Mitgard, the "center of the world." [...]

About Modern Civilization's Contagion

(from "Revolt Against the Modern World")

[...] This present "civilization," starting from Western hotbeds, has extended the contagion to every land that was still healthy and has brought to all strata of society and all races the following "gifts": restlessness, dissatisfaction, resentment, the need to go further and faster, and the inability to possess one's life in simplicity, independence, and balance. Modern civilization has pushed man onward; it has generated in him the need for an increasingly greater number of things; it has made him more and more insufficient to himself and powerless. Thus, every new invention and technological discovery, rather than a conquest, really represents a defeat and a new whiplash in an ever faster race blindly taking place within a system of conditionings that are increasingly serious and irreversible and that for the most part go unnoticed. This is how the various paths converge: technological civilization, the dominant role of the economy, and the civilization of production and consumption all complement the exaltation of becoming and

progress; in other words, they contribute to the manifestation of the "demonic" element in the modern world." (1) [...]

About the Relationship between the Dying World

& the World to Come

(from "Revolt Against the Modern World")

[...] Just like people, civilizations also undergo their own cycle, consisting of a beginning, a development, and an end; the more they are immersed in what is contingent, the more this law is inescapable. This obviously is not enough to frighten those who are rooted in what cannot be altered and what remains as a perennial presence by virtue of its being above time. Even though it may be destined to disappear, modern civilization is certainly not the first to become extinct, nor is it the one after which none will follow. In the life of what is conditioned by space and time, lights are continually being put out and kindled again, cycles end and new ones begin. As I have said, the doctrine of the cycles was known to traditional man and only the ignorance of modern man has induced him to believe that his civilization, which is characterized by the deepest roots in the temporal and contingent element, will enjoy a different and privileged fate.

To those who have a vision in conformity with reality, the problem is rather to what degree can there be a relationship of continuity between the dying world and the world to come; in other words, what elements of the old world will survive and be carried forth into the new one? The predominant view in the ancient traditional teaching is that some kind of gap separates one cycle from the next; the new cycle allegedly will be characterized not by a gradual getting up and reconstruction, but by a new beginning, a sudden mutation brought about by a divine and metaphysical event, just like an old tree does not flourish again, but dies and a new tree grows out of its seeds. This view clearly shows that the relationships of continuity between two cycles are only relative and, in any event, do not affect the masses and great structures of a civilization. These relationships only concern essential vital elements, much in the way the seed is related to the new plant.

Thus, one of the many illusions that needs to be rejected is the one nourished by those who try to see a superordained logic behind the processes of dissolution, and who think that somehow the old world had to die in order to bring forth the new world toward which mankind is heading. And yet, the only world toward which we are heading is simply that which picks up and reassumes in an extreme way that which has acted during the phase of destruction. Such a world cannot be the basis for anything meaningful, nor can it provide the material from which traditional values may be revived again, precisely because it is the organized and embodied negation of these values. There is no future, in the positive sense of the word, for modern civilization as a whole. Thus, it is a mere fancy harbored by those who dream about a goal and a future

that somehow may justify what man has destroyed both inside and outside himself. [...]

Action & Spiritual 'Experimentation':

Black, White & Red - the Regal, Active & Virile Path of Tradition

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The full title of my book was The Doctrine, Symbols and Regal Art of the Hermetic Tradition (La tradizione ermetica nella sua dottrina, nei suoi simboli e nella sua Arte Regia). What I chiefly focused on was alchemical Hermetica. These texts consist of those works of mythical origin which are first recorded in the Hellenistic period in Greek and Syriac form. This tradition was later continued by the Arabs, from whose hands it reached the European West, where it flourished in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, up to the dawn of modern scientific chemistry.

From an external point of view, all the texts of this ancient doctrine discuss chemical and metallurgic operations - particularly the production of gold, of the philosophers' stone and of the elixir of wisdom. The practical and operative side of this discipline was termed the hieratic or regal art; it was expressed by means of both a coded and symbolic language that sounded obscure to profane ears, and of the myths of Classical Antiquity. Naturally enough, modern culture interpreted alchemy as an infantile, superstitious and myth-loving sort of chemistry - something of interest to the historian of science, but which had certainly been rendered obsolete by the advent of scientific chemistry. A similar analysis, however, ignores what Hermetic authors have always made clear: that their writings are not to be taken literally, for they are written in a secret language. Hermetic authors claimed to be writing only for themselves and for those who already know, as their secret doctrine can exclusively be learned from a Master or by means of sudden enlightenment. Moreover, it is also evident that the basic worldview shared by Hermetic authors - their understanding of nature and of man - radically differs from that of modern science; and that it rather coincides with the worldview of Gnosticism, theurgy, magic, and of all ancient hieratic doctrines. In other words, it is clear that alchemy pertains to an altogether different spiritual realm from that of ordinary chemistry.

I sought to pursue a systematic study of the Hermetic and alchemical tradition in order to emphasize its true essence as an initiatory science concealed by the use of chemical and metallurgic language. In my work, I pointed out that the substances mentioned in alchemical texts are actually symbols embodying the energies and forces present in man and nature (nature which is here approached sub specie interioritatis, in its hyper-physical aspects). The various alchemical operations are essentially concerned with the initiatory transformation of the human being. Alchemical 'gold' is a metaphor for the immortal and invulnerable being, here conceived in terms of the aforementioned theory of

conditioned immortality, which is to say: not as a given, but rather as something which is to be obtained by means of a secret procedure. On the whole, alchemy is founded on a specific cosmology and a symbolic operative system.

What I have just said applies to the most genuine and essential side of the alchemical tradition, stripped of its dross and of secondary or accessory components. The 'dross' of alchemy consists of the speculations and endeavors of those individuals who have mistakenly taken alchemical symbolism literally, and have performed all sorts of material tasks and disorderly experiments - which can indeed be described as infantile and pre-scientific attempts at chemistry. The true 'sons of Hermes', however, dubbed such people 'coal-burners', to signify that they were nothing but profane practitioners who might lead the true science of alchemy to its ruin.

As for the secondary or accessory components of alchemy, these consist in the possibility of actually changing matter: for instance, by transforming metals, but by very different means from those of modern science - by means, that is, of altering matter 'from within', thanks to supra-normal abilities closely related to the internal self-transformation of the initiate (this being the chief purpose of the alchemical art).

In the light of these aims of the regal art, any 'psychological' and psychoanalytic interpretation of alchemy, of the kind which has recently been suggested, clearly appears inadequate. Alchemy has nothing to do with the products of the subconscious, with images of libido or with the involuntary and compulsive manifestation of Jungian 'archetypes' on the unreal and subjective level of the human psyche. Rather, alchemical processes are concrete operations possessing genuine power and deriving from specific forms of knowledge. An emphasis on these features of alchemy is what informed my own treatment of the subject.

The purpose of my book, however, was not only to provide an interpretation of alchemical Hermeticism from an initiatory perspective, but also to focus on alchemy as the embodiment of one of the two chief paths of Tradition: the regal, active and virile path - the other being the priestly, or ascetic and contemplative, path. Alchemical Hermeticism certainly placed an emphasis on the practical and operative side of the Art, and hence on action and spiritual 'experimentation'. The very name most frequently given to alchemy is revealing in this sense: alchemy is the *ars regia*, the regal art. But more revealing still are the stages of alchemical self-realization. According to all texts, the alchemical Great Work consists of three main phases, symbolized by three different colors: black, white and red, which correspond to the phases of *nigredo*, *albedo* and *rubedo* respectively. *Nigredo*, also known as the 'blackening', roughly corresponds to the death of the physical 'I', and to the transcendence of the limits of ordinary individuality. *Albedo*, or the 'whitening', represents the ecstatic opening experienced by the initiate, his experience of light, but merely in a passive manner - which is why this phase is also known as the rule of the Woman or of the Moon. *Albedo* is then transcended when one reaches the final and most perfect stage in the alchemical process: *rubedo* or the 'reddening', which consists of the

reaffirmation of the virile, sovereign nature - so that the Woman is overcome by the rule of Fire and of the Sun. Some Hermetic authors explicitly link the color red to regal or imperial purple. [...]

Americanization is Impossible to Fight other than Within Oneself

(from "Civiltà Americana")

Americanization in Europe is widespread and evident. In Italy it is a phenomenon which is rapidly developing in these post-war years and is considered by most people, if not enthusiastically, at least as something natural. Some time ago I wrote that of the two great dangers confronting Europe - Americanism and Communism - the first is the more insidious. Communism cannot be a danger other than in the brutal and catastrophic form of a direct seizure of power by communists. On the other hand Americanization gains ground by a process of gradual infiltration, effecting modifications of mentalities and customs which seem inoffensive in themselves but which end in a fundamental perversion and degradation against which it is impossible to fight other than within oneself.

It is precisely with respect to such internal opposition that most Italians seem weak. Forgetting their own cultural inheritance they readily turn to the United States as something akin to the parent guide of the world. Whoever wants to be modern has to measure himself according to the American standard. It is pitiable to witness a European country so debase itself. Veneration for America has nothing to do with a cultured interest in the way other people live. On the contrary, servility towards the United States leads one to think that there is no other way of life worth considering on the same level as the American one.

Our radio service is Americanized. Without any criterion of superior and inferior it just follows the fashionable themes of the moment and markets what is considered 'acceptable' - acceptable, that is, to the most Americanized section of the public, which is to say the most degenerate. The rest of us are dragged along in its wake. Even the style of presentation on radio has become Americanized. "Who, after listening to an American radio program, can suppress a shudder when he considers that the only way of escaping communism is by becoming Americanized?" Those are not the words of an outsider but of an American sociologist, James Burnham, professor at University of Princeton. Such a judgment from an American should make Italian radio programmers blush for shame.

The consequence of the 'do your own thing' democracy is the intoxication of the greater part of the population which is not capable of discriminating for itself, which, when not guided by a power and an ideal, all too easily loses sense of its own identity.

American "Civilization"

(from "Civiltà Americana")

The recently deceased John Dewey was applauded by the American press as the most representative figure of American civilization. This is quite right. His theories are entirely representative of the vision of man and life which is the premise of Americanism and its 'democracy'.

The essence of such theories is this: that everyone can become what he wants to, within the limits of the technological means at his disposal. Equally, a person is not what he is from his true nature and there is no real difference between people, only differences in qualifications. According to this theory anyone can be anyone he wants to be if he knows how to train himself.

This is obviously the case with the 'self-made man'; in a society which has lost all sense of tradition the notion of personal aggrandizement will extend into every aspect of human existence, reinforcing the egalitarian doctrine of pure democracy. If the basis of such ideas is accepted, then all natural diversity has to be abandoned. Each person can presume to possess the potential of everyone else and the terms 'superior' and 'inferior' lose their meaning; every notion of distance and respect loses meaning; all life-styles are open to all. To all organic conceptions of life Americans oppose a mechanistic conception. In a society which has 'started from scratch', everything has the characteristic of being fabricated. In American society appearances are masks not faces. At the same time, proponents of the American way of life are hostile to personality.

The Americans' 'open-mindedness', which is sometimes cited in their favor, is the other side of their interior formlessness. The same goes for their 'individualism'. Individualism and personality are not the same: the one belongs to the formless world of quantity, the other to the world of quality and hierarchy. The Americans are the living refutation of the Cartesian axiom, "I think, therefore I am": Americans do not think, yet they are. The American 'mind', puerile and primitive, lacks characteristic form and is therefore open to every kind of standardization.

In a superior civilization, as, for example, that of the Indo-Aryans, the being who is without a characteristic form or caste (in the original meaning of the word), not even that of servant or shudra, would emerge as a pariah. In this respect America is a society of pariahs. There is a role for pariahs. It is to be subjected to beings whose form and internal laws are precisely defined. Instead the modern pariahs seek to become dominant themselves and to exercise their dominion over the entire world.

An 'Anarchist of the Right' Views Original Beats & Hippies
as more Revolutionary than Ideological & Political 'Ordine Nuovo' Youths
with Bourgeois Everyday Life

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] One last essay of The Bow and the Club that I would like to mention is 'Youth, Beats and Anarchists of the Right' ('La gioventu, i beats e gli anarchici di destra'). I had already discussed the matters this essay examines on various other occasions. As it were, many of those young people who had made a positive impression on me upon my return to Italy in 1948, on account of the fact that they subscribed to the ideals of the Right, had gradually lost their way. Of these young men, those good at writing had chosen to cash in their literary talent by turning to fields such as journalism; and even when their inner inclinations had remained the same, they nevertheless had given in, in other respects (I will here refer to what I have previously written concerning the watering-down of traditionalism). The only group that has remained faithful to its original ideas and has made no compromises is the one known as 'Ordine Nuovo'. However, it should also be noted that even those young men who have continued to follow certain values share little in common with the anti-bourgeois youth of my day, the ideal - if distorted - legacy of which lies in the anarchistic, 'protesting' and 'burnt-out youth' embodied by beats and hippies. The 'revolutionary' drive of the former youths of today, on the other hand, is generally limited to the ideological and political sphere, where it is expressed through the fight against the democratic system and Marxism. Quite a few of these young men are also willing to resort to action and run concrete risks; and yet their everyday life is hardly 'revolutionary': rather, it remains as bourgeois as that of most other people - particularly with respect to marriage, sex, offspring and family.

It is for this reason that, in the aforementioned essay, I chose to discuss the beat movement (in its original form, however, not in its more recent and squalid offshoots). I emphasized the problems and limits of this movement, and also pointed to the various ways in which those youths who are driven by similar urges as those of the beats might avoid dangerous paths or deadly snares, while securing for themselves a legitimate framework in which to voice dissent, and acquiring a real center that might allow them to 'be.' Hence, my idea of an 'anarchist of the Right': who, unlike other anarchists, rejects certain things not for the mere sake of rejection, but because he cherishes values that are not found in the present order; because he rejects the bourgeois world, and aspires to a superior freedom conjoined with a more rigorous discipline (for 'one can only allow himself that which he also has the power to refuse': 'If the hinge is strong, the door can be slammed'). [...]

Antibourgeoisie

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] However, we must concede that, per se, an anti-bourgeois stance has a reason for existence. I do not mean bourgeois so much in the sense of an economic class, but rather its counterpart: there is an intellectual world, an art, custom, and general view of life that, having been shaped

in the last century parallel to the revolution of the Third Estate, appear as empty, decadent, and corrupt. A resolute overcoming of all this is one of the conditions required to solve the present crisis of our civilization.

Thus, those attempts to react against the most extreme aspects of world subversion are very dangerous indeed, when they aim only at ideas, habits, and institutions of the bourgeois era. This amounts to supplying ammunition to the enemy. A bourgeois mentality and spirit, with its conformism, psychological and romantic appendices, moralism, and concerns for a petty, safe existence in which a fundamental materialism finds its compensation in sentimentality and the rhetoric of the great humanitarian and democratic words—all this has only an artificial, peripheral, and precarious life, no matter how resolutely it survives due to the inertia in wide social strata of many countries of the "free-world." Therefore, I claim that to react in the name of the idols, the lifestyle, and the mediocre values of the bourgeois world, as is the case with the great majority of modern supporters of "law and order," means the battle is lost from the start.

However, just as the bourgeoisie in previous civilizations was a socially intermediate class, situated between the warriors and the political aristocracy on the one hand, and the mere "people" on the other hand—likewise, there is a double possibility (one positive, the other negative) of overcoming the bourgeoisie in general—that of taking a resolute stand against the bourgeois type, the bourgeois civilization, and its spirit and its values.

The first possibility corresponds to a direction that leads even lower, toward a collectivized and materialist subhumanity, under the banner of Marxist realism—to social and proletarian values against the "bourgeois decadence". It is indeed possible to conceive a liquidation of everything that pertains to the conventional, subjectivist, and "unrealistic" world that was generally bourgeois, leading not higher but lower than what is proper to the normal ideal of personality. This happens when the final result is the mass individual, the "collective" of Soviet ideology, in the mechanized and soulless climate that accompanies it. In this case, the result of the liquidation of the bourgeois world may amount only to a further regression: we go toward what is below rather than above the person. It is the opposite of what happened in the great "objective" civilizations (to use Goethe's expression), which fostered anonymity and disdain for the individual, though against the background of superior, heroic, and transcendent values.

Likewise, if the striving toward a new realism is right, we can clearly see the mistake of those who regard only the inferior degrees of reality as real. This is when realism is essentially formulated in economic terms (as happens in communism). The same applies to some trends that have emerged in the arts or at the margins of philosophy, and that have sided with left-wing movements, assuming an anticonformist stance toward the actual society. One of these trends calls itself "neo-realism", while another is the radical existentialism inspired by Sartre and his coterie. In this philosophy, "existence" is identified with the most shallow forms of life; this kind of existence is separated from any superior principle,

made absolute, and cherished in its anguished and lightless immediacy. This type of existentialism has its counterpart in psychoanalysis, a doctrine that divests and brands as unreal the conscious and sovereign principle of the person, considering instead as "real" the irrational, unconscious, collective, and nocturnal dimension of the human being: on this basis, every higher faculty is seen as derived and dependent. This also happens on the social and cultural plane, where Marxism endeavors to portray as mere "superstructure" everything that cannot be counted as social and economic processes. We are obviously in the same line of thought when existentialism proclaims the primacy of "existence" over "being", instead of acknowledging that existence acquires a meaning only when it is inspired by something beyond itself. Thus, there is an exact, visible parallel between such intellectual currents and revolutionary, sociopolitical movements, because what we are dealing with is the manifestation, in the individual domain, of what in the social and historical domain manifests itself as a subversive shift of power toward the masses, replacement of the superior with the inferior, and the removal of every principle of sovereignty that does not originate "from below". The existentialist and psychoanalytical "realism", together with similar trends, points to a human image that reflects such relationships in the individual; such an image appears as mutilated, distorted, and subversive. Thus, we may regard it as the result of some congeniality when many intellectuals of similar leanings sympathize with the social left-wing currents, even when the political leaders of these currents do not have the same feelings for them.

However, there is a second possibility: one may conceive a realistic view and a struggle against the bourgeois spirit, individualism, and false idealism that is more radical than the struggle waged against them by the Left, and yet oriented upward, not downward. As I have said in a previous chapter, this different possibility is contingent upon a revival of the heroic and aristocratic values when they are assumed naturally and clearly, without rhetoric or pomposity: in retrospect, typical aspects of the Roman and Germanic-Roman world have already exemplified it. It is possible to keep a distance from everything that has only a human and especially subjectivist character; to feel contempt for bourgeois conformism and its petty selfishness and moralism; to embody the style of an impersonal activity; to prefer what is essential and real in a higher sense, free from the trappings of sentimentalism and from pseudo-intellectual super-structures—and yet all this must be done remaining upright, feeling the presence in life of that which leads beyond life, drawing from it precise norms of behavior and action.

Everything that is antibourgeois in this sense does not converge toward the communist world; on the contrary, it is the premise for the emergence of new men and leaders, capable of erecting true barriers against global subversion, in correspondence with the establishment of a new climate, one that will be endowed with its own unique expressions even in terms of culture and civilization

It is therefore paramount to recognize clearly the opposition between the two above-mentioned possibilities or directions of the antibourgeois stance. This is especially true in Italy. In the past, Fascism adopted an antibourgeois stance and, as part of the renewal that it was supposed to

usher in, desired the advent of a new man, who was supposed to break with the bourgeois style of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Unfortunately, this was one of the cases where Fascism never got past its own sloganeering; those elements in Fascism that, despite all, remained bourgeois or became bourgeois by contagion constituted one of its weaknesses. As far as the present is concerned, with rare exceptions the average Italian communist is nothing but a bourgeois who takes to the streets (Lenin himself said that a proletarian, left to himself, tends to become a bourgeois), just as a false Christian and a member of the Christian Democratic Party represent nothing more than the bourgeoisie in the temple. Even those who call themselves monarchists can only conceive of a bourgeois king. The worst evil for Italy is the bourgeoisie: the bourgeois-priest, the bourgeois-worker, the bourgeois-"noble", the bourgeois-intellectual. This type is inconsistent, a substance without form, in which there is no "above" and no "below." The watchword or rallying cry should be: "Wipe the slate clean!" Only by following this dictum will the shift toward the wrong direction be averted.

Anti-War Western Bloc Facing Fanaticism
Will Need Qualified Men When Times of Pure Destruction Come

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] The quality and spirit of the men to whom the arms, the means of offense and destruction, are given, have represented, still represent and will always represent the basic element of 'war potential'. No mobilization will ever be 'total' if men whose spirit and vocation are up to the tests which they must face cannot be created.

How are things, in this respect, in the world of the 'democracies'? They now want, for the third time this century, to lead humanity to war in the name of 'the war against war'. This requires men to fight at the same time that war as such is criticized. It demands heroes while proclaiming pacifism as the highest ideal. It demands warriors while it has made 'warrior' a synonym for attacker and criminal, since it has reduced the moral basis of 'the just war' to that of a large-scale police operation, and it has reduced the meaning of the spirit of combat to that of having to defend oneself as a last resort.

[...] Let us examine this problem more closely. In what cause should the man of 'the Western bloc' go to war and face death? It is obviously nonsensical to respond in the name of the bourgeois ideal, the carefully maintained 'security' of existence which abhors risk, which promises that the maximum comfort of the human animal shall be easily accessible to all. Few will be deluded enough to imagine that, by sacrificing themselves, they can secure all this for future generations. Some will try to make others go and fight instead of them, offering as inducements beautiful words about humanitarianism, glory and patriotism. Apart from this the only thing a man in such a world will fight for is his own skin.

[...] Thus, those who are fundamentally lacking in heroism will seek to awaken warriors for the 'defense of the West' by playing upon the complex of anxiety. Since they have deeply demoralized the true Western soul, since they have debased and demeaned, firstly, the true basis of the State, hierarchy and virile solidarity, and secondly, the notion of war and combat, they must now play the 'trump card' of the anti-Bolshevik crusade.

[...] In the opposing bloc there are forces which combine technology with the elemental force of fanaticism, of dark and savage determination and of the contempt for individual life found among masses which, whether through their own ancient traditions or through the exaltation of the collectivist ideology, hardly value their own existence. This is the tide which will swell forth not only from the Red East, but from the whole of a contaminated and unleashed Asia.

However, what is really required to defend 'the West' against the sudden rise of these barbaric and elemental forces is the strengthening, to an extent perhaps still unknown to Western man, of a heroic vision of life. Apart from the military-technical apparatus the world of the 'Westerners' has at its disposal only a limp and shapeless substance - and the cult of the skin, the myth of 'safety' and of 'war on war', and the ideal of the long, comfortable, guaranteed, 'democratic' existence, which is preferred to the ideal of the fulfillment which can be grasped only on the frontiers between life and death in the meeting of the essence of living with the extreme of danger.

[...] It will be hard for the forces already in motion to stop [...] and there will only remain one course of action: to ride the tiger, as the Hindu expression puts it.

[...] modern man, by creating the world of technology and putting it to work, has signed his name to a debt which he is now required to pay. Technology, his creature, turns against him, reduces him to its own instrument and threatens him with destruction. This fact manifests itself most clearly in modern war: total, elemental war, the merciless struggle with materiality itself. Man has no choice but to confront this force, to render himself fit to answer this challenge, to find in himself hitherto unsuspected spiritual dimensions, to awake to forms of extreme, essentialized heroism, forms which, while caring nothing for his person, nevertheless actualize [...] the "absolute person" within him, thus justifying the whole experience.

There is nothing else one can say. Perhaps this challenge will constitute the positive side of the game for especially qualified men, given that game must be accepted and played out anyway. The preponderance of the negative part, of pure destruction, may be frightening, infernal. But no other choice is given to modern man since he himself is the sole author of the destiny, the aspect of which he is now starting to see.

This is not the moment to dwell on such prospects. Besides, what we have said does not concern any nation in particular, nor even the present time. It concerns the time when things will become serious, globally, not merely for the interests of the bourgeois, capitalist world, but for what

those men must know, who at that point will still be able to gather in an unshakeable bloc.

Apoliteia as no Concrete, Appreciable Results Possible
through Rectifying, Political Action

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] The "immortal principles" of 1789 and the rights of equality granted by absolute democracy to the atomized individual regardless of qualification or rank, and the irruption of the masses into the political structure, have effectively brought about what Walther Rathenau calls a "vertical invasion by barbarians from below," Consequently, the following observation of essayist Ortega y Gasset remains true: "The characteristic fact of the moment is that the mediocre soul, recognizing itself as mediocre, has the audacity to assert the right of mediocrity and impose it everywhere."

In the introduction I mentioned the few who by temperament and vocation still think today, in spite of everything, about the possibility of a rectifying, political action. Men among the Ruins was written with their ideological orientation in mind. But on the basis of experience we must admit the lack of the necessary premises to reach any concrete, appreciable results in a struggle of this kind. On the other hand, I have specified within these pages a human type of a different orientation, although spiritually related to those others who will fight on even in hopeless positions. After taking stock of the situation, this type can only feel disinterested and detached from everything that is "politics" today. His principle will become apoliteia, as it was called in ancient times.

It is important to emphasize that this principle refers essentially to the inner attitude. In the present political situation, in a climate of democracy and "socialism," the rules of the game are such that the man in question absolutely cannot take part in it. He recognizes, as I have said before, that ideas, motives, and goals worthy of the pledge of one's own true being do not exist today; there are no demands of which he can recognize any moral right and foundation outside that which they derive as mere facts on the empirical and profane plane. However, apoliteia, detachment, does not necessarily involve specific consequences in the field of pure and simple activity. I have already discussed the capacity to apply oneself to a given task for love of action in itself and in terms of an impersonal perfection. So, in principle, there is no reason to exclude the political realm itself as a particular case among others, since participating in it on these terms requires neither any objective value of a higher order, nor impulses that come from emotional and irrational layers of one's own being. But if this is how one dedicates oneself to political activity, clearly all that matters is the action and the impersonal perfection in acting for its own sake. Such political activity, for one who desires it, cannot present a higher value and dignity than dedicating oneself, in the same spirit, to quite different

activities: absurd colonization projects, speculations on the stock market, science, and even - to give a drastic example - arms traffic or white slavery.

As conceived here, apoliteia creates no special presuppositions in the exterior field, not necessarily having a corollary in practical abstention. The truly detached man is not a professional and polemic outsider, nor conscientious objector, nor anarchist. Once it is established that life with its interactions does not constrain his being, he could even show the qualities of a soldier who, in order to act and accomplish a task, does not request in advance a transcendent justification and a quasi-theological assurance of the goodness of the cause. We can speak, in these cases, of a voluntary obligation that concerns the "persona," not the being, by which - even while one is involved - one remains isolated.

I have already said that the positive overcoming of nihilism lies precisely in the fact that lack of meaning does not paralyze the action of the "persona." In existential terms, the only exception would be the possibility of action being manipulated by some current political or social myth that regarded today's political life as serious, significant, and important. Apoliteia is the inner distance unassailable by this society and its "values"; it does not accept being bound by anything spiritual or moral. Once this is firm, the activities that in others would presuppose such bonds can be exercised in a different spirit. Moreover, there remains the sphere of activities that can be made to serve a higher-ordained and invisible end, as when I mentioned the two aspects of impersonality and what is to be gained from some forms of modern existence.

Turning to a particular point, one can only maintain an attitude of detachment when facing the confrontation of the two factions contending for world domination today: the democratic, capitalist West and the communist East. In fact, this struggle is devoid of any meaning from a spiritual point of view. The "West" is not an exponent of any higher ideal. Its very civilization, based on an essential negation of traditional values, presents the same destructions and nihilistic background that is evident in the Marxist and communist sphere, however different in form and degree. I will not dwell on this, given that I have outlined a total conception of the course of history, and dismissed any illusion about the final result of that struggle for world control, in *Revolt Against the Modern World*. Since the problem of values does not come into question, at most it presents a practical problem to the differentiated man. That certain margin of material freedom that the world of democracy still leaves for external activity to one who will not let himself be conditioned inwardly, would certainly be abolished in a communist regime. Simply in view of that, one may take a position against the soviet-communist system: not because one believes in some higher ideal that the rival system possesses, but for motives one might almost call basely physical.

On the other hand, one can keep in mind that for the differentiated man, having no interest in affirming and exposing himself in external life today, and his deeper life remaining invisible and out of reach, a

communist system would not have the same fatal significance as for others; also an "underground front" could very well exist there. Taking sides in the present struggle for world hegemony is not a spiritual problem, but a banal, practical choice.

Army Membership as First Step
towards Higher Order of True Traditional Spirituality

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] Thus the vision of one's life as membership within an army gives shape to an ethic of its own and to a precise inner attitude which arouses deep forces. On this basis, to seek membership in an actual army, with its disciplines and its readiness for absolute action on the plane of material struggle, is the right direction and the path which must be followed. It is necessary first to feel oneself to be a soldier in spirit and to render one's sensibility in accordance with that in order to be able subsequently to do this also in a material sense, and to avoid the dangers which, in the sense of a materialistic hardening and overemphasis on the purely physical, can otherwise come from militarization on the external plane alone: whereas, given this preparation, any external form can easily become the symbol and instrument of properly spiritual meanings.

A Fascist system of ethics, if thought through thoroughly, cannot but be directed along those lines. 'Scorn for the easy life' is the starting point. The further points of reference must still be placed as high as possible, beyond everything which can speak only to feeling and beyond all mere myth.

If the two most recent phases of the involutory process which has led to the modern decline are first, the rise of the bourgeoisie, and second, the collectivization not only of the idea of the State, but also of all values and of the conception of ethics itself, then to go beyond all this and to reassert a 'warlike' vision of life in the aforementioned full sense must constitute the precondition for any reconstruction: when the world of the masses and of the materialistic and sentimental middle-classes gives way to a world of 'warriors', the main thing will have been achieved, which makes possible the coming of an even higher order, that of true traditional spirituality.

Aryan Tantrism or Shakti-Tantras' Olympian Transformation
& the Necessity of a Shiva Nature to fully go the Left-Hand Path

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] A completely revised second edition of Man as Potency was published by Bocca in 1949 under the title of The Yoga of Power (Lo Yoga della

potenza). The subtitle of the book was also simplified to 'Essays on the Tantras'.

Only in this second edition of the book did I explore the place of the Tantras within Hinduism. The basic themes of these texts are revealing of a substrate of aboriginal traditions and cults which predate the Aryan conquest. The Tantras provide the glimpse of a predominantly 'gynecocratic' civilization, which is to say: a civilization where the essence and sovereign power of the universe is identified with a feminine principle or goddess. On a cultural and mythological level, the goddess possesses both terrible, destructive traits and luminous, beneficent and maternal ones. Clear analogies exist between this figure and the great goddesses which are described in similar myths from the archaic Mediterranean world. Yet, in the symbiosis that followed the Aryan conquest of India, these original myths were transposed on a metaphysical level. With the goddess possessing the essential nature of Shakti - a term that might be translated as 'power' - the doctrine emerged according to which power is the ultimate principle of the universe. This notion provided the foundation for those treatments of Tantrism which captured my attention: those found in the Shakti-Tantras.

[...] the Tantras appear far removed from those Vedantist doctrines that interpret the world as an illusion. The Tantras conceive of Shakti as a kind of 'active Brahman' rather than as the pure infinity of conscience. Māyā is here replaced with Māyā-Shakti, i.e., that 'power' which manifests and affirms itself in the form of cosmogonic magic. Besides, according to what might be termed Tantric historiography, the Tantric system conveys those truths and those spiritual paths most adequate in the so-called kali-yuga (or 'dark age'). Because of the profound changes which characterize the kali-yuga, general existential conditions in this age differ from the original conditions on the basis of which the doctrines of the Védas had first been formulated. It is elementary forces which now prevail: man finds himself connected to such forces and unable to retreat; hence, man must face these forces, control them and transform them, if he wishes to find liberation and freedom. The path to this goal can no longer be the purely intellectual path, nor the ascetic-contemplative path, nor the ritual one. Pure knowledge in our day must lead to action: for this reason, Tantrism describes itself as sadhana-shastra: a system based on techniques, and on a concrete effort towards self-realization. According to the Tantric perspective, knowledge must serve as a means towards self-realization and radical self-transformation. One Tantric text explains that: 'Each (doctrinal) system is purely the means to an end: it is useless, if one does not yet know the Goddess (that is to say: if one has yet to unite with Shakti, or power); and it is useless, if one already knows Her.' In another text it is said that: 'It is like a woman to strive to establish superiority by means of discursive arguments; it is like a man to conquer the world with one's own power.' A common analogy is that between Tantrism and medicine: the truth of each doctrine is proven by its fruits, and not by reasoning alone. Clearly, the 'East' in question here is of a very different sort from the stereotypical East that many Westerners have in mind. I was the first writer in Italy to appreciate and make this particular East known: what Sir John Woodroffe did in the English language, I did in Italian.

Overall, the Tantras reflect the development of one central component of Eastern metaphysics: an experimentalism that is not confined to empirical experience and sense perception. [...]

Tantric literature is both vast and diverse. As I already mentioned, my main interest lay in the Shakti-Tantras, the Tantras of Power (or Shakti). The so-called 'Left-Hand Path' - that of Kaulas, Siddhas and Viras - combines the aforementioned Tantric worldview with a doctrine of the Übermensch which would put Nietzsche to shame. The East as a whole has generally avoided the fetish of morality: at a higher level, every moral, for Eastern thought, simply represents the means to an end. A classic illustration of this point is the Buddhist portrayal of law as a raft that is built to cross a stream and later discarded. The Vira - which is to say: the 'heroic' man of Tantrism - seeks to sever all bonds, to overcome all duality between good and evil, honor and shame, virtue and guilt. Tantrism is the supreme path of the absolute absence of law - of shvecchacari, a word meaning 'he whose law is his own will'. [...]

Both editions of my book on Tantrism contained two main sections. The first section was entitled 'The Doctrine of Power'. This represented the metaphysical section of the book, where I described the various phases, levels and changes which lead from the highest point - the unconditioned - first to the world of the elements and of nature (here not exclusively considered in its physical aspects), and ultimately to the human condition itself. One of the names given to this process is pravrtti-marga, which is to say: the binding path, the path leading to identification with forms and determinations. This path is then followed by nivrtti-marga: the path of detachment, revulsion, and transcendence, which has man as its starting point. This led me from metaphysics to the issue of practice and yoga.

[...] The kind of yoga I specifically discussed was hatha yoga (i.e., 'violent yoga') or kundalini-yoga, which is regarded as being closely connected to Tantrism. Unlike dhyana-yoga or jñana-yoga, kundalini-yoga is not of a purely contemplative and intellectual character. Although it presupposes an adequate psychical and mental training, kundalini-yoga takes the body as its starting point and tool - the body not in the form known by Western anatomy and physiology, but in the form which also includes the kind of deep, trans-biological energies which are not usually perceived by ordinary consciousness (particularly in the case of modern man). These forces correspond to those elements and powers of the universe which the thousand-year-old hyperphysical physiology of the East has studied just as systematically as the West has studied human organs. As for the term 'kundalini-yoga', it is indicative of a method that employs kundalini as a means towards de-conditioning and liberation - kundalini being the 'power', or Shakti, which is present, albeit latently, at the very root of the psycho-physical organism.

One of the most significant features of Tantrism is its notion of the unity of bhoga and yoga, which is to say: of enjoyment (i.e., enjoyment of the various experiences and possibilities open to man), and liberation or asceticism. Tantric texts explain that other schools conceive of bhoga and yoga as two mutually exclusive paths (so that he who enjoys material things is not regarded as a liberated soul or ascetic, while he who is a

liberated soul or ascetic is thought not to enjoy material things); but the texts add that in Tantrism, this is not the case, for 'according to the path of the Kaulas, enjoyment becomes perfect yoga, and the world itself becomes the place for liberation': for 'without power, liberation is a farce'. Tantrism advocates a paradoxical embracing of the world of life and experience - including its most intense and dangerous sides - but in a detached way. Ultimately, Tantrism is based on the 'transformation of poison into remedy'; i.e., on the use of all powers and experiences ordinarily leading to greater attachment, ruin and perdition, as a means to liberation and enlightenment. It is in this context that Tantrism expresses the ideal of liberation, not as a form of 'escapism', but as concrete and immanent freedom: the very ideal which the West has pursued and promoted in all possible ways, yet only in an intellectual, degraded, materialist and trite way.

In the second edition of the book I added much new material. For instance, I explored Vajrayana (Buddhist Tantrism) - a subject which I had overlooked out of ignorance when writing the first edition of the book. In the second edition, I also corrected or elucidated a number of points I had raised: I removed various 'critical' appendages, and further developed certain sections. This was the case with the chapter dealing with Tantric sexual practices, a subject that had been a matter of scandal among Western 'spiritualists', including Madame Blavatsky, who had described Tantrism as 'black magic of the worst kind' (this is, of course, revealing of how little Theosophists - but also Anthroposophists - actually knew about Eastern doctrines). This chapter of the book also contains some of the fundamental ideas that I developed in one of my latest books: *The Metaphysics of Sex (Metafisica del sesso)*.

One of the characteristics which distinguishes the first edition of my book on Tantrism from the second is a shift of emphasis away from the notion of 'power'. After all, the use of the term Shakti to describe the highest principle is somewhat misleading. No doubt, Tantric texts frequently refer to Mahā Shakti: the Great or Supreme Power which is the ground of all things. Yet, this highest principle is best described as that which - like Plotinus' One - embraces all possibilities. In accordance with all esoteric doctrine, Hindu metaphysics and mythology generally describe Shakti (power) as the eternal feminine principle which has its counterpart in the eternal masculine principle - symbolized, in Tantrism, by the figure of Shiva. Just as Shakti is dynamic, productive and changing, so Shiva is immobile, luminous, and detached. Just as, in Hindu cosmology, the union of Shiva and Shakti engenders the universe, so the mystery of the inner transformation of the human being and the highest principle of freedom are described as the union, within man, of the two principles - rather than as a self-abandonment to the pure, unrestrained power of Shakti.

The practical consequence of this conceptualization of Shakti in Tantrism is the Tantric promotion of an 'Olympian transformation' of the individual, who is to banish all forms of 'titanic', pandemic and chaotically ecstatic deviation. In such a way, Tantrism prevented the adoption of potentially catastrophic approaches: for only in the case of those individuals possessing a Shiva nature does the Left-Hand Path, or Path of the Kaulas, not lead to perdition and regression. Tantric

doctrine thus appeared to embody values I had already encountered in the works of Lao Tzu and, even earlier, in my own approach to Dadaism. [...]

At Least Times of "Provincialism" are Over:
Now Rootless State of Cosmopolitanism & Speed
can be Integrated Part of a Liberated Life

(from "Ride the Tiger")

The transcendent dimension may also become active in reaction to the processes responsible for a steady erosion of many ties to nature, leading to a rootless state. It is evident, for example, that the stay-at-home bourgeois lifestyle is increasingly and irreversibly affected by the progress of communication technology, opening up great expanses on land, sea, and air. Modern life takes place ever less in a protected, self-contained, qualitative, and organic environment: one is immersed in the entire world by new and rapid travel that can bring us to faraway lands and landscapes in little time. Hence, we tend toward a general cosmopolitanism as "world citizens" in a material and objective sense, not an ideological, much less a humanitarian one. At least the times of "provincialism" are over.

To see what positive effect such situations can have on the development of the differentiated and self-possessed man, it is enough to glance at the ideas of certain traditional spiritual disciplines. In them, the metaphysical idea of the transience of earthly existence and the detachment from the world have had two characteristic expressions, whether symbolic or actual: the first in hermit life, living alone in desert or forest, the second in the wandering life, going through the world without house or home. This second type has even occurred in some Western religious orders; ancient Buddhism had the characteristic concept of "departure," as the start of a non-profane existence, and in traditional Hinduism this was the last of the four stages of life. There is a significant analogy with the idea of the medieval "knight errant," to which we might add the enigmatic and sometimes disconcerting figures of "noble travelers" whose homeland was unknown, who did not have one, or must not be asked about it.

Although our case is different from that of ascetics who remove themselves from the world, the situation of the latest technological civilization might offer the incentive for commitments of this kind. In a large city, in mass society, among the almost unreal swarming of faceless beings, an essential sense of isolation or of detachment often occurs naturally, perhaps even more than in the solitude of moors and mountains. What I have hinted at concerning recent technology that annihilates distances and the planetary spread of today's horizons, feeds inner detachment, superiority, calm transcendence, while acting and moving in the vast world: one finds oneself everywhere, yet at home nowhere. In this way, the negative can again be turned into positive. The experience increasingly offered, and often imposed on our contemporaries, of going to other cities, across frontiers, even to other continents, outside the

sphere of a secure existence with its peculiarities can be banal, matter-of-fact, touristic, utilitarian, and in our day almost always is. Alternatively, it can be an integrated part of a different, liberated life, with a more profound meaning in the above-mentioned terms, but only if the proper capacity of reaction is present in oneself.

Given that the speed factor has an essential role in the modern, technical mastery of distances, a passing allusion could be made to the value of the experience of speed itself. It is well known that today it is used by many men, and even women, almost like alcohol, to obtain a physical intoxication that feeds an essentially physical I, needing distraction from unpleasant thoughts and drugging itself with strong emotions.

Like the machine itself, some situations of speed in the technologized world can have a virtual, symbolic, and realizable dimension, often involving risk: the greater the speed, the more it requires a superior lucidity, bringing into play a higher type of calmness and internal immobility. In this context the intoxication of speed can even change its nature; it can pass from one plane to another and have some traits in common with the type of intoxication of which I have spoken describing the state of integrated Dionysism. If this were the proper place, I could develop this theme much further. [...]

Beyond Nationalism & Freemasonry: Plato's True State
& the Invisible Unity of Those Who are for the Same Cause

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] When bland patriotism turned into radical nationalistic forms, the regressive character of such tendencies and the contribution from the emergence of the mass-man in the modern world became clearly evident. For the essence of nationalistic ideology is to hold homeland and nation as supreme values, conceiving them as mystical entities almost with a life of their own and having an absolute claim on the individual; whereas, in reality, they are only dissociated and formless realities, by way of their negation of any true hierarchical principle, and of any symbol or warrant of a transcendent authority. In general, the foundation of political unities that have taken form in this direction is antithetical to the traditional state. In fact, as I have said, the cement of the latter was a loyalty and fidelity that could dispense with the naturalistic fact of nationality; it was a principle of order and sovereignty that, by not being based on this fact, could even be valid in areas including more than one nationality. It was the dignities, particular rights, and castes that united or divided individuals "vertically," beyond the "horizontal" common denominator of "nation" and "homeland." In a word, it was unification from above, not from below.

Once all this is recognized, we can see in a different light the present crisis, both objective and ideal, of the concepts and sentiments of homeland and nation. Again, one might speak of destructions that attack

something already having a negative and regressive character, so that they could even signify a potential liberation, if the direction of the whole process were not toward something still more problematic. Therefore, even if only a void remained, it would be no reason for the differentiated man to deplore that crisis and concern himself with the reactions in the "realm of residues." The void could be filled, the negative could give rise to the positive, only if the ancient principles returned to replace the dissolving naturalistic unities with those of a different type; if it were no longer homelands and nations that united or divided, but rather ideas; if the decisive thing were not sentimental and irrational adhesion to a collectivizing myth, but a system of loyal, free, and strongly personalized connections - something that would naturally require as a fundamental point of reference leaders invested with a supreme and intangible authority. Along this line they could even be formed by transnational groupings such as were known in various imperial epochs and, partially, in the Holy Alliance. Today, the degraded counterfeit of all that is taking form alongside the crisis of national sovereignties: power blocs determined solely by factors that are material, economic, and "political" in the worst sense, devoid of every ideal. Hence the insignificance of the antithesis between the two principal blocs of this type existing today, between the democratic West and the communist and Marxist East. For lack of a third force of a different character, and a true ideal to unite and divide beyond homelands, nations, and anti-nations, the only prospect is that of an invisible unity, in a world without frontiers, of those few individuals who are associated by their very nature, which is different from that of the man of today, and by the same inner law - in short, almost in the same terms as Plato used, speaking of the true state, which idea was then taken up by the Stoics. A similar, dematerialized type of unity and state was at the basis of the Orders, and its last reflection, deformed to the point of being unrecognizable, can be seen in secret societies like Freemasonry. If new processes are to develop when the present cycle exhausts itself, perhaps they could have their point of departure in this very kind of unity. Then we could see in action the positive side of overcoming the idea of homeland, whether as myth of the romantic bourgeois period or as a naturalistic fact almost irrelevant to a unity of a different type. Being from the same country or homeland would be replaced by being, or not being, for the same cause. Apoliteia, the detachment of today, contains this eventual possibility for tomorrow. In this case too it is necessary to see the distance existing between the attitude indicated here and certain recent products of modern political erosion: a formless and humanitarian cosmopolitanism, a paranoid pacifism, and the whims of those who want to feel themselves only as "citizens of the world," eventually becoming the "conscientious objectors."

Beyond Speculative Thought and the Need to "Discuss":
Self-Realization, Action & Magic

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] I can confidently claim never to have been 'fooled' by 'thought', as happens to those who trust thought, but are unaware of the irrational, existential ground of rationality: who are 'being thought' rather than thinking. [...]

In my preface to Theory, I wrote: 'No doubt, mine will seem like a bold claim: what I am suggesting here is that the peak of philosophy is transcendental Idealism, which itself inevitably culminates in Magical Idealism. Beyond Magical Idealism, nothing remains for philosophy - unless, of course, philosophy is to go bankrupt and become the mere expression of personal opinions subject to present contingencies. If a further development beyond Magical Idealism is to be imagined, this will be not a philosophical development, but a kind of action... My duty has been that of leading Western speculative thought towards this further step. I am not suggesting that my work contains all that might be done... But this really is not the point. I believe that my work is enough to allow those who wish to understand to understand. As for all those people who do not wish to understand, were I even to devote the ample time ahead of me to better consolidate and further develop my system, I am sure they would still manage to find things to criticize and refute in my work. The only thing which truly matters is for the need I have pointed out to be addressed; what matters is for individuals to understand the meaning of and the need for the final philosophical step which I have outlined, and to move ahead... I will have the chance, I am sure, to meet again with those people who are truly moving in this direction...'

Just as I had previously ended my brief artistic experience, I now brought my strictly philosophical phase to an end. As I had previously abandoned painting, abstract art and the 'alchemy of words', I now set genuinely speculative work aside once and for all. By then, I had fulfilled the impersonal task that I had felt the need to carry out in the field of philosophy.

How was my doctrine of the Absolute Individual received at the time? It was largely ignored, as was to be expected in the case of any analysis decisively removed from the beaten track. My work was mostly noted by writers who were not specialists in the field. [...] On the other hand, the mainstream press and official culture was always to turn a deaf ear to my work. But this was to be expected. Aside from amateurish attempts at philosophical essay-writing occasionally appearing in newspapers, philosophy in Italy was a profession: the profession of university professors, with their cliques and factions. In order to make oneself known, it was necessary to belong to that milieu, where works are published only as a means for career advancement, and thought is subordinate to teaching. I, of course, did not belong to such a milieu at all.

But would it really have been possible to conceive of a theory of the Absolute Individual entirely removed from the university milieu? In other words, how could I suppose that the mere rigor of some of my deductions might have led some of those petit-bourgeois, those professional men of speculative thought, to abandon their world of ideas and head for unfamiliar adventures? All the extra-philosophical references which abounded in my philosophical system served as a convenient excuse for its

ostracism. It was easy to dismiss a system which featured initiation, 'magic' and relics of superstition. The fact that I had presented all these elements in rigorous philosophical terms hardly mattered. On the other hand, I myself was probably mistaken with regard to those individuals whom I thought my speculative endeavors might benefit in practical terms. Mine was a philosophical introduction to a non-philosophical world: as such, it might prove of genuine use only in those rare cases where philosophy had ultimately led to a profound existential crisis. Yet, I should also have considered a fact of which I only later became aware: that philosophical precedents to my work - i.e., the field of discursive, abstract thought - represented the worst means to positively overcome an existential crisis such as this in the way I suggested - which is to say: by embracing disciplines of self-realization. Besides, my philosophical exposition would have proven equally superfluous to those who had already taken such a step. It is for this reason that I actually advised those individuals who continued to follow my work in the period which followed not to read those three philosophical books of mine at all. In the field that I subsequently approached, there was no need to 'prove' or 'deduce' anything, nor even to 'discuss' anything. Rather, it was a matter of either recognizing or not recognizing certain principles and truths on the basis of one's inclinations, one's inborn sensitivity and inner awakening. [...]

Bhagavad-Gita: the Hero as Divine Manifestation
& Sacrality of War as Highest Tradition

(from "Metaphysics of War")

We will conclude our series of essays for the Diorama on the subject of war as a spiritual value by discussing another tradition within the Indo-European heroic cycle, that of the Bhagavad-Gita, which is a very well-known text of ancient Hindu wisdom compiled essentially the warrior caste. [...]

[...] As soon as we refer to previous times we are effectively in the presence of an ethnic and cultural heritage which is to a large extent common, and which can only be described as 'Indo-European'. The original ways of life, the spirituality and the institutions of the first colonizers of India and Iran have many points of contact not only with those of the Hellenic and Nordic peoples, but also with those of the original Romans themselves.

The traditions to which we have previously referred offer examples of this: most notably, a common spiritual conception of how to wage war, how to act and die heroically - contrarily to the views of those who, on the basis of prejudices and platitudes, cannot hear of Hindu civilization without thinking of nirvana, fakirs, escapism, negation of the 'Western' values of personhood and so on.

The text to which we have alluded and on which we will base our discussion is presented in the form of a conversation between the warrior

Arjuna and the divine Krishna, who acts as the spiritual director of the former. The conversation arises out of the occasion of a battle in which Arjuna, the victim of humanitarian scruples, is reluctant to participate. In the previous article we have already indicated that, from a spiritual point of view, the two persons, Arjuna and Krishna, are in reality one. They represent two different parts of the human being - Arjuna the principle of action, and Krishna that of transcendent knowledge. The conversation can thus be understood as a sort of monologue, developing a progressive inner clarification and solution, both in the heroic and the spiritual sense, of the problem of the warrior's activity which poses itself to Arjuna as he prepares for battle.

Now, the pity which prevents the warrior from fighting when he recognizes among the hostile ranks some of his erstwhile friends and closest relatives is described by Krishna, that is to say by the spiritual principle, as "impurity, unworthy of a noble man, not leading to heaven" (II, 2).

We have already seen this theme appear many times in the traditional teachings of the West: "Killed you will attain heaven; victorious you will enjoy the earth; arise, therefore, resolved to fight" (II, 37).

However, along with this, the motif of the 'inner war', to be fought at the same moment, is outlined: "Knowing what is beyond reason, steadying the mind by your will, kill the lust-shaped foe, difficult to overcome" (III, 43).

The internal enemy, which is passion, the animal thirst for life, is thus the counterpart of the external enemy. This is how the right orientation is defined: "Devoting all acts to Me with your mind absorbed in the supreme spirit, free from desire and selfishness, fight without faltering" (III, 30).

This demand, for a lucid, supra-conscious heroism, rising above the passions, is important, as is this excerpt, which brings out the character of purity and absoluteness which action should have so as to be considered "sacred war": "Making equal pleasure and pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat, fight for the sake of fighting; in this way you will incur no sin" (II, 38).

We find therefore that the only fault or sin is the state of an incomplete will, of an action which, inwardly, is still far from the height with respect to which one's own life matters as little as those of others and no human measure has value any longer.

It is precisely in this respect that the text in question contains considerations of an absolutely metaphysical order, intended to show how what acts in the warrior at such a level is not so much a human force as a divine force. The teaching which Krishna (that is to say the 'knowledge' principle) gives to Arjuna (that is to say to the 'action' principle) to make his doubts vanish aims first of all at making him understand the distinction between what, as absolute spirituality, is incorruptible, and what, as the human and naturalistic element, exists only illusorily: "To the non-constant (body, matter) there is no

permanence; to the constant (spirit) there is no change. Know that by which all this is pervaded (spirit) to be indestructible. He who thinks it the killer, he who thinks it slain, neither is in knowledge: for it slays not, nor is it slain. It is not killed when the body is killed. But perishable are all these bodies. Therefore, arise and fight" (II, 16, 17, 19,20,18) .

But there is more. The consciousness of the metaphysical unreality of what one can lose or can cause another to lose, such as the ephemeral life and the mortal body - a consciousness which corresponds to the definition of human existence as 'a mere pastime' in one of the traditions which we have already considered - is associated with the idea that spirit, in its absoluteness and transcendence, can only appear as a destructive force towards everything which is limited and incapable of overcoming its own finitude. Thus the problem arises of how the warrior can evoke spirit, precisely in virtue of his being necessarily an instrument of destruction and death, and identify with it.

The answer to this problem is precisely what we find in our texts. The god not only declares: "I am the strength of the strong, divorced from passion and attachment; I am the brilliance in fire, the life of all that lives and the austerity of the austere; the wisdom of the wise I am, and the glory of the glorious" (VII, 11, 9, 10), but, finally, the god reveals himself to Arjuna in the transcendent and fearful form of lightning. We thus arrive at this general vision of life: like electrical bulbs too brightly lit, like circuits invested with too high a potential, human beings fall and die only because a power burns within them which transcends their finitude, which goes beyond everything they can do and want. This is why they develop, reach a peak, and then, as if overwhelmed by the wave which up to a given point had carried them forward, sink, dissolve, die and return to the unmanifest. But the one who does not fear death, the one who is able, so to speak, / to assume the powers of death by becoming everything which it destroys, overwhelms and shatters - this one finally passes beyond limitation, he continues to remain upon the crest of the wave, he does not fall, and what is beyond life manifests itself within him. Thus, Krishna, the personification of the 'principle of spirit', after having revealed himself fully to Arjuna, can say: "Even without you, none of these warriors in the hostile ranks will survive. Therefore, arise, attain glory, destroy the enemy, enjoy a prosperous reign. All these men have already been killed by Me, and you, O Arjuna, be but the instrument. Regret not, fight, you shall conquer the enemy in battle" (XI, 32, 33, 34).

We see again here the identification of war with the 'path of God', of which we spoke in the previous article. The warrior ceases to act as a person. When he attains this level, a great non-human force transfigures his action, making it absolute and 'pure' precisely at its extreme. Here is a very evocative image belonging to the same tradition: "Life - like a bow; the mind - like the arrow; the target to pierce - the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target."

This is one of the highest forms of metaphysical justification of war, one of the most comprehensive images of war as 'sacred war'.

To conclude this excursion into the forms of heroic tradition, as presented to us by many different times and peoples, we will only add a few final words.

We have made this voyage into a world which, to some, could seem outré and irrelevant, out of curiosity, not to display peculiar erudition. We have undertaken it instead with the precise intention of showing that the sacrality of war, that is to say, that which provides a spiritual justification for war and the necessity of war, constitutes a tradition in the highest sense of the term: it is something which has appeared always and everywhere, in the ascending cycle of every great civilization; while the neurosis of war, the humanitarian and pacifist depreciation of it, as well as the conception of war as a 'sad necessity' or a purely political or natural phenomenon - none if this corresponds to any tradition, all this is but modern fabrication, born yesterday, as a side-effect of the decomposition of the democratic and materialistic civilization against which, today, new revolutionary forces are rising up. In this sense, everything which we have gathered from a great variety of sources, constantly separating the essential from the contingent, the spirit from the letter, can be used by us as an inner fortification, as a confirmation, as a strengthened certainty.

Not only does a fundamentally virile instinct appear justified by it on a superior basis, but also the possibility presents itself of determining the forms of the heroic experience which correspond to our highest vocation.

Here we must refer to the first article of this series, in which we showed that there can be heroes of very different sorts, even of an animalistic and sub-personal sort; what matters is not merely the general capacity to throw oneself into combat and to sacrifice oneself, but also the precise spirit according to which such an event is experienced. But we now have all the elements needed to specify, from all the varied ways of understanding, the heroic experience, which may be considered the supreme one, which can make the identification of war with the 'path of God' really true, and can make one recognize, in the hero, a form of divine manifestation.

Another previous consideration must be recalled, namely, that as the warrior's vocation really approaches this metaphysical peak and reflects the impulse to what is universal, it cannot help but tend towards an equally universal manifestation and end for his race; that is to say, it cannot but predestine that race for empire. For only the empire as a superior order in which a pax triumphalis is in force, almost as the earthly reflection of the sovereignty of the 'supra-world,' is adapted to forces in the field of spirit which reflect the great and free energies of nature, and are able to manifest the characters of purity, power, irresistibility and transcendence over all pathos, passion and human limitation.

Bhagavad-Gita's Solar Wisdom
& Laws of Manu (which are for Aryans as Talmud for Hebrews)

Confirm War's Re-Galvanizing Effect for Race of the Spirit

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] The first concerns the meaningful relation, in the Bhagavad-Gita, between the teaching which has just been described on the one hand and tradition and race on the other. In chapter IV, 1-3, it is said that this is the 'solar' wisdom received from Manu, who, as is well known, is the most ancient 'divine' legislator of the Aryan race. His laws, for Aryans, have the same value that the Talmud has for Hebrews: that is to say, they constitute the formative force of their way of life, the essence of their 'race of the spirit'. Now; this primordial wisdom, which was at first transmitted through direct succession, "with the passing of the times was lost to the world" (IV, 2). It was not to a priest, but to a warrior prince, Arjuna, that it was revealed again in the way just recounted. To realize this wisdom by following the path of sacred heroism and absolute action can only mean, therefore, restoration, awakening, resumption of what was at the origin of tradition, which has survived for centuries in the dark depths of the race and routinized itself in the customs of successive ages. The meaning that we have already indicated, the re-galvanizing effect which the fact of war in given conditions can have for the 'race of the spirit', is thus exactly confirmed.

Buddhism Reestablished Regal Caste's Primordial Knowledge
against Sacerdotal Caste born of Decadence
& Guénon Not Seeing "According to Truth"

(from "The Doctrine of Awakening")

[...] It is not out of place to consider another point. The brahmana caste is habitually thought of in the West as a "sacerdotal" caste. This is true only up to a certain point. In the Vedic origins the type of Brahman or "sacrificer" bears little resemblance to that of the "priest" as our contemporaries think of him: he was, rather, a figure both virile and awful and, as we have said, a kind of visible incarnation in the human world of the superhuman (bhu-deva). Furthermore, we often find in the early texts a point where the distinction between the brahman—the "sacerdotal" caste—and the ksatriya or rajam—the warrior or regal caste—did not exist; a feature that we see in the earliest stages of all traditional civilizations, including the Greek, Roman, and German. The two types only began to differ in a later period, this being another aspect of the process of regression that we have mentioned. Besides, there are many who maintain that in Aryan India the doctrine of the atma was originally confined almost exclusively to the warrior caste, and that the doctrine of brahman as an undifferentiated cosmic force was formulated mainly by the sacerdotal caste. There is probably some truth in this view. In any case, it is a fact that in many texts we see a king or a ksatriya (a member of the warrior nobility) vying in knowledge with and sometimes even instructing members of the Brahman caste; and that, according to tradition, primordial knowledge was handed down, starting

from Iksvaku, in regal succession; the same "solar dynasty" (surya-varsha) that we mentioned in connection with the Buddha's family, also figures here. We should have the following picture: in the Indo-Aryan post-Vedic world, while the warrior caste held a more realistic and virile view and put emphasis on the doctrine of the atma as the unchangeable and immortal principle of human personality, the Brahman caste was becoming little by little, "sacerdotal" and, instead of facing the reality, was moving among ritual and stereotyped exegeses and speculations. Simultaneously, in another way, the character of the first Vedic period was becoming overgrown with a tropical and chaotic vegetation of myths and popular religious images, even of semidevotional practices seeking the attainment of this, that, or the other divine "rebirth" on the basis of views on reincarnation and transmigration that, as we have said, had already infiltrated into the less illuminated Indo-Aryan mentalities. Leaving yoga apart, it is worth noting that it was the warrior nobility—the ksatram—that furnished the principal support not only of the Sarikhya system, which is regarded as representing a clear reaction against speculative "idealism," but also of Jainism, the so-called doctrine of the conquerors (from jina, "conqueror"), which laid emphasis, though with a tendency to extremism, on necessity for ascetic action.

All this is necessary for our understanding of the historical place of Buddhism and of the reasons of its most characteristic views.

From the point of view of universal history, Buddhism arose in a period marked by a crisis running through a whole series of traditional civilizations. This crisis sometimes resolved itself positively thanks to opportune reforms and revisions, and sometimes negatively with the effect of inducing further phases of regression or spiritual decadence. This period, called by some the "climacteric" of civilization, falls approximately between the eighth and the fifth centuries b.c. It is in this period that the doctrines of Lao-tzu and Kung Fu-tzu (Confucius) were taking root in China, representing a renewal of elements of the most ancient tradition on the metaphysical plane on the one hand, and on the ethical-social on the other. In the same period it is said that "Zarathustra" appeared, through whom a similar return took place in the Persian tradition. And in India the same function was performed by Buddhism, also representing a reaction and, at the same time, a re-elevation. On the other hand, as we have often pointed out elsewhere, it seems that in the West processes of decadence mainly prevailed. The period of which we are now talking is, in fact, that in which the ancient aristocratic and hieratic Hellas declined; in which the religion of Isis along with other popular and spurious forms of mysticism superseded the solar and regal Egyptian civilization; it is that in which Israelite prophetism started the most dangerous ferments of corruption and subversion in the Mediterranean world. The only positive counterpart in the West seems in fact to have been Rome, which was born in that period and which for a certain cycle was a creation of universal importance, animated in high measure by an Olympian and heroic spirit.

Coming to Buddhism, it was not conceived, as many who unilaterally take the Brahman point of view like to claim, as an antitraditional revolution, similar, in its own way, to what the Lutheran heresy was to

Catholicism; (1) and still less as a "new" doctrine, the result of an isolated speculation that succeeded in taking root. It represented, rather, a particular adaptation of the original Indo-Aryan tradition, an adaptation that kept in mind the prevailing conditions and limited itself accordingly, while freshly and differently formulating preexistent teachings: at the same time Buddhism closely adhered to the ksatriya (in Pali, khattiya) spirit, the spirit of the warrior caste. We have already seen that the Buddha was born of the most ancient Aryan nobility; but this is not the end of the matter, as a text informs us of the particular aversion nourished by his people for the Brahman caste: "The Sakiya" (Skt: Sakya)—we read—"do not esteem the priests, they do not respect the priests, they do not honour the priests, they do not venerate the priests, they do not hold the priests of account." The same tendency is maintained by Prince Siddhattha, but with the aim of restoring, of reaffirming, the pure will for the unconditioned, to which in the most recent times the "regal" line had often been more faithful than the priestly caste that was already divided within itself.

(1) This is the point of view held by R. Guénon, *Man and His Becoming*. According to the Vedanta, with which we cannot—"according to truth"—agree. More correct are the views of A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, although in this book is apparent the tendency to emphasize only what in Buddhism is valuable from the brahmana standpoint, with disregard of the specific functional meaning he possesses as compared to Hindu tradition.

There are, besides, many signs that the Buddhist doctrine laid no claim to originality but regarded itself as being, in a way, universal and having a traditional character in a superior sense. The Buddha himself says, for example: "Thus it is: those who, in times past, were saints, Perfect Awakened Ones, these sublime men also have rightly directed their disciples to such an end, as now disciples are rightly directed here by me; and those who in future times will be saints, Perfect Awakened Ones, also these sublime men will rightly direct their disciples, as now disciples are rightly directed here by me." The same is repeated in regard to purification of thought, word, and action; it is repeated about right knowledge of decay and death, of their origin, of their cessation and of the way that leads to their cessation; and it is repeated about the doctrine of the "void" or "emptiness," *suffnata*. The doctrine and the "divine life" proclaimed by Prince Siddhattha are repeatedly called "timeless," *akaliko*. "Ancient saints, Perfect Awakened Ones" are spoken of, and a traditional theme occurs in connection with a place (here called "the Gorge of the Seer") where a whole series of *Paccekabuddhas* are supposed to have vanished in the past, a series, that is, of beings who, by their own unaided and isolated efforts, have reached the superhuman state and the same perfect awakening as did Prince Siddhattha himself. Those who are "without faith, without devotion, without tradition" are reproached. A repeated saying is: "What for the world of the sages is not, of that I say: 'It is not', and what for the world of sages is, of that I say: 'It is.'" An interesting point is the mention in a text of "extinction," the aim of the Buddhist *ascesis*, as something that "leads back to the origins." This is supported by the symbolism of a great forest where "an ancient path, a path of men of olden times" is discovered. Following it, the Buddha finds a royal city; and he asks that

it should be restored. In another text the significance of this is explained by the Buddha in a most explicit way: "I have seen the ancient path, the path trodden by all the Perfected Awakened Ones of olden times. This is the path I follow." (2)

(2) It is interesting that according to the myth, Buddha attained the awakening under the Tree of Life placed in the navel of the earth where also all the previous Buddhas reached transcendent knowledge. This is a reference to the "Center of the World," which is to be considered, in its way, as a chiasm of traditionality and initiatic of orthodoxy whenever a contact with the origins was restored.

It is quite clear, then, that in Buddhism we are not dealing with a negation of the principle of spiritual authority but rather with a revolt against a caste that claimed to monopolize this authority while its representatives no longer preserved its dignity and had lost their qualifications. [...]

Buddhism: the Historical Context of the Doctrine of Awakening

(from "The Doctrine of Awakening")

First, a word about method. From the "traditional" point of view that we follow in this work, the great historical traditions are to be considered neither as "original" nor as arbitrary. In every tradition worthy of the name, elements are always present, in one form or another, of a "knowledge" that, being rooted in a superindividual reality, is objective. Furthermore, each tradition contains its own special mode of interpretation and cannot be considered as arbitrary or as proceeding from extrinsic or purely human factors. This particular element tends to vary with the prevailing historical and spiritual climate; and we can find in it the reason for the existence of certain formulations, adaptations, or limitations of the one knowledge—and the nonexistence of others. No one individual, suddenly, and as if inspired haphazardly by some outside agency, ever proclaimed the theory of the atma, for example, or invented nirvana or the Islamic theories. On the contrary, all traditions or doctrines obey, even without seeming to do so, a profound logic—discoverable by means of an adequate metaphysical interpretation of history. Accordingly, this shall be our standpoint when we deal with these aspects of Buddhism: this is also why we consider that critic to be fundamentally mistaken who tries at all costs to pin the label "original" on Buddhism or, indeed, on any great tradition, and who argues that "otherwise" such a tradition would in no way differ from others. A difference there is, as there is also an element in common with what has gone before; but both are determined—as we have said—by objective reasons, even though they may not always have been seen clearly by the individual exponents of particular historical trends.

Having said this, we must go back to the pre-Buddhist Indo-Aryan traditions in order to find the precise implications of the Buddhist

doctrine, and in them we must distinguish between two fundamental phases: the Vedic and the Brahmana Upanisad.

With regard to the Vedas, which constitute the essential foundation of the entire tradition in question, it would not be correct to talk either of "religion" or of "philosophy." To begin with, the term veda—from the root vid, which is equivalent to the Greek ... (whence we have, for example, ...) and which means "I see," "I have seen"—refers to a doctrine based not on faith or "revelation," but on a higher knowledge attained through a process of seeing. The Vedas were "seen": they were seen by the rshi, by the "seers" of the earliest times. Throughout the tradition their essence has never been regarded as a "faith" but rather as a "sacred science."

Thus it is frivolous to see in the Vedas, as many people do, the expression of a "purely naturalistic religion." As in other great systems, impurities may be present particularly where foreign matter has crept in, and very noticeably, for example, in the Atharva Veda. But what the essential and most ancient part of the Vedas reflects is a cosmic stage of the Indo-Aryan spirit. It is not a question of theories or of theologies, but of hymns containing a magnificent reflection of a consciousness that is still so harnessed to the cosmos and to metaphysical reality that the various "gods" of the Vedas are more than religious images; they are projections of the experience of significances and forces directly perceived in man, in nature, or beyond through a cosmic, heroic, and "sacrificial" concept, freely and almost "triumphantly."

Although they were written considerably later, the fundamental thought contained in such epic poems as the Mahabharata goes back to the same epoch. Men, heroes, and divine figures appear side by side; and as Kerényi said when referring to the Olympian-Homeric phase of the Aryan-Hellenic tradition, men could "see the gods and be seen by them," and could "stand with them in the original state of existence." The Olympian element is reflected also in a typical group of Vedic divinities: in Dyaus (from div, "to shine"—a root that is also found in Zeus and Deus), for example, lord of the heavenly light, the origin of splendor, strength, and knowledge; in Varuna, also a symbol of celestial and regal power, and connected with the idea of rta, that is to say, of the cosmos, of a cosmic order, of a natural and supernatural law; while in Mitra there is, in addition, the idea of a god of the specifically Aryan virtues, truth and fidelity. We also have Surya, the flaming sun from whom, as from the Olympian, nothing is hidden, who destroys every infirmity and who, in the form of Savitar, is the light that is exalted in the first daily rite of all the Aryan castes as the principle of awakening and intellectual animation; or there is Usas, the dawn, eternally young, who opens the way for the sun, who gives life and who is the "token of immortality." In Indra we find the incarnation of the heroic and metaphysical impulse of the first Hyperborean conquerors: Indra is "he, without whom men cannot win," he is the "son of force," the lightning god of war, valor, and victory, the annihilator of the enemies of the Aryans, of the black Dasyu, and, consequently, of all the tortuous and titanic forces that "attempt to climb the heavens"; while at the same time he appears as the consolidator, as "he who has consolidated the

world." The same spirit is reflected, in varying degrees, in minor Vedic divinities, even in those tied to the most conditioned forms of existence.

In the Vedas we find that this cosmic experience is evoked through the agency of sacrificial action. The sacrifice rite extends human experience into the non-human, and provokes and establishes communion between the two worlds in such a manner that the sacrificer, a figure as austere and majestic as the Roman flamen dialis, assumes the traits of a god on earth (bhū-deva, bhū-sura). As for life after death, the Vedic solution is fully consonant with the oldest Aryo-Hellenic spirit: images of obscure hells are almost entirely absent from the most ancient parts of the Vedas: the crisis of death is hardly noticed as such—in the Atharva Veda it is even considered as the effect of a hostile and demoniacal force that, with suitable rites, can be repulsed. The dead pass into an existence of splendor that is also a "return," and in which they once again take up their form: "Having laid aside all defects, return home: full of splendour unite thyself to [thy] form"—and again: "We drank the soma [symbol of a sacred enthusiasm], we became immortal, we reached the light." The symbolic Vedic rite of "wiping out the tracks," so that the dead will not return among the living, well shows how the idea of reincarnation was almost totally absent in this period; such a possibility was ignored in the light of the high degree of heroic, sacrificial, and metaphysical tension belonging to that epoch. There is no trace in the Vedas of the later significance of Yama as god of death and hell; rather, he retains the outlines of his Irano-Aryan equivalent, Yima, sun king of the primordial age: son of the "Sun." Yama is the first of the mortals and he "who first found the road [to the hereafter]": thus, broadly speaking, the Vedic "hereafter" is bound up in great measure with the idea of a reintegration of the primordial state.

About the tenth century b.c. new developments began: they found expression in the Brahmana texts on the one hand, and on the other in the Upanisad texts. Both go back to the tradition of the Vedas: yet there is a noteworthy change of perspective. We are slowly approaching "philosophy" and "theology."

The speculation of the Brahmana texts rests chiefly on that part of the Vedas that refers to ritual and sacrificial action. Ritual, in all the traditional civilizations, was conceived neither as an empty ceremony nor as a sentimental and, at the same time, formal act of praising and supplicating a God, but rather as an operation with real effects, as a process capable not only of establishing contacts with the transcendent world, but of imposing itself upon supersensible forces and, through their mediation, eventually influencing even the natural forces. As such, ritual presupposes not only knowledge of certain laws, but also, and more essentially, the existence of a power. The term brahman (in the neuter, not to be confused with Brahma in the masculine, which designates the theistically conceived divinity) originally signified this particular energy, this kind of magic power, this fluid or life force, upon which the ritual rests.

In the Brahmana texts this ritual aspect of the Vedic tradition was enlarged and formalized. Ritual became the center of everything and the

object of a fastidious science that often became a formalism destitute of any vital content. Oldenberg, referring to the period of Prince Siddhattha, talks in this connection of "an idiotic science knows everything and explains everything, and sits enthroned, satisfied, amongst its extravagant creations." This judgment is excessive, but it is not entirely unjustified. In the Buddha's time there existed a caste of theologi philosophantes who administered the remnants of the ancient tradition, trying with all the means in their power to establish a prestige that did not always correspond to their human qualifications or to their race—if not their physical race, which was well cared for by the caste system, at least their spiritual race. We have used the word "theologists" since the concept of brahman in these circles gradually became generalized and, in a manner of speaking, substantialized, to such an extent that the brahman finally no longer signified the mysterious force that, fundamentally, only made sense in terms of ritual and magic experience; it came to mean the soul of the world, the supreme force-substance of the universe, the substratum, indeterminate in itself, of every being and of every phenomenon. It thus became an almost theological concept.

The Upanisads, on the other hand, concentrated mainly on the doctrine of the atma. which largely reflected the original cosmic and solar sentiment of the earliest Aryan consciousness, insofar as it stressed the reality of the "I" as the superindividual. unchanging, and immortal principle of the personality, as opposed to the multiple variety of the phenomena and forces of nature. The atma is defined by neti neti ("not so, not so"), that is to say, by the idea that it does not belong to nature or, more generally, to the conditioned world.

In India the speculative current of the Brahmana and that of the Upanisads gradually converged; this convergence resulted in the identification of the brahman with the atma: the "I," in its superindividual aspect, and the force-substance of the cosmos became one and the same thing. This was a turning point of the greatest importance in the spiritual history of the Indo-Aryan civilization. The doctrine of the identity of the atma with the brahman did, in fact, constitute a metaphysical achievement but, at the same time, it initiated a process of breaking up and of spiritual dissolution. This process was bound to take place as shadows began to cloud the luminosity of the original heroic and cosmic experience of Vedic man and as foreign influences gained ground. Originally the doctrine of the Upanisads was considered as "secret," as a knowledge to be transmitted only to the few—the term Upanisad itself conveyed this idea. But in point of fact the philosophical and speculative tendencies became uppermost. This resulted in divergencies of opinion even in the oldest Upanisad—the Chandogya—and the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad—as to the plane of consciousness to be used as the reference point for the doctrine. Is the atma object of immediate experience or is it not? It is both one and the other at the same time. Its substantial identity with the "I" of the individual is affirmed but, at the same time, we often see the unity of the individual with the atma-brahman postponed till after death; and not only this, but conditions are postulated under which it will happen, and the case is considered in which the "I," or rather the elements of the person, may not leave the cycle of finite and mortal existences. In the ancient Upanisads, in fact,

no precise solution is ever reached of the problem of the actual relationship existing between the individual "I" of which everyone can talk, and the atma-brahman. We do not consider that this was accidental: it was a circumstance that corresponded to an already uncertain state of consciousness, to the fact that, while for the adepts of the "secret doctrine" the "I" could be equated effectively with the atma, for the general consciousness the atma was becoming a simple speculative concept, an almost theological assumption, since the original spiritual level was beginning to be lost.

Furthermore, the danger of pantheistic confusions showed itself. This danger did not exist in theory since, in the Upanisads, following the Vedic concept, the supreme principle was not only conceived as the substance of the world and of all beings, but also as that which transcends them "by three quarters," existing as "the immortal in the heavens." In the same Upanisads, however, prominence is also given to the identity of the atma-brahman with elements of all kinds in the naturalistic world, so that the practical possibility of a pantheistic deviation encouraged by the assimilation of the atma with the brahman was real: particularly so, if we take into account the process of man's gradual regression, of which we can find evidence in the teaching of all traditions, including the Indo-Aryan, where the theory of the four yuga corresponds exactly to the classical theory of the four ages and of man's descent to the last of them, the Iron Age, equivalent to the "Dark Age" (kali-yuga) of the Indo-Aryans. If, during the period of these speculations, the original cosmic and uranic consciousness of the Vedic origins had already suffered in this way a certain overclouding, then the formulation of the theory of the identity of the atma with the brahman provided a dangerous incentive toward evasion, toward a confused self-identification with the spirituality of everything, at the very moment when a particularly energetic reaction by way of a tendency toward concentration, detachment, and awakening was needed.

Altogether, the germs of decadence, which were already showing themselves in the post-Vedic period and which were to become quite evident in the Buddha's day (sixth century b.c.), are as follows: above all, a stereotyped ritualism; then the demon of speculation, whose effect was that what ought to have remained "secret doctrine," upanisad, rahasya, became partly rationalized, with the result that there eventually appeared a tumultuous crowd of divergent theories, sects, and schools, which the Buddhist texts often vividly describe. In the third place, we find a "religious" transformation of many divinities who, in the Vedic period were, as we have said, simply cosmically transfigured states of consciousness; these have now become objects of popular cults. (1) We have already spoken of the pantheistic danger. In addition to these points we have yet to consider the effect of foreign, non-Aryan influences, to which we believe are attributable in no small degree the formation and diffusion of the theory of reincarnation.

(1) It is essentially of these gods that we must think when we see them assume, in Buddhist texts, quite modest and subordinate parts, transforming themselves sometimes almost into quasi disciples who receive revelation of the doctrine from the Buddha. We are dealing, that is, with the degradation of the ancient gods: and the doctrine revealed by the

Awakened One corresponds, basically, with what they once signified, but which at this period, had been forgotten.

As we have said, there is no trace of this theory in the early Vedic period; this is because it is quite incompatible with an Olympian and heroic vision of the world, being as it is a "truth" of non-Aryan races that are tellurically and matriarchally adjusted in outlook.

Reincarnation, in fact, is conceivable only by one who feels himself to be a "son of the earth," who has no knowledge of a reality transcending the naturalistic order; bound as he is to a female-maternal divinity found alike in the pre-Aryan Mediterranean world, and in the pre-Aryan Hindu civilization, such as the Dravidian and Kosalian. Into the source from which as an ephemeral being he has sprung, the individual, when he dies, must return, only to reappear in fresh terrestrial births, in an inescapable and interminable cycle. This is the ultimate sense of the theory of reincarnation, a theory that begins to infiltrate as early as the period of Upanisad speculations; it gives place gradually to mixed forms that we can use as a measure of the change in the original Aryan consciousness to which we have referred.

While in the Vedas only a single fate after death is considered, as in ancient Hellas, in the Brahmana texts the theory of the double way already appears: "[Only] he who knows and practices ritual action rises again in life and obtains immortal life; the others who neither know nor practice ritual action will continue to be born anew, as nourishment for death." In the Upanisads, however, as the relationship between the real "I" and the atma oscillates, so does their teaching of what happens after death. They speak of the "dyke, beyond which even night becomes day, since the world of the brahman is unchangeable light"; a dyke constituted by the atma against which neither decay, nor death, nor pain, nor good action, nor bad action can prevail." They speak of the "way of the gods" (deva-yana) that leads one after death to the unconditioned whence "there is no return." But at the same time another road is considered, the pitryana, along which "one returns," the individual after death being little by little "sacrificed" to various divinities for whom he becomes "food," finally to reappear on the earth. In the oldest texts the possibility of a liberation is not considered for those who go on this second road: they speak instead of the "causal law," of the karma, which determines a man's subsequent existence on the basis of what he has done in the preceding one. We have now arrived at what we shall call the samsaric consciousness (from samsara), which is the keystone of the Buddhist vision of life: the secret knowledge, confided privately by the wise Yajnavalkya to the king Artabhaga, is that after death the individual elements of man dissolve in the corresponding cosmic elements, including the atma, which returns to the "ether," and that which is left is only the karma, that is, the action, the impersonal force, bound to the life of one being, that will go on to determine a new being.

In all this can be seen, then, more than just the effect of "free" metaphysical speculation: it is, rather, a sign of a consciousness that begins to consider itself terrestrial or, at the most, pantheistically cosmic, and that now centers itself on that part of the human being that may really be concerned with death and rebirth and indefinite wandering across various forms of conditioned existence; we say "various" since the

horizons gradually widened and it was even thought that one might re-arise in this or that world of gods, according to one's actions. In any case, in the epoch in which Buddhism appeared the theories of reincarnation and of transmigration were already an integral part of the ideas acquired by the predominant mentality. Sometimes, and even in the Upanisads, different outlooks became indiscriminately combined so that on the one side was conceived an atma that, although divorced from any concrete experience, was supposed to be permanently and intangibly present in everyone, and on the other side there was the interminable wandering of man in various lives.

It is on these lines that practical and realistic currents gradually established themselves in opposition to the speculative currents. We can include Samkhya, which opposed to the pantheistic danger a rigid dualism and in which the reality of the "I" or atma-called here purusa-as the supernatural, intangible, and unalterable principle is opposed to all the forms, forces, and phenomena of a natural and material order. But more important in this respect are the trends of yoga. Based both on Samkhya and on ascetic tendencies already coming to the fore in opposition to ritualistic and speculative Brahmanism, these recognized more or less explicitly the new state of affairs, which was that in speaking of "I" one could no longer concretely understand the atma, the unconditioned principle; that it appeared no longer as direct consciousness; and that therefore, apart from speculation, it could only be considered as an end, as the limit of a process of reintegration with action as its basis. As the immediate real datum there was substituted instead what we call "samsaric" consciousness and existence, consciousness bound to the "current"-and the term samsara (which thus only makes a relatively late appearance) means precisely "current"-it is the current of becoming.

It is not out of place to consider another point. The brahmana caste is habitually thought of in the West as a "sacerdotal" caste. This is true only up to a certain point. In the Vedic origins the type of Brahman or "sacrificer" bears little resemblance to that of the "priest" as our contemporaries think of him: he was, rather, a figure both virile and awful and, as we have said, a kind of visible incarnation in the human world of the superhuman (bhu-deva). Furthermore, we often find in the early texts a point where the distinction between the brahman-the "sacerdotal" caste-and the ksatriya or rajam-the warrior or regal caste-did not exist; a feature that we see in the earliest stages of all traditional civilizations, including the Greek, Roman, and German. The two types only began to differ in a later period, this being another aspect of the process of regression that we have mentioned. Besides, there are many who maintain that in Aryan India the doctrine of the atma was originally confined almost exclusively to the warrior caste, and that the doctrine of brahman as an undifferentiated cosmic force was formulated mainly by the sacerdotal caste. There is probably some truth in this view. In any case, it is a fact that in many texts we see a king or a ksatriya (a member of the warrior nobility) vying in knowledge with and sometimes even instructing members of the Brahman caste; and that, according to tradition, primordial knowledge was handed down, starting from Iksvaku, in regal succession; the same "solar dynasty" (surya-varsha) that we mentioned in connection with the Buddha's family, also figures here. We should have the following picture: in the Indo-Aryan

post-Vedic world, while the warrior caste held a more realistic and virile view and put emphasis on the doctrine of the atma as the unchangeable and immortal principle of human personality, the Brahman caste was becoming little by little, "sacerdotal" and, instead of facing the reality, was moving among ritual and stereotyped exegeses and speculations. Simultaneously, in another way, the character of the first Vedic period was becoming overgrown with a tropical and chaotic vegetation of myths and popular religious images, even of semidevotional practices seeking the attainment of this, that, or the other divine "rebirth" on the basis of views on reincarnation and transmigration that, as we have said, had already infiltrated into the less illuminated Indo-Aryan mentalities. Leaving yoga apart, it is worth noting that it was the warrior nobility—the ksatram—that furnished the principal support not only of the Sarhkhya system, which is regarded as representing a clear reaction against speculative "idealism," but also of Jainism, the so-called doctrine of the conquerors (from jina, "conqueror"), which laid emphasis, though with a tendency to extremism, on necessity for ascetic action.

All this is necessary for our understanding of the historical place of Buddhism and of the reasons of its most characteristic views.

From the point of view of universal history, Buddhism arose in a period marked by a crisis running through a whole series of traditional civilizations. This crisis sometimes resolved itself positively thanks to opportune reforms and revisions, and sometimes negatively with the effect of inducing further phases of regression or spiritual decadence. This period, called by some the "climacteric" of civilization, falls approximately between the eighth and the fifth centuries b.c. It is in this period that the doctrines of Lao-tzu and Kung Fu-tzu (Confucius) were taking root in China, representing a renewal of elements of the most ancient tradition on the metaphysical plane on the one hand, and on the ethical-social on the other. In the same period it is said that "Zarathustra" appeared, through whom a similar return took place in the Persian tradition. And in India the same function was performed by Buddhism, also representing a reaction and, at the same time, a re-elevation. On the other hand, as we have often pointed out elsewhere, it seems that in the West processes of decadence mainly prevailed. The period of which we are now talking is, in fact, that in which the ancient aristocratic and hieratic Hellas declined; in which the religion of Isis along with other popular and spurious forms of mysticism superseded the solar and regal Egyptian civilization; it is that in which Israelite prophetism started the most dangerous ferments of corruption and subversion in the Mediterranean world. The only positive counterpart in the West seems in fact to have been Rome, which was born in that period and which for a certain cycle was a creation of universal importance, animated in high measure by an Olympian and heroic spirit.

Coming to Buddhism, it was not conceived, as many who unilaterally take the Brahman point of view like to claim, as an antitraditional revolution, similar, in its own way, to what the Lutheran heresy was to Catholicism; (2) and still less as a "new" doctrine, the result of an isolated speculation that succeeded in taking root. It represented, rather, a particular adaptation of the original Indo-Aryan tradition, an

adaptation that kept in mind the prevailing conditions and limited itself accordingly, while freshly and differently formulating preexistent teachings: at the same time Buddhism closely adhered to the ksatriya (in Pali, khattiya) spirit, the spirit of the warrior caste. We have already seen that the Buddha was born of the most ancient Aryan nobility; but this is not the end of the matter, as a text informs us of the particular aversion nourished by his people for the Brahman caste: "The Sakiya" (Skt: Sakya)—we read—"do not esteem the priests, they do not respect the priests, they do not honour the priests, they do not venerate the priests, they do not hold the priests of account." The same tendency is maintained by Prince Siddhattha, but with the aim of restoring, of reaffirming, the pure will for the unconditioned, to which in the most recent times the "regal" line had often been more faithful than the priestly caste that was already divided within itself.

(2) This is the point of view held by R. Guénon, *L'Homme et son devenir selon le Vedanta* (Paris, 1925), p. 111 ff., with which we cannot—"according to truth"—agree [(English trans.: *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, [London, 1945] J. More correct are the views of A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York, 1941), although in this book is apparent the tendency to emphasize only what in Buddhism is valuable from the brahmana standpoint, with disregard of the specific functional meaning he possesses as compared to Hindu tradition.

There are, besides, many signs that the Buddhist doctrine laid no claim to originality but regarded itself as being, in a way, universal and having a traditional character in a superior sense. The Buddha himself says, for example: "Thus it is: those who, in times past, were saints, Perfect Awakened Ones, these sublime men also have rightly directed their disciples to such an end, as now disciples are rightly directed here by me; and those who in future times will be saints, Perfect Awakened Ones, also these sublime men will rightly direct their disciples, as now disciples are rightly directed here by me." The same is repeated in regard to purification of thought, word, and action; it is repeated about right knowledge of decay and death, of their origin, of their cessation and of the way that leads to their cessation; and it is repeated about the doctrine of the "void" or "emptiness," *suffnata*. The doctrine and the "divine life" proclaimed by Prince Siddhattha are repeatedly called "timeless," *akaliko*. "Ancient saints, Perfect Awakened Ones" are spoken of, and a traditional theme occurs in connection with a place (here called "the Gorge of the Seer") where a whole series of Paccakabuddhas are supposed to have vanished in the past, a series, that is, of beings who, by their own unaided and isolated efforts, have reached the superhuman state and the same perfect awakening as did Prince Siddhattha himself. Those who are "without faith, without devotion, without tradition" are reproached. A repeated saying is: "What for the world of the sages is not, of that I say: 'It is not', and what for the world of sages is, of that I say: 'It is.'" An interesting point is the mention in a text of "extinction," the aim of the Buddhist asceticism, as something that "leads back to the origins." This is supported by the symbolism of a great forest where "an ancient path, a path of men of olden times" is discovered. Following it, the Buddha finds a royal city; and he asks that it should be restored. In another text the significance of this is explained by the Buddha in a most explicit way: "I have seen the ancient

path, the path trodden by all the Perfected Awakened Ones of olden times. This is the path I follow." (3)

(3) It is interesting that according to the myth, Buddha attained the awakening under the Tree of Life placed in the navel of the earth where also all the previous Buddhas reached transcendent knowledge. This is a reference to the "Center of the World," which is to be considered, in its way, as a chiasm of traditionalism and initiatic of orthodoxy whenever a contact with the origins was restored.

It is quite clear, then, that in Buddhism we are not dealing with a negation of the principle of spiritual authority but rather with a revolt against a caste that claimed to monopolize this authority while its representatives no longer preserved its dignity and had lost their qualifications. The Brahmins, against whom Prince Siddhattha turns, are those who say they know, but who know nothing, who for many generations have lost the faculty of direct vision, without which they cannot even say: "Only this is truth, foolishness is the rest," and who now resemble "a file of blind men, in which the first cannot see, the one in the middle cannot see and the last cannot see." Very different from the men of the original period—from the brahmana who remembered the ancient rule, who guarded the door of the senses, who had entirely controlled their impulses, and who were ascetics, rich only in knowledge, inviolable and invincible, made strong by truth (dharma)—were their worldly successors, who were wrapped up in ritualism or intent on vain fasting and who had abandoned the ancient laws. Of these "there is not one who has seen Brahma face to face," whence it is impossible that "these brahmana, versed in the science of the threefold Vedas, are capable of indicating the way to a state of companionship with that which they neither know nor have seen." The Buddha is opposed to one who knows "only by hearsay," to one who knows "the truth only by repetition, and who, with this traditionally heard truth, as a coffer handed down from hand to hand, transmits the doctrine," the integrity of which, however, it is impossible to guarantee in such circumstances. A distinction is therefore made between the ascetics and Brahmins who "only by their own creed profess to have reached the highest perfection of knowledge of the world: such are the reasoners and the disputers," and other ascetics and Brahmins who, "in things never before heard, recognize clearly in themselves the truth, and profess to have reached the highest perfection of knowledge of the world."

It is to these latter that Prince Siddhattha claims to belong, and this is the type that he indicates to his disciples: "only when he knows does he say that he knows, only when he has seen does he say that he has seen." Regarded from this standpoint Buddhism does not deny the concept of brahmana; on the contrary the texts use the word frequently and call the ascetic life brahmacariya, their intention being simply to indicate the fundamental qualities in virtue of which the dignity of the true brahmana can be confirmed.

Here, with the aim being essentially one of reintegration, the qualities of the true brahmana and of the ascetic become identified. These notions had previously been distinct, particularly when the Asrama teaching of the Aryan code, according to which a man of Brahmin caste was obliged to

graduate to a completely detached life, vanaprashta or yati, had practically and with but few exceptions disappeared. By understanding this point we can also understand the Buddha's true attitude to the problem of caste. Even in the preceding tradition ascetic achievement had been considered as above all caste and free from obligations to any of them. This is the Buddha's point of view, expressed in a simile: as one who desires fire does not ask the type of wood that in fact produces it, so from any caste may arise an ascetic or an Awakened One. The castes appeared to Prince Siddhattha, as they did to every traditional mind, as perfectly natural and furthermore, justified transcendentally, since in following the doctrine of the Upanisads he understood that birth in one caste or another and inequality in general were not accidental but the effect of a particular preceding action. Thus he was never concerned with upsetting the caste system on the ethnic, political, or social plane; on the contrary, it is laid down that a man should not omit any of the obligations inherent in his station in life, and it is never said that a servant-sudda (Skt.: sudra)—or a vessa (Skt.: vaisya) should not obey higher Aryan castes. The problem only concerns the spiritual apex of the Aryan hierarchy, where historical conditions required discrimination and revision of the matter: it was necessary that the "lists" should be reviewed and reconstructed, with the traditional dignities being considered real only on "the merits of the individual cases." The decisive point was the identification of the true Brahman with the ascetic and, thence, the emphasis placed on what in fact is evidenced by action. Thus the principle was proclaimed: "Not by caste is one a pariah, not by caste is one a brahmana; by actions is one a pariah, by actions is one a brahmana." In respect of the "flame that is sustained by virtue, and lighted by training," as in respect of liberation, the four castes are equal. And again: as it is not to be expected in answer to a man's invocations, prayers, and praises, so it is not to be expected that the brahmana who, although they are instructed in the triple Veda yet "omit the practice of those qualities that make a man a true brahmana can, by calling upon Indra, Soma, Varuna and other gods, acquire those qualities that really make a man a non-brahmana." If they have not destroyed desire for the five stems of sense experience, they can as little expect to unite themselves after death with Brahma as a man, swimming, can expect to reach the other bank with his arms tied to his body. To unite himself with Brahma a man must develop in himself qualities similar to Brahma. This, however, in no way prevents the consideration in the texts of the ideal brahmana, in whom the purity of the Aryan lineage is joined with qualities which make him like a god or a divine being; and the texts even go so far as to reprove the contemporary Brahmins not only for their desertion of ancient customs and for their interest in gold and riches, but also for their betrayal of the laws of marriage within the caste, for they are accused of frequenting non-Brahman women at all times from mere desire "like dogs." The general principle of any right hierarchy is confirmed with these words: "In serving a man, if for this service one becomes worse, not better, this man, I say, one ought not to serve. In serving a man, on the other hand, if for this service one becomes better, not worse, this man, I say, one ought to serve."

This shows that there is no question here of equalitarian subversion under spiritual pretexts, but of rectification and epuration of the existing hierarchy. Prince Siddhattha has so little sympathy for the

masses that in one of the oldest texts he speaks of the "common crowd" as a "heap of rubbish," where there takes place the miraculous flowering of the Awakened One. Beyond the ancient division into castes, Buddhism affirms another that, deeper and more intimate, *mutatis mutandis*, is not unlike the one that originally existed between the Aryans, those "twice-born" (*dvija*) and other beings: on one side stand the Ariya and the "noble sons moved by confidence," to whom the Doctrine of Awakening is accessible; on the other, "the common men, without understanding for what is saintly, remote from the saintly doctrine, not accessible to the saintly doctrine; without understanding for what is noble, remote from the doctrine of the noble ones, not accessible by the doctrine of the noble ones." If, on the one hand, as rivers "when they reach the ocean lose their former names and are reckoned only as ocean, so the members of the four castes, when they take up the law of the Buddha, lose their former characteristics"—yet on the other they form a well-defined company, the "sons of the Sakiya's son." We can see that the effective aim of Buddhism was to discriminate between different natures, for which the touchstone was the Doctrine of Awakening itself: a discrimination that could not do other than stimulate the spiritual bases that originally had themselves been the sole justification of the Aryan hierarchy. In confirmation of this is the fact that the establishment and diffusion of Buddhism never in later centuries caused dissolution of the caste system—even today in Ceylon this system continues undisturbed side by side with Buddhism; while, in Japan, Buddhism lives in harmony with hierarchical, traditional, national, and warrior concepts. Only in certain Western misconceptions is Buddhism—considered in later and corrupted forms—presented as a doctrine of universal compassion encouraging humanitarianism and democratic equality.

The only point we must take with a grain of salt in the texts is the affirmation that in individuals of all castes all possible potentialities, both positive and negative, exist in equal measure. But the Buddhist theory of *sankhara*, that is, of prenatal predispositions, is enough to rectify this point. The exclusiveness of caste, race, and tradition in a hierarchical system results in the individual possessing hereditary predispositions for his development in a particular direction; this ensures an organic and harmonious character in his development, as opposed to the cases in which an attempt is made to reach the same point with a kind of violence, by starting from a naturally unfavorable base. Four ways are considered in some Buddhist texts, in three of which either the road or the achievement of knowledge is difficult, or both are difficult; the fourth way offers an easy road and easy attainment of knowledge; this way is called the "path of the elect," and it is reserved for those who enjoy the advantages bestowed by a good birth. At least it would have been so had circumstances been normal. But, let us repeat, Buddhism appeared in abnormal conditions in a particular traditional civilization: it is for this reason that Buddhism placed emphasis on the aspect of action and of individual achievement; and it is also for this reason that the support offered by tradition, in its most restricted sense, was held of little account. Prince Siddhattha stated that he himself had attained knowledge through his own efforts, without a master to show him the way; so, in the original Doctrine of Awakening, each individual has to rely on himself, and on his own exertions, just as a

soldier who is lost must rely on himself alone to rejoin the marching army.

Thus Buddhism, if a comparison of various traditions were being made, could legitimately take its place with the race that elsewhere we have called heroic, in the sense of the Hesiodic teaching on the "Four Ages." We mean a type of man in which the spirituality belonging to the primordial state is no longer taken for granted as something natural, for this tradition is no longer itself an adequate foundation. Spirituality has become an aim to him, the object of a reconquest, the final limit of a reintegration to be carried out by one's own virile efforts.

This ends our account of the historical place of Buddhism, an essential prerequisite for understanding the meaning of its principal teachings and the reasons for their existence.

Before going on to discuss the doctrine and the practice we must return to a point we have already mentioned, that is, that Buddhism belongs to a cycle that modern man can also comprehend.

Although in the epoch in which Prince Siddhattha lived there was already a certain clouding over of spiritual consciousness and of metaphysical vision of the world such as was possessed by ancient Indo-Aryan man, the later course of history—and particularly of Western history—has produced an increasing amount of regression, materialism, and individualism together with a corresponding loss of direct contact with metaphysical and, generally speaking, supersensible reality. With the "modern" world we have come to a point beyond which it would be difficult to go. The object of direct knowledge for modern man is exclusively the material world, with its counterpart, the purely psychological sphere of his subjectivity. His philosophical speculations and his religion stand apart, the first are purely cerebral creations, the second is based essentially on faith.

It is not entirely a case of Western religion, as opposed to the highest traditions of the most ancient time, having centered itself on faith, thereby hoping to save what yet could be saved. It is, rather, a counsel of despair: a man who has long since lost all direct contact with the metaphysical world can only adopt one possible form of religio, of reconnection, namely, that provided by belief or faith. It is in this way that we can also come to understand the real significance of Protestantism as compared with Catholicism. Protestantism took root in a period when humanism and naturalism were ushering in a phase of "secularization" of European man, a process that went much further than the normal regression of the epoch in which Christianity in general arose; and at the same time decadence and corruption appeared among the representatives of the Catholic tradition, to whom had been entrusted the task of support and mediation. These being the real circumstances and the rift having thus grown wider, the principle of the pure faith was emphasized and opposed to any hierarchical organization and mediation; a distrust of "works" (even the Christian monastic asceticism was included in this) was nourished; these are tendencies that are characteristic of Protestantism.

The present crisis of Western religions based on "belief is known to all, and we need not point out the completely secular, materialistic and samsaric character of the mentality predominant in our contemporaries. We are entitled to ask ourselves, under these circumstances, what a system, based rigorously on knowledge, free from elements of both faith and intellectualism, not tied to local organized tradition, but in reality directed toward the unconditioned, may have to offer. It is evident that this path is only suited to a very small minority, gifted with exceptional interior strength. Original Buddhism, in this respect, can be recommended as can few other doctrines, particularly because when it was formulated the condition of mankind, although still far from the straits of Western materialism and the subsequent eclipse of any living traditional knowledge, nevertheless manifested some of these signs and symptoms. Nor must we forget that Buddhism, as we have said, is a practical and realistic adaptation of traditional ideas, an adaptation that is mainly in the spirit of the ksatriya, of the Aryan warrior caste; it should be remembered especially since Western man's line of development has been warlike rather than a sacerdotal, while his inclination for clarity, for realism, and for exact knowledge, applied on the material plane, has produced the most typical achievements of his civilization.

Other metaphysical and ascetic systems might appear more attractive than Buddhism and might offer a deeper gratification for a mind anxiously trying to penetrate the mysteries of the world and of existence. Yet they tend proportionately to provide modern man with opportunities for illusions and misconceptions; the reason being that genuinely traditional systems, such as the Vedanta, if they are to be fully understood and realized, presuppose a degree of spirituality that has disappeared long ago in the vast majority of men. Buddhism, on the other hand, poses a total problem, without any loopholes. As someone has rightly said, it is "no milk for babies," nor does it provide metaphysical feasts for lovers of intellectual speculation. It states: "Man, this is what you have become and this is what your experience has become. Know it. There is a Way which leads beyond. This is its direction, these are its milestones, these are the means for following it. It rests with you to discover your true vocation and to measure your strength." "Do not persuade, do not dissuade; knowing persuasion, knowing dissuasion, neither persuade, nor dissuade, expound only reality"—we have already seen that this is the fundamental precept of the Awakened Ones.

Thus, in describing the historical place of Buddhism, we have also explained the last of the reasons we adopted to justify the choice of Buddhism as a basis for a study of a complete and virile asceticism, formulated with regard to the cycle that also includes contemporary man.

Castes: from Divine Kings to Servants

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] In order to illustrate this vast process of degeneration, particularly in its political and social aspects, I referred to the aforementioned law of caste regression. Significantly, other authors had referred to this same law in the years when I was writing *Revolt*, both simultaneously and independently from one another. On the other hand, the law of caste regression was clearly related to the doctrine of four ages. Such a law is best explained on the basis of an intrinsically valid teaching espoused in a more or less explicit, complete and regular form among most traditional civilizations. According to such teachings, human society is structured in four 'functional classes' or castes, which correspond to definite and differentiated ways of being; each caste possesses its own character, ethics, rights and duties within the broader framework of Tradition. The highest caste is comprised of those individuals who embody spiritual authority; the second of the warrior aristocracy; the third of the property-owning bourgeoisie; the fourth of servants.

History is clearly marked by the progressive descent of civilization, power and values from the level of the highest caste to that of the lowest. With the end of those systems based on pure spiritual authority ('sacral civilizations' ruled by 'divine kings'), authority fell into the hands of the warrior aristocracy: here began the cycle of great monarchies - the 'divine right' of the sovereign representing the residual echo of a former sacred dignity. The bourgeois revolution, democracy, capitalism and industrialism then contributed to transfer power into the hands of the representatives of the third caste, that of the wealthy - such transferral radically altering the character of the civilization and the nature of its interests. In the present day, socialism, Marxism and Communism are foreshadowing - and have already partly brought about - the final phase: the advent of the fourth caste, that of servants. Servants ('workers' and proletarians) are here seen to organize themselves in an attempt to gain power and to conquer the world, leaving their imprint on all aspects of life, leading the historical process of regression to its close. [...]

Certain People Still Cherish False Hopes in Islam

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The realistic point of view I felt the need to adopt in *Ride the Tiger* has lately led to my polemical confrontation with certain people who still cherish false hopes with regard to the current potential of 'traditional residues'. For instance, I discussed certain matters with Titus Burckhardt, who pointed to remnants of Tradition in areas outside Europe. I felt compelled to ask Burckhardt whether he was willing to acknowledge the fact that these areas, too, will fall subject to 'cyclical laws' - in which case, any emphasis on places where devolution has yet to reach the level it has reached in the West seems rather irrelevant. Burckhardt also mentioned the existence of 'spiritual influences that, albeit often invisible, by far surpass all of the material powers of humanity', and which are exercised by surviving

'initiatory' centers. While stressing the fact that I do not deny the possibility that similar influences might exist, I remarked that it is likely that those centers capable of exerting them might have received the order not to do so, in such a way as to not interfere with the general process of devolution. Otherwise, what should we make of a place like Tibet, which is being invaded and profaned by the Chinese Communists? Or of the Japanese kamikaze, who in most cases were decimated like flies by the massive firepower of terrified anti-aircraft crews, and were never allowed to draw near to the enemy so as to activate 'the wind of the gods'? And while some Sufi initiatory centers certainly exist within Islam, their presence hardly prevents the Arab world from 'evolving' at an increasing speed in a modernist, progressive and anti-traditional direction. To these, many other examples might be added. (I returned to such matters in a chapter of the second edition of my book, *The Bow and the Club*, entitled 'Initiatory Centers and History'.)

The world, therefore, appears to be left to its own resources. In other words, the general process of 'solidification' and deconsecration of the world limits the influence of the aforementioned powers - powers which are also difficult to measure without taking account of the sphere of action, as well as that of pure knowledge. Once again, the impression one gains is that the cycle is drawing to a close. [...]

Christianity: Historical Function & Spirit

(from "Revolt Against the Modern World")

[...] If, on the one hand, we should not ignore the complexity and the heterogeneity of the elements that were found in primitive Christianity, on the other hand, we should not minimize the existing antithesis between the dominating forces and the pathos found in these elements and the original Roman spirit. At this point I do not purport to focus on the traditional elements found in this or that historical civilization; I rather intend to assess in what function and according to what spirit the historical currents have acted as a whole. Thus the presence of some traditional elements within Christianity, and more specifically within Catholicism, should not prevent us from recognizing the subversive character of these two currents.

We already know what kind of equivocal spirituality is associated with Judaism, from which Christianity grew, and with the Asiatic cults of decadence that facilitated the expansion of the new faith beyond its birthplace.

The immediate antecedent of Christianity was not traditional Judaism, but rather prophetism and analogous currents in which the notions of sin and of expiation prevailed; in which a desperate form of spirituality emerged; and in which the type of the warrior Messiah as an emanation of the "Lord of Hosts" was replaced with the type of the Messiah as "Son of Man" predestined to be the sacrificial victim, the persecuted one, the hope of the afflicted and the rejected, as well as the object of a

confused and ecstatic cult. It is a well-known fact that the mystical figure of Jesus Christ originally derived his power and inspiration from an environment impregnated with this messianic pathos, the size of which grew with time as a result of prophetic preaching and various apocalyptic expectations. By regarding Jesus as Savior and by breaking away from the "Law," that is, from Jewish orthodoxy, primitive Christianity took up several themes typical of the Semitic soul at large. These themes were those proper to an innerly divided human type and constituted fertile ground for the growth of an antitraditional virus, especially vis-à-vis a tradition like the Roman one. Through Paul's theology these elements were universalized and activated without a direct relationship to their Jewish origins.

As far as Orphism is concerned, it facilitated the acceptance of Christianity in several areas of the ancient world, not so much as an initiatory doctrine of the Mysteries, but as its profanation paralleling the onslaught of the cults of Mediterranean decadence. These cults were characterized by the idea of "salvation" in a merely religious sense and by the ideal of a religion open to everyone and therefore alien to any notion of race, tradition, and caste; in other words, this ideal welcomed all those who had no race, tradition, or caste. A confused need started to grow among these masses, in concert with the parallel action of the universalist cults of Eastern origins, until the figure of the founder of Christianity became the precipitating catalyst and the crystallization of what had been saturating the spiritual "atmosphere." When this happened, it was no longer a matter of a state of mind or a widespread influence, but of a well-defined force opposing the world of tradition.

From a doctrinal point of view, Christianity appears as a desperate version of Dionysism. Modeling itself after a broken human type, it appealed to the irrational part of being and instead of the paths of heroic, sapiential, and initiatory spiritual growth posited faith as its fundamental instrument, the élan of a restless and perturbed soul that is attracted to the supernatural in a confused way. Through its suggestions concerning the imminent advent of the Kingdom of God and its vivid portrayals of either eternal salvation or eternal damnation, primitive Christianity exasperated the crisis of such a human type and strengthened the force of faith, thus opening a problematic path of liberation through the symbol of salvation and redemption found in the crucified Christ. If in the symbolism of Christ there are traces of a mystic pattern (through new references to Orphism and to analogous currents), nevertheless the proprium or typical feature of the new religion was the employment of such a pattern on a plane that was no longer based on initiation, but rather on feelings and on a confused mysticism; therefore it can rightly be said that with Christianity, God became a human being. In Christianity we no longer find the pure religion of the Law, as in traditional Judaism, nor a true initiatory Mystery, but rather an intermediate form, a surrogate of the latter in a formulation proper to the abovementioned broken human type; this type felt relieved from his abjection, redeemed through the feeling of "grace," animated by a new hope, justified and rescued from the world, the flesh, and from death. (1) All of this represented something fundamentally alien to the Roman and classical spirit, better yet, to the Indo-European spirit as a whole. Historically, this signified the predominance of pathos over ethos and of

that equivocal, deficient soteriology that had always been opposed by the noble demeanor of the sacred Roman patriciate, by the strict style of the jurists, the leaders, and the pagan sages. God was no longer conceived of as the symbol of an essence not liable to passion and change, which establishes an unbridgeable distance between itself and all that is merely human; nor was he the God of the patricians who is invoked in an erect position, who is carried in front of the legions and who becomes embodied in the winner. The God who came to be worshiped was a figure who in his "passion" took up and affirmed in an exclusivist fashion ("I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." John 14:6-7) the Pelasgic-Dionysian motif of the sacrificed gods and the gods who die and rise again in the shadow of the Great Mothers. Even the myth of the virginal birth reflects an analogous influence, since it reminds us of the goddesses who generate without a mate (like Hesiod's Gaea); in this regard the relevant role that the cult of the "Mother of God," or the "Divine Virgin" was destined to play in the development of Christianity is significant. In Catholicism Mary, the "Mother of God," is the queen of angels and of all the saints; she is also thought of as the adoptive mother of mankind, as the "Queen of the world," and as the "bestower of all favors." These expressions, which are exaggerated in comparison to the effective role played by Mary in the myth of the Synoptic Gospels, echo the attributes of the sovereign divine Mothers of the pre-Indo-European Southern Hemisphere. Although Christianity is essentially a religion of the Christ, more so than of the Father, its representations of both the infant Jesus and the body of the crucified Christ in the arms of the deified Mother show definite similarities with the representations of the eastern Mediterranean cults, thereby giving new emphasis to the antithesis that exists between itself and the ideal of the purely Olympian deities who are exempt from passions and free of the telluric, maternal element. The symbol that the Church herself eventually adopted was that of the Mother (Mother Church). The epitome of true religiosity became that of the imploring and prayerful soul, that is aware of its unworthiness, sinfulness, and powerlessness before the Crucified One. (2) The hatred early Christianity felt toward any form of virile spirituality, and its stigmatization as folly and sin of pride anything that may promote an active overcoming of the human condition express in a clear fashion its lack of understanding of the "heroic" symbol. The potential that the new faith was able to generate among those who felt the live mystery of the Christ, or of the Savior, and who drew from it the inner strength to pursue martyrdom frantically, does not prevent the advent of Christianity from representing a fall; its advent characterized a special form of that spiritual emasculation typical of the cycles of a lunar and priestly type.

(1) Thus, in comparison with historical Judaism, primitive Christianity may be credited with a mystical character along the same lines of prophetism, but not with an initiatory character, contrary to what F. Schuon claimed (*The Transcendent Unity of Religions* [Paris, 1937]) on the basis of sporadic elements found mostly in Eastern Orthodoxy. We should never forget though that if Christianity developed from the ancient Jewish tradition, orthodox Judaism developed in an independent fashion through the Talmud and the Kabbalah, which represents an initiatory tradition that was always missing in Christianity. This is how, later on, true esotericism developed in the West, that is, outside Christianity and

with the help of non-Christian currents such as the Jewish Kabbalah, Hermeticism, or movements of a remote Nordic origin.

(2) In pre-Christian Rome the libri sibillini, which introduced the cult of the Great Goddess, also introduced the supplicatio, the ritual abasement before the divine statue, whose knees were hugged and whose hands and feet were kissed.

Even in Christian morality, the role played by Southern and non-Aryan influences is rather visible. It does not really make much of a difference that it was in the name of a god instead of a goddess that equality among human beings was spiritually proclaimed and that love was adopted as the supreme principle. This belief in human equality essentially belongs to a general worldview, a version of which is that "natural law" that crept into the Roman law during decadent times; it exercised an antithetical function to the heroic ideal of personality and to the value bestowed on anything that a being, by becoming differentiated, by giving itself a form, is able to claim for itself within a hierarchical social order. And so it happened that Christian egalitarianism, based on the principles of brotherhood, love, and community, became the mystical and religious foundation of a social ideal radically opposed to the pure Roman idea. Instead of universality, which is authentic only in its function as a hierarchical peak that does not abolish but presupposes and sanctions the differences among human beings, what arose was the ideal of collectivity reaffirmed in the symbol of the mystical body of Christ; this latter ideal contained in embryonic form a further regressive and involutive influence that Catholicism itself, despite its Romanization, was neither able nor entirely willing to overcome.

Some people attempt to see a value in Christianity as a doctrine because of its idea of the supernatural and the dualism that it upheld. Here, however, we find a typical case of a different action that the same principle can exercise according to the function under which it is assumed. Christian dualism essentially derives from the dualism proper to the Semitic spirit; it acted in a totally opposite way from the spirit according to which the doctrine of the two natures constituted the basis of any achievement of traditional humanity. In early Christianity the rigid opposition of the natural and supernatural orders may have had a pragmatic justification motivated by a particular historical and existential situation of a given human type. Such dualism differs from the traditional dualism, however, in that it is not subordinated to a higher principle or to a higher truth, and that it claims for itself an absolute and ontological character rather than a relative and functional one. The two orders, the natural and the supernatural, as well as the distance between them, were hypostatized and thus any real and active contact was prevented from taking place. Thus, in regard to man (here too because of a parallel influence of a Jewish theme) what emerged were: (a) the notion of the "creature" separated by an essential distance from God as its "Creator" and as a personal, distinct being; and (b) the exasperation of this distance through the revival and the accentuation of the idea, of Jewish origins as well, of "original sin."

More particularly, this dualism generated the understanding of all manifestations of spiritual influence in the passive terms of "grace," "election," and "salvation," as well as the disavowal (at times accompanied by real animosity) of all "heroic" human possibilities; the counterpart of this disavowal consisted in humility, fear of God, mortification of the flesh, and prayer. Jesus' saying in Matthew (11: 12) concerning the violence suffered by the kingdom of Heaven and the revival of the Davidic saying: "You are gods" (John 10:34), belong to elements that exercised virtually no influence on the main pathos of early Christianity. But in Christianity in general it is evident that what has been universalized, rendered exclusive, and exalted are the way, the truth, and the attitude that pertain only to an inferior human type or to those lower strata of a society for whom the exoteric forms of Tradition have been devised; this was precisely one of the characteristic signs of the climate of the Dark Age, or Kali Yuga.

What has been said concerns the relationship of man with the divine. The second consequence of Christian dualism was the deconsecration of nature. Christian "supernaturalism" caused the natural myths of antiquity to be misunderstood once and for all. Nature ceased to be something living; that magical and symbolical perception of nature that formed the basis of priestly sciences was rejected and branded as "pagan." Following the triumph of Christianity, these sciences underwent a rapid process of degeneration, with the exception of a weakened residue represented by the later Catholic tradition of the rites. Thus, nature came to be perceived as something alien and even diabolical. Again, this constituted the basis for the development of an asceticism of a monastic and mortifying type, hostile to the world and to life (Christian asceticism), and radically antithetical to the classical and Roman sensibility.

The third consequence concerns the political domain. The principles: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36) and "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21), represented a direct attack on the concept of traditional sovereignty and of that unity of the two powers that had formally been reestablished in imperial Rome. According to Gelasius I, after Christ, no man can simultaneously be king and priest; the unity of sacerdotium and regnum, when it is vindicated by a king, is a diabolical deception and a counterfeit of the true priestly regality that belongs to Christ alone. It was precisely at this point that the contrast between Christian and Roman ideas escalated into an open conflict. When Christianity developed the Roman pantheon was so inclusive that even the cult of the Christian Savior could have found its proper place within it, among other cults, as a particular cult derived from a schism in Judaism. As I have previously suggested, it was typical of the imperial universalism to exercise a higher unifying and organizing function over and above any particular cult, which it did not need to deny or to oppose. What was required though, was an act demonstrating a superordained fides in reference to the principle "from above" embodied in the representative of the empire, namely, in the "Augustus." The Christians refused to perform this very act, consisting of a ritual and sacrificial offering made before the imperial symbol, since they claimed that it was incompatible with their faith; this was the only reason why

there was such an epidemic of martyrs, which may have appeared as pure folly in the eyes of the Roman Magistrates.

In this way, the new belief imposed itself. Over and against a particular universalism, a new, opposite universalism based on a metaphysical dualism affirmed itself. The traditional hierarchical view, according to which loyalty enjoyed a supernatural sanction and a religious value, since every power descended from above, was undermined at its very foundation. In this sinful world there can only be room for a *civitas diaboli*, the *civitas dei*, or the divine state, was thought to belong to a separate plane and to consist in the unity of those who are drawn to the otherworld by a confused longing and who, as Christians, acknowledge only Christ as their leader as they await the Last Day. Wherever this idea did not result in a virus that proved to be a defeatist and subversive one, and wherever Caesar was still given "the things which are Caesar's," the fides remained deconsecrated and secularized; it merely had the value of a contingent obedience to a power that was merely temporal. The Pauline saying, "all authority comes from God" was destined to remain ineffectual and meaningless.

And thus, although Christianity upheld the spiritual and supernatural principle, historically speaking this principle was destined to act in a dissociative and even destructive fashion; it did not represent something capable of galvanizing whatever in the Roman world had become materialized and fragmented, but rather represented something heterogeneous, a different current drawn to what in Rome was no longer Roman and to forces that the Northern Light had successfully kept under control for the duration of an entire cycle. It helped to rescind the last contacts and to accelerate the end of a great tradition. It is not surprising that Rutilius Namatianus put Christians and Jews on the same level, insofar as both groups were hostile to Rome's authority; he also blamed the former for spreading a fatal disease (*excisae pestis contagia*) outside the boundaries of Judea, which was under the legions' yoke, and the latter for spreading a poison that altered both the race and the spirit (*tunc mutabantur corpora, nunc animi*).

When considering the enigmatic witnesses offered by ancient symbols, one cannot help noticing the role the motif of the ass played in the myth of Jesus. Not only was the ass present in the Nativity scene, but it was on an ass that the Virgin and the Divine Child escaped to Egypt; most of all, it was on an ass that Jesus rode during his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. The ass was its traditional symbol of an infernal dissolutive "force." In Egypt it was the animal sacred to Set, who embodied this force, had an antisolar character, and was associated with the "children of the powerless rebellion." In India the ass was the mount of Mudevi, who represented the infernal aspect of the feminine deity. Also, in Greece the ass was the symbolic animal that in Lethe's plain continuously ate Ocnus's handiwork, and that had a relationship with the chthonic and infernal goddess Hecate. (3)

(3) In the Rg Veda the ass is often referred to as *rasabha*, a word that denotes turmoil, noise, and even inebriation. In the myth, Apollo turned King Midas's ears into ass's ears, since the latter had preferred Pan's music to his own - in other words, for preferring the Dionysian,

pantheistic cult to the Hyperborean cult. The slaughter of asses was, among the Hyperboreans, the sacrifice that Apollo preferred. See Pindar, Pythian Odes, 10.33-56. Typhon-Set (who corresponds to Python, Apollo's nemesis), after being defeated by Horus, runs into the desert riding an ass (Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride, 29-32); Apep, the serpent that represents the principle of darkness, is often portrayed in the company of an ass or riding an ass. Dionysus too was believed to have been carried to Thebes by an ass, an animal that was always associated with him. Some of these elements must have been preserved underground, since they later reemerged in some medieval festivals in which the Virgin and Child, led by Joseph, were carried in a procession, in the course of which the highest honors were paid to the ass.

This is how this symbol could represent the secret sign of a force that was associated with primitive Christianity and to which it partially owed its success; it was the force that emerged and assumed an active part wherever what corresponded to the "cosmos" principle within a traditional structure vacillated and disintegrated. In reality, the advent of Christianity would not have been possible if the vital possibilities of the Roman heroic cycle had not been exhausted; if the "Roman race" had not been broken in its spirit and in its representatives (a proof of this was the failure of the attempted restoration promoted by Emperor Julian); if the ancient traditions had not been dimmed; and if, in the context of an ethnic chaos and a cosmopolitan disintegration, the imperial symbol had not been contaminated and reduced to merely surviving in a world of ruins.

'Democracy' Dilemma in the US may bring Interesting Developments

(from "Civiltà Americana")

There is a significant and growing discrepancy in the United States between the shibboleths of the prevailing political ideology and the effective economic structures of the nation. A large part of studies of the subject is played by the 'morphology of business'. Studies corroborate the impression that American business is a long way from the type of organization which corresponds to the democratic ideal of U.S. propaganda. American businesses have a 'pyramid' structure. They constitute at the top an articulate hierarchy. The big businesses are run in the same way as government ministries and are organized along similar lines. They have coordinating and controlling bodies which separate the business leaders from the mass of employees. Rather than becoming more flexible in a social sense the "managerial elite" (Burnham) is becoming more autocratic than ever - something not unrelated to American foreign policy.

This is the end of yet another American illusion. America: the 'land of opportunity', where every possibility is there for the person who can grasp it, a land where anyone can rise from rags to riches. At first there was the 'open frontier' for all to ride out across. That closed and the new 'open frontier' was the sky, the limitless potential of industry

and commerce. As Gardner, Moore and many others have shown, this too is no longer limitless, and the opportunities are thinning out. Given the ever increasing specialization of labor in the productive process and the increasing emphasis on 'qualifications', what used to seem obvious to Americans - that their children would 'go further' than they would - is for many people no longer obvious at all. Thus it is that in the so-called political democracy of the United States, the force and the power in the land, that is to say the industry and the economy, are becoming ever more self-evidently undemocratic. The problem then is: should reality be made to fit ideology or vice-versa? Until recently the overwhelming demand has been for the former course of action; the cry goes out for a return to the 'real America' of unfettered enterprise and the individual free of central government control. Nevertheless, there are also those who would prefer to limit democracy in order to adapt political theory to commercial reality. If the mask of American 'democracy' were thereby removed, it would become clear to what extent 'democracy' in America (and elsewhere) is only the instrument of an oligarchy which pursues a method of 'indirect action', assuring the possibility of abuse and deception on a large scale of those many who accept a hierarchical system because they think it is justly such. This dilemma of 'democracy' in the United States may one day give place to some interesting developments.

Devotio: Ancient Roman Self-Sacrifice in Battle
as Man's Influence on Invisible Forces

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] Although this is not widely known our ancient Roman traditions contained motifs concerning the disinterested, heroic offering of one's own person in the name of the State for the purpose of victory analogous to those which we have seen in the Japanese mysticism of combat. We are alluding to the so-called devotio. Its presuppositions are equally sacred. What acts in it is the general belief of the traditional man that invisible forces are at work behind the visible ones and that man, in his turn, can influence them.

According to the ancient Roman ritual of devotio, as we understand it, a warrior, and above all a chieftain, can facilitate victory by means of a mysterious unleashing of forces determined by the deliberate sacrifice of his own person, combined with the will not to come out of the fray alive. Let us recall the execution of this ritual by Consul Decius in the war against the Latins (340 B.C.), and also the repetition of it - exalted by Cicero (Fin. II, 19, 61; Tusc. I, 37, 39) - by two other members of the same family. This ritual had its own precise ceremony, testifying to the perfect knowledge and lucidity of this heroic-sacrificial offer. In proper hierarchical order, first the Olympian divinities of the Roman State, Janus, Jupiter, Quirinus, and then, immediately following this, the God of war, Pater Mars, and then, finally, certain indigenous gods, were invoked: "gods - it is said - which confer power to heroes over their enemies"; by the virtue of the sacrifice which these ancient Romans

proposed to perform the gods were called upon "to grant strength and victory to the Roman people of the Quirites, and to sweep up with terror, fright and death the enemies of our people" (cf. Livy, VIII, 9). Proposed by the pontifex, the words of this formula were uttered by the warrior, arrayed in the praetesta, his foot upon a javelin. After that he plunged into the fray, to die. Incidentally, here the transformation of the sense of the word 'devotio' must be noticed. While it applied originally to this order of ideas, that is, to a heroic, sacrificial and evocative action, in the later Empire it came to mean simply the fidelity of the citizen and his scrupulosity in payment to the State treasury (devotio rei annonariae). As Bouché-Leclercq' puts it, in the end, "after Caesar was replaced by the Christian God, devotio means simply religiosity, the faith ready for all sacrifices, and then, in a further degeneration of the expression, devotion in the common sense of the word, that is, constant concern for salvation, affirmed in a meticulous and tremulous practice of the cult". Leaving this aside in the ancient Roman devotio we find, as we have shown, very precise signs of a mysticism aware of heroism and of sacrifice, binding the feeling of a super-natural and super-human reality tightly to the will to struggle with dedication in the name of one's own Chieftain, one's own State and one's own race. There are plenty of testimonies to an 'Olympian' feeling of combat and victory peculiar to our ancient traditions. We have discussed this extensively elsewhere. Let us only recall here that in the ceremony of the triumph the victorious dux displayed in Rome the insignia of the Olympian god to indicate the real force within him which had brought about his victory; let us recall also that beyond the mortal Caesar Romanity worshipped Caesar as 'perennial victor', that is, as a sort of supra-personal force of Roman destiny.

Thus, if succeeding times have made other views prevail the most ancient traditions still show us that the ideal of an Olympian 'heroism' has been our ideal also, and that our people also have experienced the absolute offering, the consummation of a whole existence in a force hurled against the enemy in a gesture which justifies the most complete evocation of abysmal forces; and which brings about, finally, a victory which transforms the victors and enables their participation in supra-personal and 'fatal' powers. And so in our heritage points of reference are indicated which stand in radical opposition to the sub-personal and collectivist heroism we discussed above, and not only to that, but to every tragic and irrational vision, which ignores what is stronger than fire and iron, and stronger than life and death.

Difference between Higher & Lower Views on Racism
however Meaningless to Discuss Today

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] Racist ideology, as is known, had always played a prominent role within National Socialism: generally promoted in an extremist and primitive fashion, racism represented one of the most problematic features of the Third Reich, and one in need of rectification. On the one

hand, racism was associated with anti-Semitism; on the other, racism had given rise to 'pagan' tendencies, the chief exponent of which was Alfred Rosenberg. As I already mentioned when talking of Pagan Imperialism, Rosenberg - whom I had personally met - regarded me as the spokesman of an Italian current similar to his own. In fact, the differences between my own thought and that of Rosenberg were very conspicuous. In his well-known book entitled *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, Rosenberg, not unlike myself, had quoted authors such as Wirth and Bachofen in order to discuss the idea of Nordic origins, and to provide a dynamic historical analysis of various civilizations from a racist perspective. Rosenberg's study, however, was superficial and imprecise; politically, it was aimed at serving, almost exclusively, German interests. Rosenberg also lacked any understanding of holiness and transcendence - hence his most primitive critique of Catholicism, a religion which he even attacked, in a kind of renewed *Kulturkampf*, by borrowing the most obsolete arguments from Enlightenment and secularist polemics. The 'myth of the twentieth century', according to Rosenberg, was to be the myth of blood and race: 'A new myth of life that is called forth to create, along with a new kind of life, a new kind of state and of civilization.'

As for the racism of the German state, it merged a sort of pan-Germanic nationalism with the ideas of biological science. With respect to the latter, I believe that Trotsky was not far off the mark when he described racism as a kind of zoological materialism. The German state embraced biology, eugenics, and the theory of heredity, accepting all the materialist assumptions behind such doctrines. This led National Socialism to posit the unilateral dependence of the superior to the inferior: of the psychic and super-biological part of man to the biological. This materialist view was little affected by the superimposition of a vague mystique of blood. A materialist perspective was also responsible for the National Socialist illusion that mere prophylactic intervention on the biological level - an intervention, that is, upon the physical race - might automatically better all aspects of the life of peoples and nations. Where a similar analysis might have proven valid was in the idea that it is not the state, society or civilization which are of central importance, but rather race - had 'race' here been understood in its higher sense, as describing the deepest and most fundamental components of man. Also potentially valid was the National Socialist acknowledgement of the need and opportunity to 'fight for a worldview' appropriate for the Aryan man - this representing a means of promoting a broad reassessment of the values which have come to inform the Western world. A negative element, instead, was the fanatical anti-Semitism of National Socialism, something which many people have regrettably come to identify with racism tout court.

On more than one occasion in the past, I had already had my say on the issue of materialist racism. As for Nazi neopaganism, at a press conference held in 1936 at the Kulturbund of Vienna, I argued that its theories were enough 'to turn into Catholics even those best disposed towards paganism'. I should also mention the fact that Mussolini expressed his approval of one article of mine entitled 'Race and Culture' ('Razza e cultura'), which I had published in 1935 in the magazine *Italian Review* (*Rassegna Italiana*). In this article, I affirmed the pre-eminence of formative ideas over merely biological and ethnic traits (the

same argument I also made in the pages of my own section in Regime Fascista). An editorial of mine in Balbo's newspaper, *Corriere Padano*, was also well-received by the upper echelons of the Fascist regime. The editorial was entitled 'The Duty of Being Aryan' ('Responsabilita di dirsi ariani'), and was aimed at criticizing the fetish of physical race. I here denounced the irrelevance of 'Aryanness' as an expression used merely to denote individuals who are neither Jewish nor colored, rather than as a term employed in the spiritual and ethical sense to imply a certain duty towards oneself. Racism, I suggested, certainly expressed legitimate needs, but needed to be redefined on a different basis.

By exploiting my aforementioned influence in certain German circles, I sought to promote a rectification of racist ideology. The opportunity for me to take a more decisive stand on the matter, however, only presented itself in 1938, when Fascism suddenly turned 'racist' and issued its 'Race Manifesto'.

As in the case of many other policies adopted by the Fascist regime, most people today have misunderstood the Fascist embrace of racism. It is generally believed that Fascism passively followed Hitler in this regard, and that racism, in Italy, was merely something imported. It is certainly true that racist ideology had no precedents in Italy - not least because of the historical precedents of the country - and that it only took hold with difficulty. Yet, intrinsic and legitimate reasons existed for the Fascist promotion of racism. Firstly, the establishment of an empire in Africa, and the new contact with colored peoples such an empire entailed, required a sense of remoteness, and for the racial consciousness of the Italian people to be strengthened, as - to avoid forms of dangerous promiscuity and to safeguard a necessary colonial prestige. Besides, the same approach was favored by Britain until very recently - had it been maintained by Whites, it would have forestalled the kind of 'anti-colonial' uprisings which struck at the heart of a weakened Europe like a righteous Nemesis in the aftermath of the Second World War.

A second justification for the Fascist embrace of racism was the well documented anti-Fascist sentiment of international Jewry, which intensified following Italy's alliance with Germany. It was only natural, therefore, for Mussolini to react. The suffering of Jews in Fascist Italy - a small thing in comparison to that of Jews in Germany - was due to the attitude of Jews on the other side of the Alps. The third and most important reason for the Fascist adoption of racism, however, was Mussolini's ambition to invest his 'revolution' with more than a merely political significance by shaping a new kind of Italian. Mussolini correctly believed that political movements and states require adequate and well-defined human resources in order to survive and assert themselves. It is as a means to secure such resources that Mussolini first approached the myth of race and blood.

The Italian 'Race Manifesto', however, which had been hurriedly assembled on Mussolini's orders, proved a slipshod piece of work. No doubt, Italy lacked individuals capable of discussing similar issues. The same carelessness that marked the Manifesto also surfaced in the course of the Fascist racial campaign, which was partly articulated by means of cheap and virulent polemics. All of a sudden, a whole bunch of Fascist men of

letters and journalists realized they were 'racists', and started using the word 'race' at every turn, to describe the most varied and less pertinent things. People also started talking of the 'Italian race', an utterly meaningless idea, given that no modern nation corresponds to one race - Italy least of all. The various European races described in racial studies rather feature as the single components of a whole in almost all Western nations.

In 1937, the publisher from Hoepli entrusted me with the writing of a history of racism. The book was entitled *The Myth of Blood* (*Il mito del sangue*), and a second edition of the work was published during the war. In this volume, I discussed the antecedents of racism in the ancient world (where 'race' was seen not as a myth, but as a living reality), and in the centuries leading up to the present day. I then outlined the modern variants of racial ideology by describing the basic ideas of de Gobineau, Woltmann, de Lapouge, Chamberlain and various other authors. I also examined racist views of anthropology, genetics, heredity and typology, and discussed the racist view of history and the foundations of anti-Semitism. Finally, I provided an outline of the various forms of political racism in Hitler's day. The book, with its descriptive character, allowed me to clarify a number of points.

The research I had conducted in order to write *The Myth of Blood* led me to develop a racial doctrine of my own. I outlined such a doctrine in a book entitled *Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race* (*Sintesi di dottrina della razza*), which was published by Hoepli in 1941 (a slightly revised edition was published in German by Runge Verlag of Berlin). The appendix of the volume included 52 photos.

One's idea of race depends on one's idea of man: the nature of each racial doctrine is determined by its conceptualization of the human being. All distortions in the field of racism derive from a materialist view of man, a view informed by science and naturalism. By contrast, at the very basis of my racial doctrine I placed the traditional idea of man as a being comprised of three elements: body, character and spirit. I argued that an exhaustive racial theory has to take all three elements into account by examining race in its threefold manifestation: as race of the body, race of the character, and race of the spirit. Racial 'purity' is found when these three races stand in harmonious balance with one another, each race shining through the other two. This, however, has long been only a rare occurrence. The most unwelcome consequence of the various cases of miscegenation which have occurred during the historical development of human society is not the alteration of the physical race and psychosomatic type - what ordinary racism is chiefly concerned with - but, rather, the divide and contrast between the three kinds of races within the same individual. As a consequence of such miscegenation, one finds men whose body no longer reflects their character, and whose emotional, moral and volitional dispositions no longer agree with their spiritual inclinations. 'Spirit' should here be distinguished from 'character' as that component of man in touch with higher values that transcend life. In this sense, the 'race of the spirit' manifests itself in the different approaches to the sacred, to destiny and to the question of life and death, as well as in world-views, religions, etc. I here argued, therefore, that three levels of racism ought to be distinguished

in order to reflect the three kinds of races: the first level of racism pertaining to the race of the body, the second to the race of the character, and the third to the race of the spirit.

In my study of race, I argued that in accordance with the legitimate inner hierarchy of man, the inner race ought to be regarded as superior to the external and merely biological form. A similar approach called for a radical reassessment of the views of materialist racism, not least with respect to genetics and heredity. I rejected the fetish of merely physical racial purity, on the grounds that the purity of the external race of an individual is often preserved even when his inner race has dimmed or deteriorated (a common example of this is that of the Dutch and Scandinavians). Such an approach also put the problem of miscegenation into perspective: miscegenation certainly has negative consequences in those cases where the inner race is weak; yet if the inner race is strong, the presence of an external element, introduced - albeit not in excess - by means of interbreeding, potentially provides a galvanizing challenge (hence, the opposite problem of certain aristocratic stocks which degenerate on account of incestuous unions). These, and other, similar considerations I made in my book.

From a political and social perspective, I acknowledged the use of racism as the expression of an anti-egalitarian and anti-rationalistic approach. Racism clearly emphasizes the idea of differentiation, with regard to both the peoples and the members of a given people. Racism opposes the democratic ideology born of the Enlightenment which proclaims the identity and equal dignity of all human beings; on the contrary, racism asserts that humanity as such is either an abstract and fictitious concept, or the final stage in a process of degeneration, dissolution and collapse - a stage only to be posited as an outmost limit never actually to be reached. Human nature, instead, is ordinarily differentiated, and this differentiation is expressed in the form of different bloodlines and races. This differentiation constitutes the primary feature of humanity: not only is it a natural condition among all beings, but also a positive element, something which ought to exist, and ought to be defended and safeguarded. The acknowledgement of diversity never led me - unlike certain other racists - to conceive humanity as a series of isolated, self-contained units; nor did it lead me to reject all higher principles. A kind of unity is certainly conceivable for humanity, but only at a higher level; and such unity accepts and preserves differentiation at a lower level. Unity 'from below', on the other hand, is a regressive phenomenon: such is the leveling unity sought by democracy, 'integrationism', humanitarianism, pseudo-universalism and collectivism. De Gobineau had already criticized similar ideas, essentially by promoting racism in aristocratic terms.

The other, generally positive aspect of racism is its anti-rationalism, which accompanies the racist embrace of differentiation as an attempt to valorize the kind of qualities, dispositions and dignities which cannot be bought, gained or replaced, which do not derive from an external influence or from the environment, which are related to the living whole of an individual person, and which have their roots in a deep, organic terrain. Such is the foundation of the individual person, as opposed to the merely abstract or amorphous individual. My aforementioned racial

theory provided a safe key to approach these issues by emphasizing the fact that human races cannot be discussed in the same terms as horse or cat breeds: for human life, unlike the life of animals, is not confined to instincts and bias.

The notion of an 'inner race', and of its pre-eminence over the external race, was particularly useful in two regards. On the one hand, from a moral point of view, this doctrine presented each race as an independent essence regarded as a universal in itself, almost as a Platonic 'idea' - although each race might empirically be understood in conjunction to a given physical race, among a given people. A similar analysis could practically be applied to the use of the terms 'Aryan' and 'Jewish', here understood as indicative of a series of attitudes that may or may not be found among all people of Aryan or Jewish blood. Such a use of the two terms would have provided a safeguard against conceit and one-sidedness: for what ultimately counted the most, in my view, was the inner form of each individual. As anticipated in my article in *Corriere Padano*, my doctrine of the inner race also implied a number of duties. It is for this reason, I may add, that after the war I was to emphasize the futility, from a superior perspective, of dwelling on the 'Jewish' or 'Aryan' question: for the negative behavior which Jews are charged with is now common among most 'Aryans' (who, unlike Jews, lack the extenuating circumstance of any hereditary predisposition).

Moreover, the notion of inner race implied the idea of race as a moulding energy. Thus, the development of a definite human type free of ethnic miscegenation might be explained on the grounds of an inner moulding power, which finds its most direct manifestation in a given civilization or tradition. A notable example of this phenomenon is provided by the Jewish people: originally lacking any ethnic unity (in a physical sense), the Jews came to possess recognizable hereditary traits thanks to their tradition, ultimately coming to embody one of the clearest historical examples of strenuous racial unity. A more recent example is that of North American society: for Americans have come to show rather constant racial traits (particularly in terms of inner race) thanks to the moulding power of their civilization, which has shaped an extraordinarily mixed ethnic whole. My approach, therefore, ruled out the possibility that populations might be conditioned by biological factors alone.

The practical possibilities of applying my racial doctrine to the field of what Vacher de Lapouge termed 'political anthropology' were self-evident. In a country where the state embodies the role of a superior, active and moulding principle, an attempt to favor the differentiation of the ethnic make-up of the population is certainly a conceivable prospect. In this regard, National Socialism was not entirely mistaken. What ought to have been distinguished in Germany was negative racism - understood as a means to protect the nation from dangerous forms of miscegenation - from positive racism - which is aimed at fostering diversity within the national community in order to define and strengthen a superior human type. Modern racism goes beyond the broad racial distinctions found in school textbooks (those between the White race and the Black, Yellow, etc.): for even the White, 'Aryan' or Indo-European race ought to be divided into smaller groupings: the Mediterranean race, the Nordic, the Dinaric, the Slav, Ostid, etc. (such terms significantly varying among

different authors). In his Rassenseelekunde, L.R. Clauss had also sought to provide a description of the soul and inner character of these different races, which are present in every European nation to various degrees. The aim of political racism ought to have been that of determining which race should be granted pre-eminence in the case of each country, and allowed to shape the nation. In the case of Germany, this race was the Nordic Aryan.

I personally addressed the same question with regard to Italy, and reached the conclusion that the central, guiding race of the country was to be the Roman Aryan race, a race that in ancient times had broken away from the same branch which had later engendered the Nordic race. In my book, I provided a description of the Roman Aryan type primarily in terms of its inner race (I provided a rough outline of the typology of the various 'races of the spirit'). In a separate chapter, I also discussed the prospect of an ethnic rectification of Italy aimed at reducing the widespread 'Mediterranean' elements in favor of the Roman Aryan - this, it goes without saying, from the point of view of sensibility and customs. I here described the elite as a governing class which would not only possess authority, power and prestige thanks to its position, but also embody a superior human type, where external and inner race would ideally coincide. The book also contained an iconographic appendix with photos and images in order to provide initial guidance in the study of the various races of the body, of the character and of the spirit, and of the consequences of interfering with them.

My book, no doubt, provided an original approach to racism, which avoided the chief pitfalls that marked the German approach. In my study of the subject, I raised a number of points which, I believe, remain valid even outside the specific context in which they were first formulated.

From a historical perspective, it might be interesting to note that Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race was openly approved by Mussolini. After reading the book, Mussolini got in touch with me, praising the work beyond its real merit on the grounds that the doctrine it espoused was just what he needed. My racial doctrine, Mussolini believed, might allow him to engage with the same issues addressed in Germany, thus 'conforming' to Germany, while at the same time maintaining an independent approach based on a spiritual drive (the primacy of the spirit which German racism generally lacked). In particular, Mussolini believed that my theory regarding the Roman Aryan race, and the myth which accompanied it, might serve both to integrate the Roman ideal of Fascism and to provide a foundation for his attempt to rectify and elevate the Italian people - to create, as it were, a new kind of Italian - by means of the Fascist 'revolution' and state.

[...] As should be evident from what I have written so far, mine had been an attempt to engage with the issue of race from a superior, spiritual perspective. Racism I actually regarded as a secondary matter: my purpose was rather that of contrasting the errors of the materialist and primitive brand of racism which had surfaced in Germany, and which some people amateurishly sought to emulate in Italy. This field, too, I explored in accordance with my own inclinations, and nothing I then wrote

I now truly disown - although I acknowledge the meaninglessness of any attempt to resume similar discussions today. [...]

Drugs

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] the "personal equation" and the specific zone on which drugs, here including alcohol, act, lead the individual toward alienation and a passive opening to states that give him the illusion of a higher freedom, an intoxication and an unfamiliar intensity of sensation, but that in reality have a character of dissolution that by no means "takes him beyond." In order to expect a different result from these experiences, he would have to have at his command an exceptional degree of spiritual activity, and his attitude would be the opposite of those who seek and need drugs to escape from tensions, traumatic events, neuroses, and feelings of emptiness and absurdity.

I have already pointed out the African polyrhythmic technique: one energy is locked into continuous stasis in order to unleash an energy of a different order. In the inferior ecstaticism of primitive peoples this opens the way for possession by dark powers. I have said that in our case, this different energy should be produced by the response of the "being" (the Self) to the stimulus. The situation created by the reaction to drugs and even alcohol is no different. But this kind of reaction almost never occurs; the reaction to the substance is too strong, rapid, unexpected, and external to be simply experienced, and thus the process cannot involve the "being." It is as if a powerful current penetrated the consciousness without requiring assent, leaving the person to merely notice the change of state: he is submerged in this new state, and "acted on" by it. Thus the true effect, even if not noticed, is a collapse, a lesion of the Self, for all his sense of an exalted life or of a transcendent beatitude or sensuality.

For the process to proceed differently, it would go schematically as follows: at the point in which the drug frees energy x in an exterior way, an act of the Self, of "being," brings its own double energy, $x + x$, into the current and maintains it up to the end. Similarly, a wave, even if unexpected, serves a skilled swimmer with whom it collides by propelling him beyond it. Thus, there would be no collapse, the negative would be transformed into positive, no condition of passivity would be formed with respect to the drug, the experience in a certain way would be de-conditioned, and, as a result, one would not undergo an ecstatic dissolution, devoid of any true opening beyond the individual and only substantiated by sensations. Instead, in certain cases there would be the possibility of coming into contact with a superior dimension of reality, which was the intention of ancient, non-profane drug use. To a certain degree, the harmful effect of drugs would be eliminated. [...]

An effective use of these drugs would presuppose a preliminary "catharsis," that is, the proper neutralization of the individual

unconscious substratum that is activated; then the images and senses could refer to a spiritual reality of a higher order, rather than being reduced to a subjective, visionary orgy. One should emphasize that the instances of this higher use of drugs were preceded not only by periods of preparation and purification of the subject, but also that the process was properly guided through the contemplation of certain symbols. [...]

In general, one must keep in mind that drug use even for a spiritual end, that is, to catch glimpses of transcendence, has its price. How drugs produce certain psychic effects has not yet been determined by modern science. It is said that some, like LSD, destroy certain brain cells. One point is certain: Habitual use of drugs brings a certain psychic disorganization; one should substitute for them the power of attaining analogous states through one's own means. Therefore, when one has chosen a path based on the maximum unification of all one's psychic faculties, these drawbacks must be kept firmly in mind. [...]

Essence of the Very Idea of Empire
& Aryan Race as Army of Solar Reality

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] For the ancient Aryan war had the general meaning of a perpetual fight between metaphysical powers. On the one hand there was the Olympian principle of light, the uranic and solar reality; on the other hand, brute violence, the titanic-telluric, barbaric element in the classical sense, the feminine-demonic substance. The motif of this metaphysical fight resurfaces continually through countless forms of myth in all traditions of Aryan origin. Any fight, in the material sense, was experienced with greater or lesser awareness as an episode in that antithesis. But the Aryan race considered itself to be the army of the Olympian principle: accordingly, it is necessary to restore this conception among Aryans, as being the justification, or the highest consecration, of any hegemonic aspiration, but also of the very idea of empire, whose anti-secular character is basically very obvious.

To the traditionally based world view, all apparent realities are symbolic. This is therefore true of war as well, as is seen from the subjective and interior point of view. War and the Path of God are thus merged into a single entity.

[...] If we want to go beyond an exhausted, battered spirituality, built upon speculative abstractions and pietistic feelings, and at the same time to go beyond the materialistic degeneration of action, what better points of reference can be found today than the aforementioned ideals of ancient Aryan man?

But there is more. In the West spiritual and material tensions have become entangled to such a degree in recent years that they can only be resolved through combat. With the present war an age goes towards its end and forces are gaining ground which can no longer be dominated by

abstract ideas, universalistic principles or myths conceived as mere irrationalities, and which do not in themselves provide the basis for a new civilization. A far deeper and far more essential form of action is now necessary so that, beyond the ruins of a subverted and condemned world, a new age breaks through for Europe.

In this perspective a lot will depend on the way in which the individual of today is able to give shape to the living experience of combat: that is, on whether he is in a position to assume heroism and sacrifice as catharsis, as means of liberation and of inner awakening. This work of our combatants - inner, invisible, far from gestures and grandiloquences - will have a decisive character not only for the conclusion, victorious and definitive, of the events of this stormy period, but also for the configuration and the attribution of the sense of the Order which will rise from victory. Combat is necessary to awaken and temper that force which, beyond onslaughts, blood and danger, will favor a new creation with a new splendor and a powerful peace.

For this reason it is on the battlefield that pure action must be learned again today: action not only in the sense of virile asceticism, but also in the sense of purification and of path towards higher forms of life, forms valid in themselves and for themselves - this means precisely a return to ancient Aryan-Western tradition. From remote times, this evocative watchword still echoes down to us: "Life - like a bow; the mind - like the arrow; the target to pierce - the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target."

The one who still experiences combat today, in the sense of this acknowledgement of this profession, will remain standing while others will collapse - and his will be an invincible force. This new man will overcome within himself any drama, any dusk, any chaos, forming, with the advent of the new times, the principle of a new development. According to the ancient Aryan tradition such heroism of the best men can assume a real evocative function, that is, it can re-establish the contact, lost for centuries, between world and supra-world. Then the meaning of combat will be, not horrible slaughter, nor desolate destiny conditioned by the will-to-power alone, but a test of the good reason and divine vocation of a stock. Then the meaning of peace will not be renewed drowning in colorless bourgeois everyday life, nor the lack of the spiritual tension found in combat, but the fullness of the tension itself.

"The blood of Heroes is closer to the Lord than the ink of scholars and the prayers of the pious."

The traditional conception is also based on the presupposition that, far more than individuals, the mystical primordial powers of the race are at work in 'holy war'. These powers of the origins are those which create world-wide empires and bring to men 'victorious peace'.

European Decadence

(from "Imperialismo Pagano")

Present western "civilization" awaits a substantial upheaval (rivolgimento), without which it is destined, sooner or later, to smash its own head. It has carried out the most complete perversion of the rational order of things. Reign of matter, gold, machines, numbers; in this civilization there is no longer breath or liberty or light. The West has lost its ability to command and to obey. It has lost its feeling for contemplation and action. It has lost its feeling for values, spiritual power, godlike men. It no longer knows nature. No longer a living body made of symbols, gods, and ritual act, no longer a harmony, a cosmos in which man moves freely like "a kingdom within a kingdom", nature has assumed for the Westerner a dull and fatal exteriority whose mystery the secular sciences seek to bury in trifling laws and hypotheses. It no longer knows Wisdom. It ignores the majestic silence of those who have mastered themselves: the enlightened calm of seers, the exalted reality of those in whom the idea becomes blood, life, and power. Instead it is drowning in the rhetoric of "philosophy" and "culture", the specialty of professors, journalists, and sportsmen who issue plans, programs, and proclamations. Its wisdom has been polluted by a sentimental, religious, humanitarian contagion and by a race of frenzied men who run around noisily celebrating becoming (divenire) and "practice", because silence and contemplation alarm them.

It no longer knows the state, the state as value crystallized in the Empire. Synthesis of the sort of spirituality and majesty that shone brightly in China, Egypt, Persia, and Rome, the imperial ideal has been overwhelmed by the bourgeois misery of a monopoly of slaves and traders.

Europe's formidable "activists" no longer know what war is, war desired in and of itself as a virtue higher than winning or losing, as that heroic and sacred path to spiritual fulfillment exalted by the god Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita. They know not warriors, only soldiers. And a crummy little war was enough to terrorize them and drive them to rehashing the rhetoric of humanitarianism, and pathos or, worse still, of windbag nationalism and Dannunzianism.

Europe has lost its simplicity, its central position, its life. A democratic plague is eating away at its roots, whether in law, science, or speculation. Gone are the leaders, beings who stand out not for their violence, their gold, or for their skills as slave traders but rather for their irreducible qualities of life. Europe is a great irrelevant body, sweating and restless because of an anxiety that no one dares to express. Gold flows in its veins; its flesh is made up of machines, factories, and laborers; its brains are of newsprint. A great irrelevant body tossing and turning, driven by dark and unpredictable forces that mercilessly crush whoever wants to oppose or merely escape the cogwheels.

Such are the achievements of western "civilization". This is the much ballyhooed result of the superstitious faith in "progress", progress beyond Roman imperiousness, beyond radiant Hellas, beyond the ancient Orient - the great Ocean.

And the few who are still capable of great loathing and great rebellion find themselves ever more tightly encircled.

Fascism: Myth and Reality

(from "Il Fascismo")

Fascism has undergone a process which can be called mythologization, and the attitude which many adopt towards it is of a passionate and irrational kind rather than a critical, intellectual one. This is especially true of those who retain an idealistic loyalty towards the Italy that was. [...]

Mythologization has naturally gone hand in hand with idealization, so that only the positive aspects of the Fascist regime are highlighted, deliberately or unconsciously playing down the negative ones. The same procedure is practiced the other way round by those who represent anti-nationalist forces, their mythologization leading to systematic denigration, the aspects with a view to discrediting it and making everyone hate it. [...]

Over and above any polemical one-sidedness, those who, unlike the 'nostalgics' of the younger generation, have lived through Fascism and have thus had a direct experience of the system and its men, know and acknowledge that not everything about it was in order. As long as Fascism existed and could be considered a movement of reconstruction in the making, one of yet unrealized and un-crystallized possibilities, it was still permissible not to criticize it beyond a certain limit. And those who, like ourselves, while defending a set of ideas which only partially coincided with Fascism (and with German National Socialism), did not condemn these movements, even though fully aware of their questionable or aberrant aspects, did so precisely because we counted on future possible developments--to be encouraged with every means and strength we could muster--which might have corrected or eliminated these aspects.

Today, when that Fascism lies behind us as a historical reality, our attitude cannot be the same. Instead of idealizing it in a way consistent with the 'myth' of Fascism, what is necessary now is to separate the positive from the negative, not just for theoretical reasons, but for practical guidance with an eventual political struggle in mind. Thus we should not accept the adjective 'fascist' or 'neo-fascist' tout court; we should call ourselves fascist (if we feel we must) in respect of what was positive about Fascism, not fascist in respect of what Fascism was not. [...]

Even in the search for the positive, there is in practice an essential difference between on the one hand those whose only reference point is Fascism (or possible analogous movements of other nations--German National Socialism, Belgian Rexism, the early Falange in Spain, Salazar's Regime, the Romanian Iron Guard: at one point it was possible to talk of a 'world revolution', a general movement of opposition to the proletarian

revolution), seeing in it the be-all and end-all of their political, historical, and doctrinal horizons, and on the other those who consider what emerged from such movements as particular manifestations, some more perfect than others, of ideas and principles based in that earlier Tradition of which we have spoken, but adapted to particular circumstances. These principles are to be associated with 'normality' and permanence, relegating what is original and in the strict sense 'revolutionary' about those movements to secondary, contingent traits. In other words, it is a question of making linkages as far as it is possible between the great European political Tradition and discarding what at bottom can be seen as compromises, divergent or even deviant possibilities, or phenomena which were products of the very evils which people set out to take a stand against and fight.

Fascism against Christianity: the Great Liberation

(from "Imperialismo Pagano")

Let us conclude.

Today we must absolutely put a stop to Christianity.

Everything in it is incompatible with and contradictory to the ideals, the morals, the vision of the world and of man that would enable a race to bring about the resurrection of the Empire.

Our sleep has lasted long enough. All the possible compromises and variations have been exhausted. It is time to say "Enough!" No more of Christianity embraced as a whole, in the totality of all its forms! The Latin race in particular must bitterly disavow any descent from the dark object that emerged from the Jewish slums of Palestine to contaminate us.

Thus:

On an ideal and moral level, it is time to unmask Christianity's enormous doctrinal bluff and to refuse to allow it to continue to parade around loaded up with all the values that have been superstitiously and unconsciously attributed to it.

On a practical level, it is time to become aware of the European danger and the decline of the West and to respond by reviving in the modern world the political and sapient values characteristic of the Mediterranean tradition.

Ethical and religious Christianity today is nothing more than a name and a habit, absolutely external to conscience; but nobody, or nearly nobody, has bothered to abolish the name itself and to put its content on trial again, so as to start right back at the beginning, rejecting the "fact" of Christianity, its "tradition" and all the rest.

This is precisely my intent: to hold such a trial, demanding that every account to be scrutinized with inflexible severity, that all cards be placed openly on the table, and that every way out and every compromise be barred in advance. At stake are not more or less anticlerical polemics but rather a serious, objective examination, unbiased by feeling and belief. A cool-headed examination should suffice to blunt the ecstatic thrill and to unmask the true poverty and inferiority of the Christian vision of the world and of man.

With regard to fascism I declare:

Fascism... will blaze the path toward breaking up the monstrous political connivance with the Catholic Church, abetted by the intrigues of that secret and illicit association, the Society of Jesus. It will become aware that it has fallen prey to a suckers' marketplace (marche de dupes). The petty political advantages to be gained are trivial when compared to the Church's devious efforts to achieve monopoly control over Italy's conscience by means of public education and clever sophistries that polarize the fascist regime against everything that is not Catholic. To have agreed that a crucifix should be placed not in the universities, not in the coliseum, but on the Campidoglio in place of the eagle and the fasces is a blot without precedent that it will take a lot to wipe away.

This transpired because fascism still lacks spirituality and culture of its own, as fresh and vibrant as the warrior forces that brought it into being. The result was that fascism's political triumph was unaccompanied by a spiritual-cultural triumph. This transpired because fascism is still crippled by a definition of empire as a simple political, economic, and military organization, based on the industrial-capitalist system and cast in the mold of British and German bourgeois and material imperialism. But such a definition has nothing in common with true imperialism, that spiritual, sacred, and heroic imperialism of ancient Rome, Byzantium, and Persia. The real explanation for the success of Catholic infiltration lies in fascism's actual (though concealed) indifference to spiritual questions, whereby it did not hesitate to embrace new members who could solidify the material structure of the new regime, even at the cost of accommodating the most strident of contradictions.

Once fascism transcends the bourgeois-industrial definition of empire, once it embraces imperiousness (imperialita) in the true, traditional sense, the problem will be resolved. Fascism will find its soul within itself, a fact that will paralyze all efforts to apply external pressure and render ever more acute the incompatibility between state and Church. "Incompatibility" not as understood by demagogic, anticlerical, or secular ideologies but in the sense that the empire would become the true spiritual reality, the immanent, powerful religion that ousts the dead hierarchies and empty devotional forms that have survived in Catholicism.

So if the "daring" that fascism regularly exalts is more than rhetorical bluster, here's a first task: deride the arrogance that did not hesitate to call the king of Italy a usurper from on the high at the Vatican and reaffirm the complete dominion of the state over the Church. The Church must be directly controlled by the state. Its every organization must require state approval and sanction... Above all, it must be denied any

role in the education of souls during the period in which the will is not yet formed and the conscience is not yet clear. (Though its continuing presence can be tolerated as a feature of popular belief, but only on a temporary basis, until such a time as the Mediterranean and imperial sense of life has fully revitalized everyone's spirit, thanks to pedagogical training carried out over several generations.)

So much for Catholicism, which on a practical plane must be distinguished from Christianity. The latter is mostly to be identified with the forms of Protestantism active in Anglo-Saxon liberal democracies. Here lies the true European danger from which we must protect ourselves, reacting ruthlessly to all the international, unionist, Masonic, anti-aristocratic, anti-Roman, socialist, humanitarian, moralist ferments with which it would seek to infiltrate Italy.

In the properly cultural field, fascism ought to begin by promoting critical and historical studies, not partisan studies but cold surgical analyses of the essence of Christianity akin to Louis Rougier's work in France, published in his collection, *Masters of Anti-Christian Thought*. At the same time, fascism ought to promote studies and research on the spiritual side of paganism (and work to diffuse such knowledge) studies extending from paganism's true vision of life to rigorously appropriate (because many are not) explorations of the Mediterranean tradition in its primitive and metaphysical nature.

Let the following be stated firmly, absolutely, and unambiguously. We are not destroyers but restorers. When we appear to be destroying we are in fact rearranging and replacing what is on the wane with higher forms, forms more vibrant and glorious. We possess a complete, total, positive system of values, developed in close connection with the forms of contemporary civilization, a system that provides us with a firm foundation and frees us from any fear of the void as we demolish all the negatives of European decadence.

From the standpoint of its praxis, Fascism must not betray itself, which is to say, it must deeply embrace those values of affirmation, activity, will to power, anti-sentimentalism, and anti-rhetoricism whose imprint it bears (especially in its purest manifestations). Values that are essentially anti-Christian. Values to be raised to a higher internalized and spiritualized form and freed from the inferior and provisional approach based on mere violence and material domination.

And here there is a precursor, a misunderstood man, who waits in the shadows: Friedrich Nietzsche. The Nietzschean experiment is not yet exhausted because it hasn't even truly begun. What is worn out is the aesthetic-literary or firebrand (baionettista) caricature of Nietzsche found in characters like Corrado Brando, Stelio Effrena, or William II. But very much alive are values that Nietzsche heroically propagated despite no end of suffering, despite the rebellion of his entire being, which, after having given everything without complaint, simply collapsed. These values transcend his philosophy, his "humanity", even himself. They are of cosmic significance, reflecting the power of the Aeon, the Ur, the terrible fire of magical initiations. These are the values that are still waiting to be understood and taken up. They encompass the sounding of an

alarm, an appeal for disgust, the call for an awakening, and a summons to participate in the great struggle in which the destiny of the West will be decided, whether toward twilight or toward dawn. Fascism must begin here: by beginning the slow, tenacious construction of a new and wondrous race.

Accordingly, education will be reoriented toward pagan and Mediterranean values.

To the "myth" of the crucified God-man who suffers and loves will be opposed that of the man-God, a being radiating light and power, the summit of an imperial ethos. To a dualistic and transcendental worldview will be opposed a vision of free and immanent unity, withdrawn into itself, matter for domination. To Christianity's race of "slaves and children of God" will be opposed a race of liberated and liberating beings who interpret God as a supreme power that one may freely obey or do battle against in manly fashion with one's head held high, immune to the taint of feelings, vacillations, and prayers. To feelings of dependence and lack will be opposed a feeling of sufficiency; to the will to equality, the will to difference, distance, hierarchy, and aristocracy. To the mystical communist promiscuity will be opposed firm individuality; to the need for love, happiness, peace, and consolation, the heroic contempt for all this and law of pure will and absolute action. To Christianity's providential vision will be opposed the tragic conception whereby man stands alone facing the contingencies of nature such that either he must redeem himself or redemption will forever elude him. Do away with "sin" and "bad conscience" brashly heap all responsibilities upon one's shoulders, bar the door to any escape, fortify the innermost spirit.

No more "brothers" or "fathers" but instead a fully autonomous individuals, self-enclosed as if each were a separate world, rock, or peak, individuals clothed only in their strength or in their weakness, each and every one operating like an independent combat post that defends a distinctive quality, life, dignity, unequal strength, indomitable force. No more subjection to the need to "communicate", and to be "understood" or to fraternal bonds or to the sensual pleasure of loving and of feeling loved as equals. All are subtly corrupting and violent forces that weaken aristocracy and individuality. On the contrary, the incommunicability must be celebrated in the name of absolute purity and respect. Stronger forces and weaker forces, the one alongside or against the order, loyally, coldly, acknowledging one another thanks to the discipline of the spirit that burns within but produces an exterior rigid and tempered like steel, forces magnificently infused with the immeasurability of the infinite as found in feats of war and on the battlefield : (this is the ideal). A state of absolute generosity and absolute cruelty insure that some men and races ascend, while others fall with a thud. Nothing "infinite". Precise relations, order, cosmos, hierarchy. Solar and sufficient beings, masters who are far-sighted, fearful, distant, and solitary; who, instead of taking in, give out an overabundance of light and power, who resolutely incline toward ever more dizzying intensities within a hierarchical chain of being that comes not from above but from the dynamic natural interconnection between their natures.

"How beautiful they are, how pure are these free forces not yet corrupted by the spirit!" wrote the young Nietzsche after an ascent during a storm. In the place of Nietzsche's "not yet", I would substitute "no longer corrupted by the spirit" in the present context, the word "spirit" meaning the unreal: an outer crust of feelings, hopes, doctrines, beliefs, "values", sensations, words, sensual pleasures, and human emotions. But the meaning remains the same. The world is to be cleansed, returned to its pre-Christian state. It is to be returned to a free, overabundant, essential state within which nature is not yet nature or the spirit, in which "things" and "forms" do not exist except as powers; in which every instant of life is a heroic event, made up of acts, symbols, commands, magical gestures, and rituals, accompanied by great waves of sound, light, and terror.

This is our truth and this is the threshold of our great liberation: the end of faith and the world's emancipation from God. No "heaven" will hover over the land, gone will be "providence", "reason", "good", and "evil", masks for the terrified, pallid escapes for pallid souls. At last, those who think themselves men, unaware that they are sleeping gods, will be left to themselves: everything, all around, will return to a state of freedom; everything will finally breathe. The weak will collapse. The strong will assert themselves and will be rekindled as the "holy race of the kingless" of the ancient Gnostic oracles; the race of "those who are", of the unchained and the unburdened, of redeemed justifiers of the world, lords of necessity and suffering.

This is our truth. This is the "myth" that we pagans oppose to the superstition of Galilee, the myth that we affirm today as central to the values of our race and to the restoration of the Empire in the West.

Fascism as Anti-Europe: Prerequisites for the Imperium

(from "Imperialismo Pagano")

Can fascism be the source of an anti-European restoration?

Is fascism powerful enough today to take on such a task?

Fascism arose from below, from confused needs and brutal forces unleashed by the European war. Fascism has thrived on compromises, on rhetoric, on the petty ambitions of petty people. The state organization that it has created is often uncertain, awkward, inexpert, violent, cramped, riddled by ambiguities.

Nevertheless, if we look around us today and note the demise of the only two states - Russia and Germany - that had preserved remnants of hierarchical values (however distorted and materialized) we must draw the conclusion that fascism is the West's best hope.

For better or worse, fascism has developed a body. But this body is still lacking a soul. It is still lacking the superior power (atto) needed to justify it, complete it, make it rise to its feet as a principle opposed to all of Europe. The soul in question can achieve these ends only if fascism manages to resurrect a distinctive system of meta-economics and meta-political values by means of a radical, profound, absolute upheaval (rivolgimento), a new leap ahead and away from the politics of "normalization" and bourgeois compromise (imborghesimento) that is beginning to pervade contemporary fascism.

But let's not misunderstand one another.

The breeding ground of fascism were youthful, resolute forces, ready for anything, immune to the evils of "culture". To this day they represent the vital nucleus of fascism, while those who worry about developing a "philosophy of fascism" and a "fascist culture" are themselves symptoms of degeneration, or, at the very least, of a turn away from the path leading to something really new; a true revolution (not one regarding which one can conclude "plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose).

No. Fascism must remain anti-philosophical. Decisively, and crudely so. Tapping into its purest core of force, it must sweep away the filthy film of rhetoric, sentimentalism, moralism, and hypocritical piety with which the West has clouded and humanized everything. There is an irrefutable need for someone to break into the temple - perhaps even a barbarian - to drive out the corrupters of "civilized" Europe, the monopolistic preachers of the "spirit", good and evil, and the divine who actually know only matter and what human words, fear, and superstition have layered over matter.

To all this I reply "That's enough!" My negation is meant to allow a few men to rediscover the long path, the long danger, the long gaze, and the long silence, to unleash the wind of the open sea - the wind of the Mediterranean Tradition - so that it may revive the enslaved men of the West.

Anti-philosophy, anti-sentiment, anti-religion: these are the premises. No more aestheticisms and idealisms: not a single one! No more thirsting of the soul for a hallucinated God to pray to and adore. No more acceptances of the common ties and mutual interdependencies that bind beggars together on a foundation of lack.

To soar beyond and above with pure faces. Forces that will have to meet a challenge that transcends politics and social concerns, that recoils at the clamorous gesture and superficial resonance, a challenge so great that the material forces vibrating out in the world of people and things can no longer have any effect.

In silence, under conditions of strict discipline, inflexible self-control, seriousness, and simplicity, with the brisk and tenacious effort of individuals, we in Italy must create an elite in whom Wisdom comes to life again. By "wisdom" I mean the power (virtus) that does not allow itself to speak, that rises up out of a hermetic and Pythagorean silence, that comes into being by subduing the senses and the soul, and that

manifests itself not by means of arguments and books but through powerful actions.

We must reawaken to a renewed, spiritualized, bitter feeling (sensazione) for the world, not as a philosophical concept but as something that vibrates in the rhythm of our very blood: a feeling for the world as power, as the agile and free rhythmic dance of Shiva, as a sacrificial act (Veda). This feeling will breed strong, hard, active, solar, Mediterranean beings; beings made up of force and eventually only of force; beings infused with a sense of freedom and nobility whose cosmic perspective (respiro cosmico) has been much stammered about but little understood by Europe's "dead". Science today is profane, democratic, and materialistic. Always relative and qualified in its truths, a slave to phenomena and to incomprehensible laws, it remains mute with regard to the profound reality of man. To debunk it we must reawaken in the new elite a sacred science, a science that is interior and secret and gives rise to initiations, a science of self-fulfillment and self-dignification that taps the occult forces that govern our being and subdues them so as to permit men to be actually (not mythically) reborn as beings superior to the laws of the body and of space and time.

So a race of leaders it will be. Invisible leaders who do not rattle on or parade about but who act irresistibly and are capable of anything. A center will thus exist in de-centered Europe.

The problem of hierarchy can only be addressed by creating leaders, a strictly individual and internal problem, resistant to external solutions. Hierarchy can come into being only when there are leaders and not vice versa.

The empire cannot be built on economic, military, industrial, and even "ideal" foundations. The Imperium, according to the Iranian and Roman conception, is transcendent. It can only be attained by those who have the power to transcend the petty lives of petty men and their petty appetites, patriotisms, "values", "non-values", and gods.

The ancients understood this when they deified their emperors, joining together royal dignity and spiritual dignity. Have the young barbarians who have dared to resurrect the eagle and the fasces learned this lesson? Have they understood that there is no alternative, that this is the only way to transform their "revolution" into the first light that pierces the thick fog of European decadence? Rather than amounting to little more than the small contingency of a small nation, they could plant the seed for a resurgence of Rome throughout the world, the seed for a true restoration.

From the Lesser to the Greater Holy War:
Bhagavad-Gita's Aryan Sense of Heroic-Spiritual Reality
Unmatched elsewhere & Contains Precious Hyperborean Material

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] even without having been killed one can have experienced death, can have won and can have achieved the culmination peculiar to 'supra-life'. From a higher point of view 'Paradise', 'the celestial realm', are, like Valhalla, the Greek 'Isle of Heroes', etc., only symbolic figurations, concocted for the masses, figurations which actually designate transcendent states of consciousness, beyond life and death. Ancient Aryan tradition has the word *jivanmukti* to indicate a realization of that sort obtained already in the mortal body.

Let us come now to a pure metaphysical exposition of the doctrine in question. We find it in a text originating from the ancient Indo-Aryan races, imprinted with a sense of the heroic-spiritual reality which it would be hard to match elsewhere. It is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, a part of the epic poem, the *Mahabharata*, which to an expert eye contains precious material relating not only to the spirituality of the Aryan races which migrated to Asia, but to that of the 'Hyperborean' nucleus of these which, according to the traditional views to which our conception of race refers, must be considered as the origin of them all.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* contains in the shape of a dialogue the doctrine given by the incarnate divinity, Krishna, to a warrior prince, Arjuna, who had invoked him, as, overcome by humanitarian and sentimental scruples, he found himself no longer able to resolve to fight the enemy. The judgement of the god is categorical: it defines the mercy which had withheld Arjuna from fighting as "the limp tie of the soul", and "impurity, unworthy of a noble man, not leading to heaven" (II, 2). Therefore, it is not on the basis of earthly and contingent necessities but of a divine judgement that the duty of combat is confirmed here. The promise is: "Killed you will attain heaven; victorious you will enjoy the earth; arise, therefore, resolved to fight" (II, 37). The inner guideline, necessary to transfigure the 'lesser war' into 'greater, holy war' in death and triumphant resurrection, and to make contact, through heroic experience, with the transcendental root of one's own being, is clearly stated by Krishna: "Devoting all acts to Me with your mind absorbed in the supreme spirit, free from desire and selfishness, fight without faltering" (III, 30). The terms are just as clear about the 'purity' of heroic action, which must be wanted for itself, beyond every contingent motivation, every passion and all gross utility. The words of the text are: "Making equal pleasure and pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat, fight for the sake of fighting; in this way you will incur no sin" (II, 38).

But beyond even this a true metaphysical justification of war is arrived at. We will try to express this in the most accessible way. The text works on the fundamental distinction between what in man exists in the supreme sense and, as such, is incorruptible and immutable - spirit - and the corporeal and human element, which has only an illusory existence. Having stressed the metaphysical non-reality of what one can lose or make another lose in the vicissitudes of combat, as ephemeral life and mortal body (there is nothing painful and tragic - it is said - in the fact that what is destined fatally to fall, falls), that aspect of the divine which appears as an absolute and sweeping force is recalled. Before the greatness of this force (which flashes through Arjuna's mind in the moment of a supernatural vision), every created, that is, conditioned,

existence appears as a 'negation'. It can therefore be said that such a force strikes as a terrible revelation wherever such 'negation' is actively denied; that is to say, in more concrete and intelligible terms, wherever a sudden outburst sweeps up every finite life, every limitation of the petty individual, either to destroy him, or to revive him. Moreover, the secret of the 'becoming', of the fundamental restlessness and perpetual change which characterises life here below, is deduced precisely from the situation of beings, finite in themselves, which also participate in something infinite. The beings which would be described as 'created' by Christian terminology, are described rather, according to ancient Aryan tradition, as 'conditioned', subject to becoming, change and disappearance, precisely because, in them, a power burns which transcends them, which wants something infinitely vaster than all that they can ever want. Once the text in various ways has given the sense of such a vision of life it goes on to specify what fighting and heroic experience must mean for the warrior. Values change: a higher life manifests itself through death; and destruction, for the one who overcomes it, is a liberation - it is precisely in its most frightening aspects that the heroic outburst appears as a sort of manifestation of the divine in its capacity of metaphysical force of destruction of the finite - in the jargon of some modern philosophers this would be called 'the negation of the negation'. The warrior who smashes "the limp tie of the soul", who faces the vicissitudes of heroism "with your mind absorbed in the supreme spirit", seizing upon a plan according to which both the 'I' and the 'thou', and therefore both fear for oneself and mercy for others, lose all meaning, can be said to assume actively the absolute divine force, to transfigure himself within it, and to free himself by breaking through the limitations relating to the mere human state of existence. "Life - like a bow; the mind - like the arrow; the target to pierce - the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target." - These are the evocative expressions contained in another text of the same tradition, the Markandeya Purana. Such, in short, is the metaphysical justification of war, the sacred interpretation of heroism, the transformation of the 'lesser war' into the 'greater holy war', according to the ancient Indo-Aryan tradition which gives us therefore, in the most complete and direct form, the intimate content present also in the other formulations pointed out. [...]

Fundamental Difference Between the "Lunar" & the Magic, "Solar" Path

(from "The Path of Enlightenment in the Mithraic Mysteries")

[...] In the "lunar" path, or the path of Isis, what matters is to turn oneself into an obedient instrument of higher entities. In the magic, "solar" path, or path of Ammon, the most important action is to retain one's being vis à vis these entities; this, however, is not possible other than by overcoming them. One must wrestle away from them the "quantity" of fate which they carry, in order to take upon oneself their weight and responsibility. [...]

Get Rid of Church, Islam, Freemasonry & All:
Today only Ignorant Conformists follow Exoteric Norms
or Going Beyond René Guénon

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] My position on such matters also served as an implicit critique of the view that had been voiced in Guénonian circles concerning the 'need to adopt a traditional form of exotericism' (although I never explicitly referred to such matters in the book). The issue of exotericism perfectly serves to illustrate the tendency of similar groups to indulge in the discussion of abstract, normative principles while ignoring concrete reality. Guénon had argued that superior forms of knowledge ought not be pursued on a level removed from the general norms established by a positive tradition ('exotericism') - less still in opposition to, and in revolt against such norms. The two spheres - the exoteric sphere and the esoteric - Guénon suggested, ought to be complementary: so that an individual who is incapable of following 'exoteric' norms aimed at investing life with order and sacredness ought not attempt to pursue a higher path. The basic premise of *Ride the Tiger*, however, was precisely my realistic acknowledgement of the fact that it is impossible to follow such exoteric norms in the present day: for no positive, meaningful and truly legitimate institutions exist to provide a support for the individual. A 'consecration', therefore, of external, active life today can only derive from a free and genuine inner drive towards transcendence, rather than from given moral or religious norms. Hence, if - as might have been expected - I referred to traditional doctrines when examining the prospect of 'riding the tiger', it is the 'inner doctrines' of Tradition that I examined: those doctrines that, in traditional civilizations, were usually known to a privileged minority alone. What I was concerned with was the fact that traditionalism might serve as a tool for conformism. Plotinus' injunction *apele panta* ('get rid of all') must serve as the motto of those capable of seeing the present in its true light. Hence, too, the central relevance of the idea of the 'Left-Hand Path' in our day. [...]

Grail Embodies Mystery of Warrior Initiation

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The ordinary reader today knows about the Grail thanks only to Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*, which, in its Romantic approach, really deforms and twists the whole myth. Equally misleading is the attempt to interpret the mystery of the Grail in Christian terms: for Christian elements only play an accessory, secondary and concealing role in the saga. In order to grasp the true significance of the myth, it is necessary instead to consider the more immediate points of reference

represented by the themes and echoes pertaining to the cycle of King Arthur, which survives in the Celtic and Nordic traditions. The Grail essentially embodies the source of a transcendent and immortalizing power of primordial origin that has been preserved after the 'Fall', degeneration and decadence of humanity. Significantly, all sources agree that the guardians of the Grail are not priests, but are knights and warriors - besides, the very place where the Grail is kept is described not as a temple or church, but as a royal palace or castle.

In the book, I argued that the Grail can be seen to possess an initiatory (rather than vaguely mystical) character: that it embodies the mystery of warrior initiation. Most commonly, the sagas emphasize one additional element: the duties deriving from such initiation. The predestined Knight - he who has received the calling and has enjoyed a vision of the Grail, or received its boons - or he who has 'fought his way' to the Grail (as described in certain texts) must accomplish his duty of restoring legitimate power, lest he forever be damned. The Knight must either allow a prostrate, deceased, wounded or only apparently living King to regain his strength, or personally assume the regal role, thus restoring a fallen kingdom. The sagas usually attribute this function to the power of the Grail. A significant means to assess the dignity or intentions of the Knight is to 'ask the question': the question concerning the purpose of the Grail. In many cases, the posing of this crucial question coincides with the miracle of awakening, of healing or of restoration. [...]

"Grand Style" New "Objective" Art's
Positive Realism to Affirm Absolute Realities
as Alternative for Future Post-Bourgeois Art Empty Spiritual Space
(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] Nonetheless, from the differentiated man's point of view the process of dissolution found in the most extreme art (I will address music later), with its atmosphere of anarchic or abstract freedom, may actually have a liberating value, as opposed to much of yesterday's bourgeois art. Aside from this, after the exhaustion of expressionism as a shapeless eruption of dissociated, psychic contents, and after the exhaustion of dadaism and surrealism, if their attitudes had persisted we would have witnessed the self-dissolution of modern art, which would have left an empty spiritual space. In a different epoch, it is precisely in that space that a new "objective" art might have taken shape, in that "grand style" to which Nietzsche referred: "The greatness of an artist is not measured by the beautiful sentiments that he arouses - only girls can think along these lines - but by the degree to which he approaches the grand style. This has in common with great passion the disdain of pleasure; he forgets to persuade, he wills ... To make himself master of the chaos that one is, to force his own chaos to become form, mathematics, law - that is the grand ambition. Around such despotic men a silence is born, a fear, similar to what is felt at a great sacrilege." But to think this way in the present world is absurd: our epoch lacks any

center, any meaning, any objective symbol that could give soul, content, and power to this "grand style."

Similarly, in the field of fiction what is of interest today belongs to the documentary genre, which, with more or less expressive power, makes us aware of the state of contemporary existence. Only here, and in a few cases, is subjectivism overcome. But in the majority of literary works, in short stories, dramas, and novels, the regime of residues persists, with its typical forms of subjective dissociation. Their constant background, rightly called the "fetishism of human relationships," consists of the insignificant, sentimental, sexual, or social problems of insignificant individuals, reaching the extreme of dullness and banality in a certain epidemic type of American novel.

Having mentioned "social problems," I must also squelch the claims, or more accurately, the aesthetic and artistic ambitions, of "Marxist realism." The Marxist critic condemns the "bourgeois novel" as a phenomenon of alienation, but as I have already said, the intent of giving a social content or interpretation to the narrative, specifically mirroring the dialectic evolution of classes, the impulse of the proletariat, and so on, is merely a simian parody of realism and the organic integration of a divided and neutral culture. Here one kind of dissociation is replaced by another more serious one: that of making the socioeconomic element an absolute, detached from the rest. "Social" problems are, in themselves, of as little interest and importance as those of personal relationships and fetishist sentimentalities. None of these touches the essence; they fall far short of what might be the object of fiction and of a high art in an organic civilization. The few fictional writings brought to a difficult and artificial birth under the sign of "Marxist realism" speak for themselves; they are coarse material forced into a straitjacket by the demands of pure propaganda and "communist edification." One cannot speak here either of aesthetic criticism or of art, but rather of political agitation in the lowest meaning of the term. However, the present world is such that even where there was a demand for "functional art," for a "consumer art" (Gropius's expression) that was not "alienated," it was obliged more or less to end at the same level. The only sector that was preserved was perhaps architecture, because its functionalism does not require reference to any higher meanings, which are nonexistent today. When a Marxist critic like Lukacs writes: "In recent times art has become a luxury item for idle parasites; artistic activity, in its turn, has become a separate profession with the task of satisfying those luxury needs," he sums up what art is practically reduced to in our day.

This *reductio ad absurdum* of an activity sundered from every organic and necessary context parallels the other forms of internal dissolution that are present today, and as such facilitates the radical revision that the differentiated human type is forced to make concerning the importance of art in the earlier period. I have already mentioned how, in the climate of the present civilization and its objective, elementary, even barbaric tendencies, many people have discarded the notion of the period of bourgeois romanticism that art is one of the "supreme activities of the spirit," revealing the meaning of the world and of life. The man whom we have in mind can of course agree with this devaluation of art today. The

fetishizing of art in the bourgeois period, connected with the cult of the "creative personality," the "genius," is alien to him. Even when it comes to some of the so-called great art of yesterday, he may feel no less distant than certain men of action today, who pay no attention to appearances, not even for "recreation," but are interested in other things. We may well share and approve this attitude - based, however, on the higher realism of which I have spoken, and on the sentiment of the "merely human" that is the constant basis of that art, in all its pathos and tragedy. It may even be that a differentiated man finds himself more comfortable with certain very modern art, because in itself it represents art's self-dissolution.

Incidentally, this devaluation of art, justified by the latest consequences of its "neutralization" and the new, active realism, had some general precedents in the traditional world. Art in a traditional and organic civilization never occupied the central spiritual position that the period of humanist and bourgeois culture accorded to it. Before the modern era, when art had a true, higher meaning, this was thanks to its preexisting contents, superior and prior to it, neither revealed nor "created" by it as art. These contents gave meaning to life and could exist, manifest, and act even in the virtual absence of what is called art, in works that sometimes might seem "barbaric" to the aesthete and the humanist who have no sense of the elementary and primordial.

We can draw an analogy with the attitude toward art in general that the differentiated man, looking to a new freedom, can assume in this period of dissolution. He is very little interested in, or preoccupied with, the current "crisis of art." Just as he sees no valid, authentic knowledge in modern science, similarly he recognizes no spiritual value in the art that has taken shape in the modern era through the processes mentioned at the beginning of this chapter; he sees no substitute for the meanings that can be kindled by direct contact with reality in a cool, clear, and essential climate. Upon objective consideration of the processes at work, one has the distinct feeling that art no longer has a future: that it is relegated to an ever more marginal position with respect to existence, its value being reduced to a luxury, in accord with Lukács's criticism quoted above.

It is helpful to return for a moment to the particular realm of modern fiction, where one deals with works that are corrosive and defeatist, so as to anticipate the same possibility of misunderstanding as in the case of neorealism. Clearly, my position has nothing in common with judgments based on bourgeois points of view; thus the accusation of the divided and neutral character of art must not be confused with moralizing, or with the censuring of art on the part of current petty morality. In the artistic works in question, it is not a matter of those "existential testimonies" pure and simple, to which one can apply this saying about Schoenberg: "All his happiness lay in recognizing unhappiness; all his beauty in forbidding himself the appearance of beauty," It concerns a particular art that directly or indirectly works to undermine any idealism, to deride any principles, to attack institutions, to reduce to mere words ethical values, the just, the noble, and the dignified - and all this without even obeying an explicit agenda (hence its difference

from a corresponding literature of the Left, or the use and political exploitation of that literature on the part of the Left).

We know which groups raise an indignant protest against a similar, popular type of art. This is not the correct reaction, in my view, because it disregards its potential significance as a touchstone, especially for the differentiated man. Without anticipating coming chapters, I shall just say here that the difference between depraved and mutilated realism, and positive realism, lies in the latter's affirmation that there are values that, for a given human type, are not mere fictions or fantasies, but realities - absolute realities. Among these are spiritual courage, honor (not in the sexual sense), straightforwardness, truth, and fidelity. An existence that ignores these is by no means "realistic," but sub-real. For the man who concerns us, dissolution cannot touch these values, except in extreme cases of an absolute "rupture of levels." One must nevertheless distinguish between the substance and certain expressions of it, and also recognize that, on account of the general transformations of mentality and environment that have already happened or are in process, these expressions have already been prejudiced by the conformism, the rhetoric, the idealistic pathos, and the social mythology of the bourgeois period; thus their foundations are already undermined. Whatever is worth saving in the field of conduct needs to be liberated in an interior and simplified form, needing no consensus, and sound enough not to lean on any of the institutions or value systems of yesterday's world. As for the rest, it may as well collapse.

Once this point is settled (and it was already explained in the introduction), one can recognize that the corrosive action exercised by contemporary literature rarely touches on anything essential, and that many of its targets are not worth defending, cherishing, or regretting. Those scandalized, alarmist, and moralizing reactions stem from an undue confusion of the essential and the contingent, from the incapacity to conceive of any substantial values beyond limited forms of expression that have become alien and ineffective. The differentiated man is not scandalized, but adopts a calm attitude of understatement; he can go even further in overthrowing the idols, but then he asks: "And now what?" At most, he will trace an existential line of demarcation, in the direction that I have repeatedly indicated. It does not matter that this corrosive and "immoral" literature does not obey any higher goals (though it likes to pretend that it does), and is only of value as evidence of the somber, tainted, and often filthy horizons of its authors. The evidence remains valid: it defines a certain distance. Times like these justify the saying that it is good to give the final push to that which deserves to fall.

From our point of view, a reactionary "re-moralizing" of literature appears inauspicious, even if it were possible, in the sense of a return to the style of Manzoni, and in general of the nineteenth-century specialists in the theatrical presentation of concepts of honor, family, homeland, heroism, sin, and so on. One has to go beyond both positions: that of the moralizers, and that of the proponents of this corrosive art whose transitional and primitive forms are destined to exhaust themselves, leaving for some a void, and for others, the free space for a higher realism. And these considerations should make it plain that my

former accusations of divided and indifferent art are not to be interpreted as the desire to give art a moralizing, edifying, or didactic content.

Guénon's Excessive Faith in Catholicism
& the Secularization & Deconsecration of the World of Action & Virility

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] Given the overall perspective of *Revolt*, the book also appeared to be lacking the same faith in Catholicism as a positive point of reference that marked the work of other traditionalist authors. As I previously mentioned, Guénon had argued that the Catholic Church had provided Europe with a traditional order, and that a return to traditional Catholicism - as I already mentioned with regard to *The Mask and Face of Contemporary Spiritualism* - constituted the only means for a rebirth of the West and an overcoming of the crisis of the modern world. Consequently, Guénon had directed a more or less explicit appeal to the representatives of the Catholic tradition (in the letters we privately exchanged, however, Guénon had confessed that while he had felt obliged to launch such an appeal, he had also predicted its failure).

As I stated in the conclusion to *Revolt*, I could not agree with Guénon on this point. Catholicism, I argued, had failed to give proof of any restraining or creative power even in the past, when material and intellectual conditions were far more favorable. Rather, Catholicism was one of the factors which contributed to the dissolution of the West: for Catholicism had caused a disastrous fracture by stripping spirituality of virility and advocating the supremacy of priestly holiness in place of primordial synthesis and centrality, thus favoring the secularization and deconsecration of the world of action and virility. Naturally, *Revolt* did not emphasize those aspects of Catholicism which *The Mask and Face of Contemporary Spiritualism* had praised from a purely doctrinal or esoteric perspective. In my conclusion to the second edition of *Revolt*, following an evaluation of certain new experiences, I argued that: 'Those individuals who today consider themselves to be men of Tradition on the simple grounds of their adherence to Catholicism are stopping midway, for they show no awareness of the series of causes, and of the world of origins and absolute values.' [...]

Heroism: from the Lowest Naturalistic Level to the Holy Aryan Heights

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] People are accustomed to speaking too generally, and too romantically, about 'heroism', 'heroic experience' and the like. When they are done with such romantic assumptions, in modern times, there seem to remain only material ones, such that men who rise up and fight are

considered simply as 'human material', and the heroism of the combatants is related to victory as mere means to an end, the end itself being nothing but the incrementation of the material and economic power and territory of a given State.

In view of the considerations which have been pointed out here, it is necessary to change these attitudes. From the 'ordeal by fire' of the primordial forces of race, heroic experience, above all other experience, has been a means to an essentially spiritual and interior end. But there is more: heroic experience differentiates itself in its results not only according to the various races, but also according to the extent to which, within each race, a super-race has formed itself and come to power. The various degrees of this creative differentiation correspond to so many ways of being a hero and to so many forms of awakening through heroic experience. On the lowest plane hybrid, essentially vital, instinctive and collective forces emerge - this is somewhat similar to the awakening on a large scale of the 'primordial horde' with the solidarity, the unity of destiny and of holocaust which is peculiar to it. Gradually, this mostly naturalistic experience is purified, dignified, becomes luminous, until it reaches its highest form, which corresponds to the Aryan conception of war as 'holy war', and of victory and triumph as an apex, since its value is identical to those of holiness and initiation, and, finally, of death on the battlefield as mors triumphalis, as not rhetorical but effective overcoming of death. [...]

Hitler and the Secret Societies

(from "Il Conciliatore")

It is remarkable that some authors in France have researched the relationship of German National Socialism to secret societies and initiatic organizations. The motivation for this was the supposed occult background of the Hitler movement. This thesis was first proposed in the well-known and very far-fetched book by Pauwels and Bergier, "Le Matin des Magiciens" (English ed., "The Dawn of Magic"), in which National Socialism was defined as the union of "magical thinking" with technology. The expression used for this was "Tank divisions plus René Guénon": a phrase that might well have caused that eminent representative of traditional thought and esoteric disciplines to turn indignantly in his grave.

The first misunderstanding here is the confusion of the magical element with the mythical, whereas the two have nothing to do with one another. The role of myths in National Socialism is undeniable, for example in the idea of the Reich, the charismatic Führer, Race, Blood, etc. But rather than calling these "myths," one should apply to them Sorel's concept of "motivating energy-ideas" (which is what all the suggestive ideas used by demagogues commonly are), and not attribute to them any magical ingredient. Similarly, no rational person thinks of magic in connection with the myths of Fascism, such as the myth of Rome or that of the Duce, any more than with those of the French Revolution or Communism. The

investigation would proceed differently if one went on the assumption that certain movements, without knowing it, were subject to influences that were not merely human. But this is not the case with the French authors. They are not thinking of influences of that kind, but of a concrete nature, exercised by organizations that really existed, among which were some that to various degrees were "secret." Likewise, some have spoken of "unknown superiors" who are supposed to have called forth the National Socialist movement and to have used Hitler as a medium, though it is unclear what goals they could have had in mind in so doing. If one considers the results, the catastrophic consequences to which National Socialism led, even indirectly, those goals must have been obscure and destructive. One would have to identify the "occult side" of this movement with what Guénon called the "Counter-Initiation." But the French authors have also proposed the thesis that Hitler the "medium" emancipated himself at a certain point from the "unknown superiors," almost like a Golem, and that the movement then pursued its fatal direction. But in that case one must admit that these "unknown superiors" can have had no prescience and very limited power, to have been incapable of putting a stop to their supposed medium, Hitler.

A lot of fantasy has been woven on the concrete level about the origin of National Socialism's themes and symbols. Reference has been made to certain organizations as forerunners, but ones to which it is very difficult to attribute any genuine and factual initiatic character. There is no doubt that Hitler did not invent German racial doctrine, the symbol of nobility was self-bestowed), who had formerly been a Cistercian monk and had founded an Order that already used the swastika; Lanz edited the periodical "Ostara" from 1905 onwards, which Hitler certainly knew, in which the Aryan and anti-Semitic racial theories were already clearly worked out.

But much more important for the "occult background" of National Socialism is the role of the Thule Society. Things are more complex here. This society grew out of the Germanenorden, founded in 1912, and was led by Rudolf von Sebottendorf, who had been in the East and had published a strange booklet on "Die Praxis der alten türkischen Freimaurerei" [The practice of ancient Turkish Freemasonry]. Practices were described therein that involved the repetition of syllables, gestures, and steps, whose goal was the initiatic transformation of man, such as alchemy had also aimed at. It is unclear what Turkish masonic organization Sebottendorf was in contact with, and also whether he himself practiced the things in question, or merely described them.

Moreover, it cannot be established whether these practices were employed in the Thule Society that Sebottendorf headed. It would be very important to know that, because many top-ranking National Socialist personalities, from Hitler to Rudolf Hess, frequented this society. In a way, Hitler was already introduced to the world of ideas of the Thule Society by Hess during their imprisonment together after the failed Munich Putsch.

At all events, it must be emphasized that the Thule Society was less an initiatic organization than it was a secret society, which already bore the swastika and was marked by a decided anti-Semitism and by Germanic racial thinking. One should be cautious about the thesis that the name Thule is a serious and conscious reference to a Nordic, Polar connection, in the effort to make a connection with the Hyperborean origins of the Indo-Germans--since Thule appears in ancient tradition as the sacred center or sacred island in the uttermost North. Thule may just be a play on the name "Thale," a location in the Harz where the Germanenorden held a conference in 1914, at which it was decided to create a secret "völkisch" band to combat the supposed Jewish International. Above all, these ideas were emphasized by Sebottendorf in his book "Bevor Hitler kam" [Before Hitler came], published in Munich in 1933, in which he indicated the myths and the "völkisch" world-view that existed before Hitler.

Thus a serious investigation into Hitler's initiatic connections with secret societies does not lead far. A few explanations are necessary in regard to Hitler as a "medium" and his attractive power. It seems to us pure fantasy that he owed this power to initiatic practices. Otherwise one would have to assume the same about the psychic power of other leaders, like Mussolini and Napoleon, which is absurd. It is much better to go on the assumption that there is a psychic vortex that arises from mass movements, and that this concentrates on the man in the center and lends him a certain radiation that is felt especially by suggestible people.

The quality of medium (which, to put it bluntly, is the antithesis of an initiatic qualification) can be attributed to Hitler with a few reservations, because in a certain respect he did appear as one possessed (which differentiates him from Mussolini, for example). When he whipped up the masses to fanaticism, one had the impression that another force was directing him as a medium, even though he was a man of a very extraordinary kind, and extremely gifted. Anyone who has heard Hitler's addresses to the enraptured masses can have no other impression. Since we have already expressed our reservations about the assumption that "unknown superiors" were involved, it is not easy to define the nature of this supra-personal force. In respect to National Socialist theosophy [Gotteserkenntnis], i.e. to its supposed mystical and metaphysical dimension, one must realize the unique juxtaposition in this movement and in the Third Reich of mythical, Enlightenment, and even scientific aspects. In Hitler, one can find many symptoms of a typically "modern" world-view that was fundamentally profane, naturalistic, and materialistic; while on the other hand he believed in Providence, whose tool he believed himself to be, especially in regard to the destiny of the German nation. (For example, he saw a sign of Providence in his survival of the assassination attempt in his East-Prussian headquarters.) Alfred Rosenberg, the ideologist of the movement, proclaimed the myth of Blood, in which he spoke of the "mystery" of Nordic blood and attributed to it a sacramental value; yet he simultaneously attacked all the rites and sacraments of Catholicism as delusions, just like a man of the Enlightenment. He railed against the "Dark men of our time," while attributing to Aryan man the merit of having created modern science. National Socialism's concern with runes, the ancient Nordic-Germanic

letter-signs, must be regarded as purely symbolic, rather like the Fascist use of certain Roman symbols, and without any esoteric significance. The program of National Socialism to create a higher man has something of "biological mysticism" about it, but this again was a scientific project. At best, it might have been a question of the "superman" in Nietzsche's sense, but never of a higher man in the initiatic sense.

The plan to "create a new racial, religious, and military Order of initiates, assembled around a divinized Führer," cannot be regarded as the official policy of National Socialism, as René Alleau writes, when he presents such a relationship and even compares it, among others, to the Ishmaelites of Islam. A few elements of a higher level were visible only in the ranks of the SS.

In the first place, one can see clearly the intention of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler to create an Order in which elements of Prussian ethics were to be combined with those of the old Orders of knighthood, especially the Teutonic Order. He was looking for legitimization of such an organization, but could not obtain it, since these old Orders of Catholicism were openly opposed by the radical wing of National Socialism. Himmler was also seeking, without the possibility of any traditional connection, a relationship to the Nordic-Hyperborean heritage and its symbolism (Thule), albeit without those "secret societies" discussed above having any influence over it. He took notice, as did Rosenberg, of the researches of the Netherlander Herman Wirth into the Nordic-Atlantic tradition. Later Himmler founded, with Wirth, the research and teaching organization called the "Ahnenerbe." This is not without interest, but there was no "occult background" to it.

So the net result is negative. The French authors' fantasy reaches its high point in the book "Hitler et la tradition cathare" by Jean-Michel Angebert (Paris, 1971). This deals with the Cathars, also called Albigensians, who were a heretical sect that spread especially in Southern France between the 11th and 12th centuries, and had their center in the fortress of Montségur. According to Otto Rahn, this was destroyed in a "crusade against the Grail," which is the title of one of his books. Whatever the Grail and its Grail-Knights had to do with this sect remains completely in the dark. The sect was marked by a kind of fanatical Manicheism: sometimes its own believers would die of hunger or some other cause as a demonstration of their detachment from the world and their hostility to earthly existence in flesh and matter. Now it is assumed that Rahn, with whom we corresponded during his lifetime and tried to persuade of the baselessness of his thesis, was an SS man, and that an expedition was sent on its way to retrieve the legendary Grail which was supposedly brought to safety at the moment when the Cathars' fortress in Montségur was destroyed. After the fall of Berlin, a unit is said to have reached the Zillertal and hidden this object at the foot of a glacier, to await a new age.

The truth is that there was talk of a commando unit, which however had a less mystical commission, namely the rescue and concealment of the Reich's treasures. Two further examples show what such fantasies can lead to when they are given free rein. The SS (which included not only battle

units but also researchers and scholarly experts) mounted an expedition to Tibet in order to make discoveries in the fields of alpinism and ethnology, and another one to the Arctic, ostensibly for scientific research but also with a view to the possible situation of a German military base. According to these fantastic interpretations, the first expedition was seeking a link to a secret center of the Tradition, while the other was seeking contact with the lost Hyperborean Thule...

Humans and Production in the United States

(from "Civiltà Americana")

In his classic study of capitalism Werner Sombart summarized the late capitalist phase in the adage Fiat producto, pareat homo. In its extreme form capitalism is a system in which a man's value is estimated solely in terms of the production of merchandise and the invention of the means of production. Socialist doctrines grew out of a reaction to the lack of human consideration in this system.

A new phase has begun in the United States where there has been an upsurge of interest in so-called labor relations. In appearance it would seem to signify an improvement: in reality this is a deleterious phenomenon. The entrepreneurs and employers have come to realize the importance of the 'human factor' in a productive economy, and that it is a mistake to ignore the individual involved in industry: his motives, his feelings, his working day life. Thus, a whole school of study of human relations in industry has grown up, based on behaviorism. Studies like Human Relations in Industry by B. Gardner and G. Moore have supplied a minute analysis of the behavior of employees and their motivations with the precise aim of defining the best means to obviate all factors that can hinder the maximization of production. Some studies certainly don't come from the shop floor but from the management, abetted by specialists from various colleges. The sociological investigations go as far as analyzing the employee's social ambience. This kind of study has a practical purpose: the maintenance of the psychological contentment of the employee is as important as the physical. In cases in which a worker is tied to a monotonous job which doesn't demand a great deal of concentration, the studies will draw attention to the 'danger' that his mind may tend to wander in a way that may eventually reflect badly on his attitude towards the job.

The private lives of employees are not forgotten - hence the increase in so-called personnel counseling. Specialists are called in to dispel anxiety, psychological disturbances and non-adaptation 'complexes', even to the point of giving advice in relation to the most personal matters. A frankly psycho-analytic technique and one much used is to make the subject 'talk freely' and put the results obtainable by this 'catharsis' into relief.

None of this is concerned with the spiritual betterment of human beings or any real human problems, such as a European would understand them in

this "age of economics". On the other side of the Iron Curtain man is treated as a beast of burden and his obedience is maintained by terror and famine. In the United States man is also seen as just a factor of labor and consumption, and no aspect of his interior life is neglected and every factor of his existence is drawn to the same end. In the 'Land of the Free', through every medium, man is told he has reached a degree of happiness hitherto undreamed of. He forgets who he is, where he came from, and basks in the present.

Important Clarification on the Term Mediterranean

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] The way in which I employ the term Mediterranean requires a further clarification. I have often spoken of Mediterranean civilization, the Mediterranean spirit, and even a Mediterranean race, taking little care to indicate what these vague and elastic designations meant. (1)

(1) In one of my early works (*Imperialismo pagano*, Rome: Atanor, 1928) I mentioned a "Mediterranean tradition." What I meant by it was clarified in later works of mine, such as *Revolt Against the Modern World*. The German edition of this book no longer contained this expression.

"Mediterranean" merely designates a space, or a geographical area in which very different cultures and spiritual and racial powers often clashed or met, without ever producing a typical civilization. In anthropology, the "Mediterranean" myth was promoted by Giuseppe Sergi in the past century. Sergi believed in the existence of a Mediterranean race of African origin to which many Italic populations belonged, including the Pelasgians, the Phoenicians, the Levantines, and other half-Semitic populations: these are hardly flattering kinships, which should rather be referred to as "bastard brothers," an expression Mussolini once used to refer to the myth of the Latin spirit. The theory of Sergi is now passé. I believe it is fitting to use the term Mediterranean to designate some suspicious spiritual and ethnic components. These components, which are found in other Mediterranean and "Latin" more or less mixed populations, are also present in various strata of the Italian people, in opposition to its more noble and original nucleus (which should not be called "Mediterranean") reflecting the "Roman" element.

Some psychologists have tried to define the Mediterranean type, not so much anthropologically, but in terms of character and style. In these descriptions we can easily recognize the other pole of the Italian soul, namely negative aspects likewise found in the Italian people that need to be rectified.

The first "Mediterranean" trait is love for outward appearances and grand gestures. The Mediterranean type needs a stage, if not for the sake of vanity and exhibitionism, at least in the sense that he often draws the impulse and motivation even for noble, remarkable, and sincere things from his main concern to be noticed by others and to make an impact on

them. Hence the inclination for a "gesture"—that is, to do something to draw attention and curiosity, even when the person knows he is the only one to witness it. In the Mediterranean man there is a splitting between an "I" that plays the role and an "I" that regards his part from the point of view of a possible observer or spectator, more or less as actors do.

Let me repeat: what is problematic here is the style, as the action or the work per se could have a positive value. But this has very little to do with Roman style, and it marks a disintegration and an alteration; it is the antithesis of the ancient saying *esse non haberi* [to be and not appear to be], or of the style due to which, among other reasons, ancient Roman civilization was characterized by anonymous heroes. In a wider context, the opposition could be formulated in these terms: the Roman style is monumental, monolithic, while the Mediterranean style is choreographic-theatrical and spectacular (see also the French notions of *grandeur* and *gloire*). Thus, if this "Mediterranean" component of the Italian man were to be rectified, the best model to follow would be that of the ancient race of Rome—the sober, austere, active style, free from exhibitionism, measured, endowed with a calm awareness of one's dignity. To have the sense of what one is and of one's value independently of any external reference, loving distance as well as actions and expressions reduced to the essential, devoid of any exhibition and cheap showmanship—all these are fundamental elements for the eventual formation of a superior type. And even if the Italian man had in common with the Mediterranean type the above-mentioned "splitting" (as simultaneous actor and spectator), this splitting should be utilized for a careful supervision of one's conduct and expressions. This supervision should prevent every primitive spontaneity; one should carefully study one's own demeanor, not with the purpose of making an "impression" on others, or with great concern for their opinion, but for sake of the style that one intends to display to oneself.

The propensity toward outward appearances is easily associated with a personalism that degenerates into individualism. This is another typical negative trait of the Mediterranean soul: the tendency toward a restless, chaotic, and undisciplined individualism. Politically speaking, this is the tendency that, after asserting itself by fomenting struggles and constant quarrels, led the Greek city-states to ruin, although it had previously contributed in a positive manner to their articulated formation. We find this trait in the turbulent times of the early empire; it finally erupted in medieval Italy, degenerating into particularisms, schisms, struggles, factions, and all kinds of rivalries. And although the Italian Renaissance has splendid features, they are nevertheless problematic features that derive from this Mediterranean individualism, which does not tolerate any general and strict law of order; and valuable possibilities dissipated in purely personal positions and in the fireworks of a creativity disjoined from any higher meaning and tradition. Here the author, rather than the work itself, is at center stage.

Thus, descending even lower, the same "Mediterranean" component is found in the contemporary pseudo-genial type, who is ever critical and always ready to uphold the opposite thesis in order to make a show of himself,

being very clever in finding ways to get around an obstacle and in eluding a law. Even lower we find the maliciousness and the shrewdness (i.e., knowing how to "fool" others) that the Mediterranean type regards as synonyms for intelligence and superiority, whereas the "Roman" type would feel in this a degradation, a betrayal of one's dignity. I have discussed this attitude earlier on, when speaking of Manacorda.

The Roman chastity or sobriety of speech, expression, and gesture is contrasted by the gesticulating, noisy, and disordered exuberance of the Mediterranean type, by his mania for communication and effusiveness, and by his feeble sense of boundaries, hierarchy, and silent subordination. The counterpart of these traits is often a lack of character, the tendency to get excited and become drunk with words: verbosity, a flaunted and conventional sense of honor, susceptibility, concern for appearances but with little or no substance. The expression "Pobre in palabras pero in obras largo" [Poor of words but rich in deeds], which characterized the ancient Spanish aristocratic type, should be compared with Moltke's characterization: "Talk little, do much, and be more than you appear to be"; all this points to the "Roman" style.

The Mediterranean man often shares with the so-called "desert race" (a psychological-anthropological classification by Clauss, probably the effect of the presence within him of some elements of this race) an intense, explosive, and changeable temperament, tied to circumstances and also flaring up; an immediacy and the power of desire or affection in the emotional life; and random intuitions in the intellectual life. A style of psychological equilibrium and a sense of measure are not his strength. Although he is always cheerful, enthusiastic, and optimistic in appearance, especially when he is in the company of other people, in reality the Mediterranean type experiences sudden psychological lows, and discovers dark and hopeless inner visions that make him anxiously shun solitude and return to exteriority, noisy social interactions, effusions, and passionateness.

While acknowledging this, in an eventual rectification we should not proceed by mere antitheses. Nietzsche's saying: "I evaluate a man by his power to delay his reactions" may certainly act as a general basic principle against disorderly impulsivity and "explosiveness." Nietzsche himself warned against every morality that tends to dry up every impetuous current of the human soul instead of channeling it. The capability of control, equilibrium, continuity in feeling and in willing must not lead to a withering and mechanization of one's being, as seems to be the case with some negative traits of the central-European and Anglo-Saxon man. What matters is not to suppress passion and to give to the soul a beautiful, regulated, and homogeneous, though flat form; but rather to organize one's being in an integral way around the capability of recognizing, discriminating, and adequately utilizing the impulses and the lights that emerge from one's deep recesses. It cannot be denied that passion is predominant in many Mediterranean Italian types, but this disposition does not amount to a defect, but rather to an enrichment, provided it finds its correlative in a firmly organized life.

A more negative element of the Mediterranean type is sentimentality. Here we should distinguish between sentimentality and true feeling, the former

being a degeneration and rhetorical form of the latter. The former plays a predominant role in various expressions typical of the Mediterranean soul. As an example we could adduce a number of sugary songs; the success and the echo they have in the popular soul, despite their patent insincerity, are significative.

The Mediterranean man is always inclined to defend himself, just as the Nordic man tends to judge himself. The former is alleged to be more indulgent with himself than with others, and to be reluctant to examine the hidden motives of his inner life under a clear and objective light. This opposition is rather unilateral. Generally speaking, we should not ignore the dangers inherent in morbid introspection: I am thinking here of the line that leads to psychoanalysis and to the psychology of some of Dostoyevsky's characters on the one hand, and to certain complexes of guilt or existential anguish on the other. A style of simplicity and sincerity, first of all toward one's soul, is essential for a superior human type, as is the natural precept of being strict with oneself but understanding and cordial with others. Specific connections with the racial factor subsist only in part in this regard.

We should instead consider the importance that sex has for the Mediterranean type. The sexualization of morality on the one hand, and the turning of women and sex almost into an obsession on the other, are not just typically "Mediterranean" traits, since in the latter we can recognize one of the general phenomena of every degenerating civilization. We cannot deny, however, the emphasis that this inclination receives in the average Mediterranean-Southern type, in contrast with what was proper to the best Roman ethics, which assigned to women and to love their rightful place, neither too high nor too low. Roman ethics pointed to the really fundamental values for a clear and virile formation of character and life, without adopting puritanical moralisms. Generally speaking, in Italy the relationships between the two sexes present a far from satisfactory aspect. Southern "temperament" with its primitive features, or with its up-to-date type of the Latin lover; an existing complex of bourgeois prejudices, with hypocrisies, inhibitions, conventionalisms; and a cheap and widespread corruption—all this is far from a line of clarity, sincerity, freedom, and courage. This theme would require a special analysis, but this is not the proper context for it, as it affects more general problems than those of the Mediterranean typology.

Having briefly outlined these opposite elements of style, we should recall that they represent two limits. The qualities of the "Roman" type represent the positive limit of dispositions hidden in the best parts of our people, just as the qualities characterized as "Mediterranean" correspond to the negative limit and the less noble part of it; these limits are also found as components in other peoples, especially in the "Latin" group. However, we must realize that too many times behaviors resembling the "Mediterranean" type have been identified, especially abroad, as typically Italian, and that the "Mediterranean" component appears to have prevailed overall in Italian life following World War II.

And yet, a trend in the opposite direction would not be inconceivable under certain conditions. Only this trend could create the basis for a

new State and a new society, for there is no doubt that formulas, programs, and institutions are of little help when there is no human substance, at least in the dominating elite. In every man there are various possibilities, at least in principle, that can be traced to primordial legacies. While in the best moments of our history we recognize the Aryan-Roman component, in periods of crisis and concealment we can detect the emergence and prevalence of what we have conventionally called the "Mediterranean" component; I said "conventionally" because it consists rather of Mediterranean debris and residues, influences of non-European races that have almost no history, or products of ethnic decay and erosion.

In the rectifying and formative action the key role will always be played by the political myth, in Sorel's sense of a galvanizing idea-force. The myth reacts on the environment, implementing the law of elective affinities: it awakens, frees, and imposes those possibilities of single individuals and the environment to which they correspond, while the others are silenced or neutralized. The selection can obviously take place in reverse, according to the nature of the myth. Thus, the communist and democratic myths appeal to what is most promiscuous and degraded in modern man; the corresponding movements owe their success to the mobilization of such elements through the inhibition of every different, higher possibility and sensibility.

If a rectification occurred, obviously we would not be able to see results overnight. Besides the above-mentioned condition, consisting of the presence of a political myth capable of creating a given climate, and a specific human ideal, what is needed is a persistent action for a sufficiently long period, stronger than the relapses and eventual reemergences of the opposite possibilities. As is well known, during the Fascist era Italy attempted to start similar developments, whose most serious concern, though it was felt only by a minority, was to increasingly transform a "Mediterranean" Italy into a "Roman" Italy. An adequate integrating counterpart could have been the initial separation of Italy from her "Latin sisters" and a reapproach to the German people, beyond the plane of mere political concerns.

It goes without saying that considering the contemporary climate in Italy, with its democratic nadir and its Marxist intoxication, it would be purely utopian to suggest similar ideas again. This obviously does not affect their intrinsic and normative value, as well as the value of other "outdated" ideas. Their "outdatedness" could disappear only at the point of a rupture and a reaction from within, which quite often take place in almost organic terms at the end of dissolutive processes.

Initiation: Only Three Possible Cases Beyond Realm of Phenomena
& René Guénon's Two Misunderstandings

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] We can set aside the most spurious, "occultist" varieties of neospiritualism, dominated by the interest in "clairvoyance," in this or that supposed "power," and any kind of contact with the invisible. The differentiated man can only be indifferent to all of that; the problem of the meaning of existence is not going to be resolved in that way, because there one is still always within the realm of phenomena. Instead of a profound existential change, it may even cause an evasion and a greater dispersion, like that caused on another plane by the stupefying proliferation of scientific knowledge and technology. However, neospiritualism does occasionally envisage something more and different, even if confusedly, when it refers to "initiation" and when this is postulated as the goal of various practices, "exercises," rites, yogic techniques, and so on.

I cannot simply condemn this out of hand, but it is necessary to dispel some illusions. Initiation, taken in its strict and legitimate sense, means a real ontological and existential change of man's state, an opening to the fact of the transcendent dimension. It would be the undeniable realization, the integral and de-conditioning appropriation, of the quality that I have considered as the basis of the human type who concerns us, the man still spiritually rooted in the world of Tradition. Thus the problem arises of what one should think when some neospiritualist current exhumes and presents "initiatic" paths and methods.

This problem has to be circumscribed by the limits of this book, which is not concerned with those who leave their environment and concentrate all their energies on transcendence, as the ascetic or the saint can do in the religious realm. I am concerned rather with the human type who accepts living in the world and the age, despite having a different inner form from that of his contemporaries. This man knows that it is impossible, in a civilization like the present one, to revive the structures that in the world of Tradition gave a meaning to the whole of existence. But in that same world of Tradition, what might correspond to the idea of initiation belonged to the summit, to a separate domain with precise limits, to a path having an exceptional and exclusive character. It was not a question of the realm in which the general law, handed down from the heights of Tradition, shaped common existence within a given civilization, but of a higher plane, virtually released from that very law by the fact of being at its origin. I cannot go here into the distinctions to be made within the domain of initiation itself; we must just keep firmly in mind the higher and more essential significance that initiation has when one is placed on the metaphysical plane: a significance already mentioned as consisting of the spiritual de-conditioning of the being. Those lesser forms that correspond to caste and tribal initiations, and also to the minor initiations linked to one or another cosmic power, as in certain cults of antiquity - forms quite different, therefore, from the "great liberation" - must be left aside here, not least because no basis for them exists any longer in the modern world.

Well then, if initiation is taken in its highest, metaphysical sense, one must assume a priori that it is not even a hypothetical possibility in an epoch like the present, in an environment like the one we live in, and

also given the general inner formation of individuals (now feeling the fatal effect of a collective ancestry that for centuries has been absolutely unfavorable). Anyone who sees things differently either does not understand the matter, or else is deceiving himself and others. What has to be negated most decisively is the transposition to this field of the individualistic and democratic view of the "self-made man," that is, the idea that anyone who wants can become an "initiate," and that he can also become one on his own, through his own strength alone, by resorting to various kinds of "exercises" and practices. This is an illusion, the truth being that through his own strength alone, the human individual cannot go beyond human individuality, and that any positive result in this field is conditioned by the presence and action of a genuine power of a different, non-individual order. And I can say categorically that in this respect, the possible cases are reduced to only three.

The first case is where one already naturally possesses this other power. This is the exceptional case of what was called "natural dignity," not derived from simple human birth; it is comparable to what in the religious domain is called election. The differentiated man posited here does possess a structure akin to the type to whom this first possibility refers. But for "natural dignity" in this specific, technical sense to be validated in him, a host of problems arise that can only be overcome if the trial of the self, spoken of in chapter 1, happens to be oriented in this direction.

The other cases concern an "acquired dignity." The second case is the possibility of the power in question appearing in cases of profound crises, spiritual traumas, or desperate actions, with the consequence of a violent breakthrough of the existential and ontological plane. Here it is possible that if the person is not wrecked, he may be led to participate in that force, even without his having held it consciously as a goal. I should clarify the situation by adding that in such cases a quantity of energy must already have been accumulated, which the circumstances cause to suddenly appear, with a consequent change of state. Therefore the circumstances appear as an occasional cause but not a determining cause, being necessary but not sufficient. It is like the last drop of water that makes the vase overflow, but only when it is already full, or the breaking of a dike that does not cause an inundation unless the water is already pressing on it.

The third and last case concerns the grafting of the power in question onto the individual by virtue of the action of a representative of a preexistent initiatic organization who is duly qualified to do so. It is the equivalent of priestly ordination in the religious field, which in theory imprints on the person an "indelible character," qualifying him for the efficacious performance of the rites. The author already cited here, René Guénon - who in modern times has been almost alone in treating such arguments with authority and seriousness, not without denouncing, too, the deviations, errors, and mystifications of neospiritualism considers this third case almost to the exclusion of the others. For my part, I think that in our time this case is virtually excluded in practical terms, because of the almost complete nonexistence of the organizations in question. If organizations of the kind have always had a more or less underground character in the West, because of the nature of

the religion that has come to predominate there, with its repressions and persecutions, in recent times they have virtually disappeared. As for other areas, especially the East, such organizations have become ever more rare and inaccessible, even when the forces that they control have not been withdrawn, in parallel with the general process of degeneration and modernization that has now invaded those areas, too. Most of all, today the East itself is no longer in a position to furnish most people with anything but by-products, in a "regime of residues." That much is obvious if one examines the spiritual stature of those from the East who have set to exporting and publicizing "Eastern wisdom" among us.

Guénon did not see the situation in such pessimistic terms because of two misunderstandings. The first derived from his not only considering initiation in the integral and actual sense, as described here, but introducing the concept of a "virtual initiation" that can take place without any effect being perceptible by the consciousness; thus it remains as inoperative in concrete terms as - to take another parallel from the Catholic religion - the supernatural quality of being a "son of God" is in the vast majority of cases, though this is dispensed at baptism, even to retarded infants. Guénon's second misunderstanding comes from supposing that the transmission of such a force is real even in the case of organizations that once had an initiatic character, but which time has brought to a state of extreme degenerescence. There is good reason to suppose that the spiritual power that originally constituted their center has withdrawn, leaving nothing behind the facade but a sort of psychic cadaver. In neither point can I agree with Guénon, and so I think that today the third case is even more improbable than the other two.

Referring now to the man who concerns us, if the idea of an "initiation" is to figure on his mental horizon, he should clearly recognize the distance between that and the climate of neospiritualism, nor should he have any illusions about it. The most he can conceive of as a practical possibility is a basic orientation in terms of preparation, for which he will find a natural predisposition in himself. But realization has to be left undetermined, and it is well for him to recall the post-nihilistic vision of life, described above, which excludes any reference point that might cause a deviation or de-centering - even if the diversion, as in this case, were linked to the impatient awaiting of the moment in which he would finally achieve an opening. The Zen saying is again valid in this context: "He who seeks the Way, leaves the Way. "

A realistic view of the situation and an honest self-evaluation indicate that the only serious and essential task today is to give ever more emphasis to the dimension of transcendence in oneself, more or less concealed as it may be. Study of traditional wisdom and knowledge of its doctrines may assist, but they will not be effective without a progressive change affecting the existential plane, and more particularly, the basic life force of oneself as a person: that force that for most people is bound to the world and is simply the will to live. One can compare this effect to the induction of magnetism into a piece of iron - an induction that also imprints on it a direction. Afterwards one can suspend the iron and move it about as one wishes, but after oscillating for a certain time and amplitude, it will always return

to point toward the pole. When the orientation toward the transcendent no longer has a merely mental or emotional character, but has come to penetrate a person's being, the most essential work is done, the seed has penetrated the earth, and the rest is, in a way, secondary and consequential. All the experiences and actions that, when one lives in the world, especially in an epoch like ours, may have the character of a diversion and be tied to various contingencies, will then have the same irrelevant effect as the displacing of the magnetized needle, after which it resumes its direction. Anything more that may eventually be realized, as I have said, is left to circumstance and to an invisible wisdom. And here the horizons should not be restricted to those of the individual, finite existence that the differentiated man finds himself living here and now.

Thus, setting aside the far-off and overly pretentious goals of an absolute and actual initiation understood in metaphysical terms, even the differentiated man should think himself fortunate if he can actually succeed in producing this modification, which integrates quite naturally the partial effects of the attitudes defined for him, in many different domains, in the preceding pages.

Jünger: from 'Conservative Revolutionary'
to Sluggishly Liberal & Humanistic

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The other work I completed in this period was *The Figure of the Worker* in the Thought of Ernst Jünger (L'operaio nel pensiero di Ernst Jünger), which was published in 1960 by the editor A. Armando (head of the publishing house 'Avio'). Someone had drawn my attention to a book published in the years between the two World Wars, a book entitled *The Worker: Dominion and Gestalt* (Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt). Its author, Ernst Jünger, was already well-known at the time thanks to various works which - by contrast to the defeatist and pacifist literature prevalent in the aftermath of the war - emphasized the potentially positive and spiritual aspects of modern warfare. On this account, Jünger had even been labelled the 'anti-Remarque'. Nor was Jünger a mere writer: having joined the Foreign Legion in his youth, he had later volunteered to fight in the First World War, where he was repeatedly wounded and was awarded the highest military honors. Following the collapse of Imperial Germany, Jünger was held in high esteem in nationalist and combat circles, and soon emerged as one of the representatives of the 'Conservative Revolution' - the term I already used to describe those circles which I came to appreciate and collaborate with in central Europe.

The starting point of Jünger's analysis in *The Worker* is the fact that modern warfare has unleashed elementary forces (where 'elementary forces' is used as it might be when talking of nature). Such elementary forces, Jünger argues, are related to that which is 'material'; i.e., to technical devices possessing an enormous destructive power (here the

author speaks of 'material battles'). In the case of modern warfare, it is as if a non-human force had been awakened by man from which the individual soldier cannot escape: a force he must rather face by attempting to stand up to the very machines he serves, spiritually as well as physically. This is only possible if the individual takes on a new form of being by forging a new human type capable of grasping the absolute meaning of existence in a context that would prove destructive for any other person. In order to achieve such a goal, the character, ideals, myths, values and worldview of the bourgeois world must be transcended.

Jünger had sought to apply his analysis of modern 'total war' to the context of modern existence in general: for the rise of technology and mechanization, Jünger argued - and the various phenomena which this rise entails - will lead to a similar unleashing of 'elementary forces' and destructive, frightening processes, whereby the tools of science and technology, which man has created to conquer nature, will backfire. Jünger here examined similar issues to those he had examined with regard to modern warfare. Having ascertained the impossibility both of relying on previous norms and values, and of avoiding the process underway, Jünger pointed to the need for developing a new human type capable of actively facing destruction: capable, that is, of being the perpetrator rather than the victim of destruction. Destruction, according to Jünger, would thus have to be accepted as a means to overcome what is merely human: as the means to attain a new 'heroic sense of reality' which would replace hedonism and the pursuit of happiness as the chief driving force of life. This heroic sense of reality and impersonality would contribute to differentiate humanity once more, while transcending the antitheses and problems of the bourgeois world and its degenerate features. The new type of man destined to stand out physically from the rest as a new 'figure' in world history - a figure destined to act as the centre, foundation and ruler of the technical age - Jünger termed the 'worker' (der Arbeiter) - hence the title of his book. No doubt, Jünger ought to have chosen a better term, for his 'worker' does not describe a social class - the working class - nor does it have anything to do with the Leftist idea of the industrial proletariat. Rather, Jünger's term 'worker' refers to a broad human type which shares certain traits with both the ascetic and the warrior, and affirms its way of being with detachment and clarity in all aspects of life. In his book, Jünger describes the present age as an age of transition (something, he suggests, in between a museum and a construction yard), and outlines various prospects for the future role of the 'worker', not least in the realm of politics. Jünger here defends the ideal of hierarchy and talks in terms of a new Order. As this Order is described by Jünger as being both 'Spartan' and Prussian, as reminiscent of both the Jesuits and the Communist elites, it is clear that what the author has in mind are the values that have surfaced in the past, and are surfacing today among movements which are situated on the opposite side of the political spectrum, yet share a rejection of bourgeois and democratic values.

I had long wished to make Jünger's book known in Italy by publishing its translation. Yet in reading Jünger's work again, I realized that a mere translation would not have sufficed: for the book mixes many interesting sections with others that might confuse the inexperienced reader (for

they refer to certain past events in Germany, while lacking any reference to other issues of dramatic importance for the present). Besides, Jünger's book presented certain editorial difficulties. I therefore abandoned the idea of a mere translation and opted for a synthesis of Jünger's theories. While I made extensive use of Jünger's own writing in my study, in order to develop a more critical and interpretive framework, I avoided quoting the extraneous or spurious parts of Jünger's book, and attempted to emphasize its most essential and relevant points. As for my own critical contribution to Jünger's theory, I pointed out that the sense of euphoria and prosperity that pervades the 'Western' world today would seem to have deprived the figure of the 'worker' of those alarming conditions necessary to its affirmation. And yet, I noted, there is no doubt another side to our 'Atomic Age' or 'Second Industrial Revolution': for the times of peace we are living in show all the signs of being an armistice. Besides, the necessary conditions for the rise of the 'worker' will continue to exist not externally, but in the form of internal acts of destruction and elementary forces in revolt against the current order (particularly if this order has been rationally, perfectly planned). If I ever criticized Jünger in my book, it was rather for his ambivalent description of the 'worker': for such a figure runs the risk of merely expressing a form of activism and self-development devoid of any transcendent character capable of engendering new and legitimate hierarchies. On the other hand, the attainment of a superior dimension of this kind is not a likely prospect; for the younger generations are increasingly coming to reflect the kind of worldview and perspective favored by modern science: a perspective that lies at the basis of modern technology (and thus of our own twilight civilization), and which denies the very possibility of transcendence.

In *The Worker* (as well as in a more recent book entitled *At the Wall of Time*), Jünger has mentioned the as-yet unperceived 'metaphysics' that lie at the basis of the world of machines and technology, and that will one day surface and come to prevail. Other authors have recently voiced similar ideas: a notable example is that of Pauwels and Bergier in *Le matin des magiciens* - a book that has attracted quite a lot of attention. Similar ideas, however, strike me as mere whims - unless the term 'metaphysical' is here understood in its literal meaning of 'that which lies beyond the physical' - in which case the emergence of non-physical forces might be seen to refer to the affirmation of a mechanistic and technological world: a 'daemonic' rather than truly 'metaphysical' event. Thus, in the conclusion to my book on Jünger's theories, I suggested that without an actual 'mutation' - in the sense the word possesses in the field of biology and genetics, where it refers to the development of new species - the figure of the 'worker', provided it ever comes into being, will hardly prove any different from the Communist ideal of the worker in materialist and collectivist terms. Here, I also remarked that the very use of the term 'worker' is questionable, for the idea of the 'worker' chiefly pertains to the fourth and final caste. It is revealing, therefore, that 'job' is a term so frequently used today that it even describes - and hence debases - activities which have nothing to do with the idea of a job - something I frequently emphasized in my own writing.

On the other hand, over the years Jünger has come to distance himself from the book I had introduced to the Italian public, and has abandoned

his original views. While the most recent writing of Jünger has significantly contributed towards his fame as a writer and man of letters, on a spiritual level it reflects a lapse: both for its merely literary and aesthetic nature, and because it betrays the influence of ideas of a different, and often antithetical sort from the ones that inform *The Worker* and other early books of Jünger. It is as if the spiritual drive that Jünger had derived from his life in the trenches of the First World War, and applied on an intellectual level, had gradually run out. Besides, not only did Jünger play no significant role during the Second World War, but it also appears that, when in service in occupied France, he got in touch with those members of the Wehrmacht who in 1944 attempted to murder Hitler. Jünger, therefore, should be numbered among those individuals who first subscribed to 'Conservative Revolutionary' ideas but were later, in a way, traumatized by the National Socialist experience, to the point of being led to embrace the kind of sluggishly liberal and humanistic ideas which conformed to the dominant attempt 'to democratically reform' their country; individuals who have proven incapable of distinguishing the positive side of past ideas from the negative, and of remaining true to the former. Alas, this incapability to discern is, in a way, typical of contemporary Germany (the land of the 'economic miracle').

The following book I wrote, *Ride the Tiger*, partly returns to the issue of the 'worker', which it develops and integrates. [...]

Liberalism & Totalitarianism: Degrees of the same Disease

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] Coming back to liberalism, I wish to say that it represents the antithesis of every organic doctrine. Since according to liberalism the primary element is the human being regarded not as person, but rather as an individual living in a formless freedom, this philosophy is able to conceive society merely as a mechanical interplay of forces and entities acting and reacting to each other, according to the space they succeed in gaining for themselves, without the overall system reflecting any higher law of order or meaning. The only law, and thus the only State, that liberalism can conceive has therefore an extrinsic character in regard to its subjects. Power is entrusted to the State by sovereign individuals, so that it may safeguard the freedoms of the individuals and intervene only when these freedoms clash and prove dangerous to one another. Thus, order appears as a limitation and a regulation of freedoms, rather than as a form that freedom itself expresses from within, as freedom to do something, or as freedom connected to a quality and a specific function. Order, namely the legal order, eventually amounts to an act of violence because, practically speaking, in a liberal and democratic regime a government is defined in terms of a majority; thus, the minority, though composed of "free individuals," must bow and obey.

The specter that most terrifies liberalism today is totalitarianism. It can be said that totalitarianism may arise as a borderline case out of

the presuppositions of liberalism, rather than out of those of an organic State. As we shall see, in totalitarianism we have the accentuation of the concept of order uniformly imposed from the outside onto a mass of mere individuals who, lacking their own form and law, must receive one from the outside, be introduced in a mechanical, all-inclusive system, and avoid the disorder typical of a disorganized and selfish expression of partisan forces and special-interest groups.

Events have recently led toward a similar solution, after the more or less idyllic view proper to the euphoric phase of liberalism and of laissez-faire economy has turned out to be simply a fancy. I am referring here to the view according to which a satisfactory social and economic equilibrium allegedly arises out of the conflict of particular interests: almost as if a preestablished harmony à la Leibniz would take care of ordering everything for the better, even when the single individual cares only for himself and is freed from every bond.

Thus, not only ideally, but historically too, liberalism and individualism are at the beginning and at the origin of the various interconnected forms of modern subversion. The person who becomes an individual, by ceasing to have an organic meaning and by refusing to acknowledge any principle of authority, is nothing more than a number, a unit in the pack; his usurpation evokes a fatal collectivist limitation against himself. Therefore, we go from liberalism to democracy: and then from democracy to socialist forms that are increasingly inclined toward collectivism. For a long time Marxist historiography has clearly recognized this pattern: it has recognized that the liberal revolution, or the revolution of the Third Estate, opened a breach and contributed to erode the previous traditional sociopolitical world and to pave the way to the socialist and communist revolution; in turn, the representatives of this revolution will leave the rhetorics of the "immortal principles" and the "noble and generous ideas" to naive and deluded people. Since every fall is characterized by an accelerated motion, it is not possible to stop halfway. Within the system of the predominant ideologies in the West, liberalism, having absolved its preliminary task of disintegration and disorganization, has quickly been set aside—thus, the claim of some of its contemporary epigones to be able to contain Marxism, which represents the last link in the chain of causes, rings hollow indeed and is indicative of lack of wisdom. There is a saying from Tacitus that summarizes in lapidary style what has happened since the "liberal revolution": *Ut imperium evertant, libertatem praeferunt; si pervenerint, libertatem ipsam adgredientur*—that is, "in order to overthrow the State (in its authority and sovereignty: i.e., imperium) they uphold freedom; once they succeed, they will turn against it too." Plato said: "Probably, then, tyranny develops out of no other constitution than democracy—from the height of liberty, I take it, the fiercest extreme of servitude." Liberalism and individualism played merely the role of instruments in the overall plan of world subversion, to which they opened the dams.

Thus, it is of paramount importance to recognize the continuity of the current that has generated the various political, antitraditional forms that are today at work in the chaos of political parties: liberalism, constitutionalism, parliamentary democracy, socialism, radicalism, and

finally communism and Soviet-ism have emerged in history as degrees or as interconnected stages of the same disease. Without the French Revolution and liberalism, constitutionalism and democracy would not have existed; without democracy and the corresponding bourgeois and capitalist civilization of the Third Estate, socialism and demagogic nationalism would not have arisen; without the groundwork laid by socialism, we would not have witnessed the advent of radicalism and of communism in both its national and proletarian-international versions. The fact that today these forms often appear either to coexist or to be in competition with each other should not prevent a keen eye from noting that they sustain, link, and mutually condition each other, being only the expression of different degrees of the same subversion of every normal and legitimate institution. It necessarily follows that, when these forms clash, the one that will prevail will be the most extreme, or the one located on the lowest step. The beginning of the process is to be traced to the time when Western man broke the ties to Tradition, claiming for himself as an individual a vain and illusory freedom: when he became an atom in society, rejecting every higher symbol of authority and sovereignty in a system of hierarchies. The "totalitarian" forms that are emerging are a demonic and materialistic counterfeit of the previous unitary political ideal, and they represent "the greatest and most savage slavery," which, according to Plato, arose out of formless "freedom."

Economic liberalism, which engendered various forms of capitalist exploitation and of cynical, antisocial plutocracy, is one of the final consequences of the intellectual emancipation that made the individual solutus—that is, lacking the inner, self-imposed bond, function, and limit that are found instead in every organic system's general climate and natural hierarchy of values. Moreover, we know that in more recent times, political liberalism has become little more than a system at the service of laissez-faire—namely, economic liberalism—in the context of a capitalist-plutocratic civilization; from this situation new reactions arose, pushing everything lower and lower, to the level of Marxism.

The above-mentioned connections are also visible in the special sector of property and wealth, especially when we consider the meaning of the change that occurred within it, following the institutions created by the French Revolution. By denouncing everything in the economic world that was still inspired by the feudal ideal as a cruel regime based on privileges, the organic connection (displayed mainly in various feudal systems) between personality and property, social function and wealth, and between a given qualification or moral nobility and the rightful and legitimate possession of goods, was broken. It was the Napoleonic Code that made "property" neutral and "private" in the inferior and individualistic sense of the word; with this code, property ceased to have a political function and bond. Moreover, property was no longer subject to an "eminent right," nor tied to a specific responsibility and social rank and subject to a "higher right." In this context, rank signified the objective and normal consecration in a hierarchical system that the superior one, as well as the personality formed and differentiated by a supra-individual tradition and idea, receives. Property, and wealth in general, no longer had any duties before the State other than in fiscal terms. The subject of property was the pure and simple "citizen," whose dominant concern was to exploit the property

without any scruples and without too much regard for those traditions of blood, family, and folk that had previously been a relevant counterpart of property and wealth.

It was only natural that in the end the right to private property came to be disputed; whenever there is no higher legitimization of ownership, it is always possible to wonder why some people have property and others do not, or why some people have earned for themselves privileges and social preeminence (often greater than those in feudal systems), while lacking something that would make them stand out and above everybody else in an effective and sensible manner. Thus the so-called "social question," together with the worn-out slogan "social justice," arose in those conditions where no differentiation is any longer visible other than in terms of mere "economic classes" (wealth and property having become "neutral" and apolitical; every value of difference and rank, of personality and authority having been rejected or undermined by processes of degeneration and materialization; the political sphere having been deprived of its original dignity). Thus, subversive ideologies have successfully and easily unmasked all the political myths that capitalism and the bourgeoisie have employed, in the absence of any superior principle, in order to defend their privileged status against the push and final violation by the forces from below.

Again, we can see that the various aspects of the contemporary social and political chaos are interrelated and there is no real way to effectively oppose them other than by returning to the origins. To go back to the origins means, plainly and simply, to reject everything that in any domain (whether social, political, or economic) is connected to the "immortal principles" of 1789, as a libertarian, individualistic, and egalitarian thought, and to oppose it with the hierarchical view, in the context of which alone the notion, value, and freedom of man as person are not reduced to mere words or excuses for a work of destruction and subversion.

Method of the True Dominators of History vs. Progressivism

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] We already know what the true foundation of progressivism is: the mirage of technological civilization, the lure exercised by some undeniable material and industrial progress that, however, is appreciated without paying much attention to its negative drawbacks, which often affect other, more important and valuable domains of human life. Those who are not subject to the predominant materialism of our times, upon recognizing the only context in which it is legitimate to speak of progress, will be on guard against any orientation in which the modern "myth of progress" is reflected. In ancient times the matter was very clear. In Latin, the word denoting subversion was not *revolutio* (which had a different meaning, as I have explained before) but rather *sestitutio*, or *eversio*, or *civilis perturbatio*, or *rerum publicarum commutatio*. Thus, the term "revolutionary," in its modern meaning, was rendered with

circumlocutions such as *rerum novarum studiosus*, or *fautor*, namely one who aims at and promotes new things. According to the traditional Roman mentality, "new things" were automatically regarded as negative and subversive.

Thus, in regard to "revolutionary" ambitions it is necessary to clear the misunderstanding and to choose between the two aforementioned opposing positions, which determine two likewise opposing styles. Again, on the one hand there are those who acknowledge the existence of immutable principles for every true order and who abide by them, not allowing themselves to be swept along by events. Such people do not believe in "history" and in "progress" as mysterious super-ordained entities, but instead attempt to dominate the forces of the environment and lead them back to higher, stable forms: according to them, this is what embracing reality amounts to. On the other hand there are those who, having been "born yesterday," have nothing in the past, who believe only in the future and are committed to a groundless, empirical, and improvised action, deluding themselves that they are able to direct events without knowing or acknowledging anything that rises above the plane of matter and contingency; such people devise many systems, the end result of which will never be an authentic order, but instead a more or less manageable disorder. The "revolutionary" vocation belongs to this second line of thought, even when it does not directly serve the interests of unadulterated subversion. In this context, the lack of principles is supplied with the myth of the future, through which some dare to justify and sanctify recent destructions that have occurred, since in their view they were necessary in order to move ahead and to achieve new and better horizons (any trace of which, I am afraid, it is difficult to point out).

Once things are clearly seen in these terms, it is necessary to thoroughly examine one's "revolutionary" ambitions, all the while aware that if these ambitions are kept within their legitimate limits, one would then be a part of history's demolition squad. Those who are still standing upright in this world of ruins are at a higher level; their watchword is Tradition, according to the dynamic aspect I have just made evident. When circumstances change, when crises occur, when new factors come into play, where the previous dams begin to crack, these people know how to retain their sangfroid and are capable of letting go of what needs to be abandoned in order that what is truly essential may not be compromised. These people know how to move on, upholding in an impassive way the forms that are proper to the new circumstances, knowing how to assert themselves through them; their goal is to reestablish and maintain an immaterial continuity and avoid a groundless and adventurous course of action. This is the method of the true dominators of history, which is very different from and more virile than that of the merely "revolutionary." [...]

Military Style - Prussian Style - "Militarism" - Heroism - War

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] I will not repeat what I have expounded elsewhere in a more detailed fashion, namely how often in the traditional world we encounter the interpretation of life as a perennial struggle between metaphysical powers, between Uranian forces of light and order, on the one hand, and telluric, dark forces of chaos and matter on the other. Traditional man yearned to fight this battle and to triumph in both the inner and outer worlds. A true and just war on the external plane reproduced in other terms the same struggle that had to be waged within: it was a struggle against forces and people that in the external world presented the same traits as the powers the single individual needed to subjugate and dominate internally, until a pax triumphalis was achieved.

From this follows an interdependence between the warrior idea and that of a certain "asceticism," inner discipline, and superiority toward or control of one's self that appears in various degrees in the best warrior traditions and remains on the military plane (in the specific sense of the term) with the authentic value of a culture, in the anti-intellectualist sense of development and mastery of one's self. Contrary to what the bourgeois and liberal polemics claim, the warrior idea may not be reduced to materialism, nor is it synonymous with the exaltation of the brutal use of strength and destructive violence. Rather, the calm, conscious, and planned development of the inner being and a code of ethics; love of distance; hierarchy; order; the faculty of subordinating the emotional and individualistic element of one's self to higher goals and principles, especially in the name of honor and duty--these are all elements of the warrior idea, and they act as the foundations of a specific "style" that has largely been lost. This loss occurred with the shift from the States that are regarded as "militaristic," in which all this corresponded to a long and stern tradition, to the democratic and nationalistic States, in which the duty of serving in the armed forces has replaced the right to bear arms. Thus, the real antithesis is not between the "spiritual values" and "culture," on the one hand, and "militaristic materialism," on the other; the antithesis is between two ways of conceiving what spirit and culture really are. We must resolutely oppose the democratic, bourgeois, and humanistic view of the nineteenth century, which, in correspondence with the advent of an inferior human type, has presented its interpretation as the only legitimate and unquestionable one.

The truth is that there has been an entire cycle of civilization, especially in the Indo-European areas, in which elements, feelings, and structures of an analogous warrior type were determinant in all the domains of life, up to and including the domain of familiar and patrician right, whereas the factors of a naturalistic, sentimental, and economic character were limited. The hierarchical idea is certainly not exhausted in the hierarchy of a military or warrior type. The more original form of hierarchy is defined with essentially spiritual values (the Greek word for hierarchy means "sovereignty of the sacred," hieros). However, it must be pointed out that in many civilizations even the hierarchies with a spiritual foundation either relied on hierarchies that were more or less warrior and military or reproduced their form, at least externally. Thus, when the original spiritual level could not be maintained, hierarchical structures of a warrior type constituted the armature of the major States, especially in the West.

The Prussian spirit, the *bête noire* of democracies, should not be regarded as the anomaly of a certain people; on the contrary, in it we must see the same style that, thanks to a set of favorable circumstances, was preserved until recent times in German-speaking countries (as an "intolerable obscurantist residue," according to the progressive representatives of the modern era). The Prussian style did not apply only to the military: by defining itself as "Frederickianism," it shaped one of the most austere and aristocratic European military traditions, but also manifested its influence in everything that is service to the State, loyalty, and anti-individualism. This style educated a class of government officials according to principles very different from mere bureaucracy, petty clerical spirit, and the irresponsible and lazy administration of the affairs of the state. Moreover, this style never failed to act in the economic sector, ensuring, at the onset of the industrial era, an intimate cohesion to great industrial complexes led by quasi-dynastic lines of entrepreneurs who were respected and obeyed by the workers almost in terms of military loyalty and solidarity.

Thus, the antithesis between two eras is reflected in the polemics concerning the meaning of the military and warrior element: moreover, in it we see the polemics between the two components of a collective organism—the social and the political. Antimilitaristic democracy is the expression of "society," which, with its material ideals of peace or, at most, of wars waged to maintain peace, is opposed to the political principle—that is, to the principle of the *Männerbund*, the shaping force of the State that has always depended on a warrior or military element, that cherished less material ideals, such as honor and superiority. Thus, what has transpired at an international level in the democratic ideology upheld during the two world wars is yet another aspect of the regressive phenomena and of the aggressive emergence of an inferior element.

Aside from this, from a practical point of view we must acknowledge that in modern times, since the sensibility for purely spiritual values and dignities has become mostly atrophied among Western populations ("spiritual" in a traditional sense, not an "intellectualist" or "cultural" one), the model of a military hierarchy, though it is not the highest nor the original one, is almost the only one that can still supply the basis and act so as to emphasize hierarchical values in general, and thus save what can still be saved. That model still retains a certain prestige, and exercises a certain attraction on every human type that is not yet entirely disintegrated and "socialized." Despite any antimilitaristic propaganda culminating in the shallow, spineless, and gutless "conscientious objectors," there is a heroic dimension in the Western soul that cannot be totally extirpated. Maybe it is still possible to appeal to this dimension through an adequate view of life.

In relation to this, a further consideration concerns a general attitude and a certain level of tension, which in many sectors of contemporary life become necessary, with the effect of minimizing the distinction between times of peace and times of war. I am not alluding to the political struggles among political parties, which are phenomena that relate only to a period of decadence and an absence of the idea of the State: I am alluding to all those aspects of modern life that, in order

to be mastered and not to have destructive consequences on the individual, require a complete assumption of one's own position, so as not to refrain from turning risk and discipline into an integral part of one's way of being. In this case, too, we have an attitude opposite of the bourgeois man's. Obviously it cannot be required that such a climate of tension last permanently and remain in everybody, in the same degree: however, at the present time, in certain instances there is no other choice. It is on the basis of various capabilities of the individuals to conform to such a climate, to love such a climate, so that in every domain new selections and real, existential hierarchies can be determined; these hierarchies are such as to find a natural acknowledgment from every healthy human being.

It is obvious that the nations in which such premises are sufficiently realized will be not only the ones better prepared for war, but also the ones in which war will acquire a higher meaning. Concerning the first point, it is the equivalent of what applies on the material plane, where the wartime efficiency of a nation is measured by the virtual potential for industries and peacetime economy to be suddenly converted into wartime industries and economy. There will be a certain continuity of spirit and attitude, a common moral denominator in peace and in war that facilitates the shift from one state to the other. It has rightly been affirmed that war shows a nation what peace has meant for it. The "military" education of the spirit has an independent value from "militarism" and from war; however, it creates the necessary potential so that, when a war breaks out, a nation is ready for it, and fights it with a sufficient number of men who reproduce in a new form the warrior type, rather than that of the "soldier."

The entire order of ideas that has been discussed so far is thus ignored or falsified by the polemics against "militarism," just as in other cases (e.g., "totalitarianism") a false target is created. In reality, what is meant to be effaced and discredited is a world that the merchant and the bourgeois type abhor, hate, and regard as intolerable, even when it does not directly threaten democracy. Thus, it is convenient to focus on that which is only a degeneration of militarism, namely those situations in which a certain class of professional soldiers, of rather narrow views and limited competence, exercises an artificial influence on the politics of a nation, pushing it to the brink of war with the support of warmongering elements. Such situations can be definitely condemned without thereby compromising the value of the overall warrior view that I have discussed so far. However, this does not amount to espousing the democracies' theoretical pacifism and sharing their totally negative view concerning war and the meaning of battle.

Contemporary democracies are caught in a contradiction that undermines their very physical existence. After trying to persuade the world that their last anti-European crusade was a "war against war," or the last war, now they need to rearm themselves, since they cannot defend their interests against the new "aggressors" with mere prayers and solemn proclamations issued by their leadership. Thus, this is the situation we are facing today: democracies theoretically continue to deprecate war; to conceive of war only in terms of "defense" and "aggression"; to abhor "militarism"; and almost to perceive the warrior as a criminal—and yet

with such demoralizing and self-defeating ideological views, they arm themselves in order to confront their new opponents, namely the world of the Fourth Estate, organized by communism into one powerful bloc. The ideal for these democracies would be to find someone else to wage a war for them, as their "soldiers," limiting themselves to supplying weapons, ammunition, financing, and well-tested propaganda employing slogans such as "defense of the free world" and "defense of civilization." But such propaganda loses credibility day by day; moreover, we should not harbor too many illusions concerning the value of a technical and industrial superiority (unless it is totally overwhelming) when the counterpart of a moral factor and the warrior spirit is lacking in the fighting troops.

Finally, it is not easy to find somebody naive enough to believe that he is fighting in the "last war" and to be so selfless as to risk or sacrifice his life for those who will come after him in the hypothetical, idyllic democratic age without wars. And so the situation arises in which one is forced to fight, while his entire bourgeois and democratic education makes him hate war and conceive it as the worst scourge or as something ushering in ruin and all sorts of miseries. The best possibility will be to fight out of desperation in order to save one's life or wallet, since plutocratic democracies today remind us of the situation of one who, confronted with the choice between his wallet and his life, prefers to risk his life rather than surrendering the wallet. We can see up what blind alleys the democratic "antimilitarism" leads today, when those who are fighting are the elements more or less directly threatened and pushed against the wall. The civilization of the merchant and the bourgeois who extols only the "civic virtues" and who identifies the standard of values with material well-being, economic prosperity, a comfortable and conformist existence based on one's work, productivity, sports, movies, and sexuality causes the involution and extinction of the warrior type and the hero; what remains is the military man as "human material," whose performance on the battlefield is very problematic due to the above-mentioned absence of the inner factor—namely, a corresponding tradition and warrior view of life.

However, we may wonder if, after the recent experiences, one has had enough, or if one should forget what a modern "total war" entails; moreover, we may recall the extreme technical nature of such a conflict, seeing it not as a war of man against man, but rather as a war of the machine, matériel, and everything devised by science harnessed for purposes of radical destruction against man. We may wonder, in such a war, what margin is left to the traditional type of the warrior and the hero. The reply is that what is at work here is what Asians call karma. Modern man has no other choice. We may well agree with Ernst Jünger's views, according to which modern man, by creating the technology to dominate nature, has signed a promissory note that is now due; for instance, this is the type of war in which technology turns against him and threatens to destroy him not only physically, but spiritually as well. Thus, mankind must come to terms with its creation and compete with it. This is impossible unless a new inner dimension is created, which, in the case of war, will manifest itself in the form of a cold, lucid, and complex heroism in which the romantic, patriotic, instinctive element is absent, and in which, beside a more specific technical preparation, we find a sacrificial disposition: man's capability to face, and even to

love, the most destructive situations through the possibilities they afford. These possibilities, in their elementary character, offer him the chance to grasp what may be called the "absolute person." All this, to a certain degree, will have to be applied to an entire nation, as in the modern "total war" the distinction between combatants and noncombatants is a relative one.

It may be said that modern war will lead only to the transformation of the heroic disposition and that its increasingly technical nature will constitute a real test, so that this disposition may assume a quintessential form, be purified and almost deindividualized, joining particular and complex forms of control, lucidity, and dominion. This purely spiritual and naked assumption of heroism is probably the only one that is still possible.

Obviously, in these terms heroism assumes an autonomous value as pure experience and individual realization. The circumstances of modern times seem such that those who still yearn to be warriors and heroes must place this value at the forefront. In a novel written during World War II, a character says: "It is a luxury to be able to fight for a just cause." This is a significant testimony concerning the deep, widespread mistrust toward the ideological background of the recent wars, a background shaped by many lies and much propaganda. Thus, wars will increasingly display the traits attributed to them by certain sociologists; such traits are similar to those of elementary and unavoidable natural phenomena, and the result is the relativization of the meaning and value of the "cause" in the name of which people fight on both sides. We might be inclined to suspect that to think in these terms may promote a demoralizing and defeatist attitude. This may be the case, but only in those who have a passive attitude toward the phenomenon of war and who are bourgeois in spirit. In other instances, it will be a matter of inverting the relationship from means to end: the value of the "cause" will consist in its susceptibility to become a mere means for the realization of the experience as "autonomous value." Beyond any destruction, ideology, and "ideals," this realization will remain as an intangible and inalienable thing. However, it is not the view of life endorsed by modern democracies that will propitiate this eventual inversion of perspectives. The times ahead of us, despite the euphoria for the "second industrial revolution," make it very likely that to remain spiritually upright and to endure even after extreme trials and destructions will be possible only on such conditions.

Misunderstandings of the New "Paganism"

(from "Sintesi di Dottrina della Raza")

It is perhaps appropriate to point out the misunderstandings that are current at the moment in some radical circles, who believe that a solution lies in the direction of a new paganism. This misunderstanding is already visible in the use of terms such as "pagan" and "pagandom". I myself, having used these expressions as slogans in a book that was

published in Italy in 1928, and in Germany in 1934, have cause for sincere regrets.

Certainly the word for pagan or heathen, *paganus*, appears in some ancient Latin writers such as Livy without an especially negative tone. But this does not alter the fact that with the arrival of the new faith, the word *paganus* became a decidedly disparaging expression, as used in early Christian apologetics. It derives from *pagus*, meaning a small town or village, so that *paganus* refers to the peasant way of thinking: an uncultured, primitive, and superstitious way. In order to promote and glorify the new faith, the apologists had the bad habit of elevating themselves through the denigration of other faiths. There was often a conscious and often systematic disparagement and misrepresentation of almost all the earlier traditions, doctrines, and religions, which were grouped under the contemptuous blanket-term of *paganism* or *heathendom*. To this end, the apologists obviously made a premeditated effort to highlight those aspects of the pre-Christian religions and traditions that lacked any normal or primordial character, but were clearly forms that had fallen into decay. Such a polemical procedure lead, in particular, to the characterization of whatever had preceded *Christendom*, and was hence non-Christian, as necessarily anti-Christian.

One should consider, then, that "*paganism*" is a fundamentally tendentious and artificial concept that scarcely corresponds to the historical reality of what the pre-Christian world always was in its normal manifestations, apart from a few decadent elements and aspects that derived from the degenerate remains of older cultures.

Once we are clear about this, we come today to a paradoxical realization: that this imaginary *paganism* that never existed, but was invented by Christian apologists, is now serving as the starting-point for certain so-called pagan circles, and is thus threatening for the first time in history to become a reality -- no more and no less than that.

What are the main traits of today's pagan outlook, as its own apologists believe and declare them to be? The primary one is the imprisonment in Nature. All transcendence is totally unknown to the pagan view of life: it remains stuck in a mixture of Spirit and Nature, in an ambiguous unity of Body and Soul. There is nothing to its religion but a superstitious deification of natural phenomena, or of tribal energies promoted to the status of minor gods. Out of this there arises first of all a blood- and soil-bound particularism. Next comes a rejection of the values of personality and freedom, and a condition of innocence that is merely that of the natural man, as yet unawakened to any truly supra-natural calling. Beyond this innocence there is only lack of inhibition, "sin," and the pleasure of sinning. In other domains there is nothing but superstition, or a purely profane culture of materialism and fatalism. It is as though only the arrival of Christianity (ignoring certain precursors which are dismissed as insignificant) allowed the world of supra-natural freedom to break through, letting in grace and personality, in contrast to the fatalistic and nature-bound beliefs ascribed to "*paganism*," bringing with it a catholic ideal (in the etymological sense of universality) and a healthy dualism, which made it possible to subjugate Nature to a higher

law, and for the "Spirit" to triumph over the law of flesh, blood, and the false gods.

These are the main traits of the dominant understanding of paganism, i.e., of everything that does not entail a specifically Christian world-view. Anyone who possesses any direct acquaintance with cultural and religious history, however elementary, can see how incorrect and one-sided this attitude is. Besides, in the early Church Fathers there are often signs of a higher understanding of the symbols, doctrines, and religions of preceding cultures. Here we will give only a sampling.

What most distinguished the pre-Christian world, in all its normal forms, was not the superstitious divinization of nature, but a symbolic understanding of it, by virtue of which (as I have often emphasized) every phenomenon and every event appeared as the sensible revelation of a supra-sensible world. The pagan understanding of the world and of man was essentially marked by sacred symbolism.

Moreover, the pagan way of life was absolutely not that of a mindless innocence, nor a natural abandonment to the passions, even if certain forms of it were obviously degenerate. It was already aware of a healthy dualism, which is reflected in its universal religious or metaphysical conceptions. Here we can mention the dualistic warrior-religion of the ancient Iranian Aryans, already discussed and familiar to all; the Hellenistic antithesis between the "two natures," between World and Underworld, or the Nordic one between the race of the Ases and the elementary beings; and lastly the Indo-Aryan contrast between sams'ra, the "stream of forms," and m(o)kthi, "liberation" and "perfection."

On this basis, all the great pre-Christian cultures shared the striving for a supra-natural freedom, i.e., for the metaphysical perfection of the personality, and they all acknowledged Mysteries and initiations. I have already pointed out that the Mysteries often signified the reconquest of the primordial state, the spirituality of the solar, Hyperborean races, on the foundation of a tradition and a knowledge that were concealed through secrecy and exclusivity from the pollutions of an environment already in decay. We have also seen that in the Eastern lands, the Aryan quality was already associated with a "second birth" achieved through initiation. As for natural innocence as the pagan cult of the body, that is a fairy-tale and not even in evidence among savages, for despite the inner lack of differentiation already mentioned in connection with races "close to nature," these people inhibit and constrict their lives through countless taboos in a way that is often stricter than the morality of the so-called "positive religions." And as for that which seems to be the superficial view to embody the prototype of such "innocence," namely the classical ideal, that was no cult of the body: it did not belong on that side of the body-spirit duality, but on the other side. As already stated, the classic ideal is that of a Spirit that is so dominant that under certain favorable spiritual conditions it molds Body and Soul to its own image, and thereby achieves a perfect harmony between the inner and the outer.

Lastly, there is an aspiration away from particularism to be found everywhere in the "pagan" world, to which was due the imperial summons

that marked the ascending phase of the Nordic-derived races. Such a summons was often metaphysically enhanced and refined, and appeared as the natural consequence of the expansion of the ancient sacred state-concept; also as the form in which the victorious presence of the "higher world" and the paternal, Olympian principle sought to manifest itself in the world of becoming. In this respect we might recall the old Iranian concept of Empire and of the "King of kings," with its associated doctrine of the hvareno (the "celestial glory" with which the Aryan rulers were endowed), and the Indo-Aryan tradition of the "World-king" or cakravarti, etc., right up to the reappearance of these signifiers in the "Olympian" assumptions of the ancient Roman idea of State and Empire. The Roman Empire, too, had its sacred contents, which were systematically misunderstood or undervalued not only by Christendom, but also by the writers of "positive" history. Even the Emperor-cult had the sense of a hierarchical unity at the top of a pantheon, which was a series of separate territorial and ancestral cults belonging to the non-Roman peoples, which were freely respected so long as they kept within their normal boundaries. Finally, concerning the "pagan" unity of the two powers, spiritual and temporal, this was very far from meaning that they were fused. As a "solar" race understood it, it expressed the superior rights that must accrue to the spiritual authority at the center of any normal state; thus it was something quite different from the emancipation and "supremacy" of a merely secular state. If we were to make similar amendments in the spirit of true objectivity, the possibilities would be overwhelming.

Mithras' 'Slaying of the Bull'
& Cherishing a Life of Light, Freedom & Power

(from "The Path of Enlightenment in the Mithraic Mysteries")

[...] I have already mentioned that the "bull" symbolizes the elementary life-force. It is to be identified with the Green Dragon of Alchemy, with tantric kundalini or with the Taoist "Dragon." The disciplines which focus on breathing call this force prana - a breathing considered in its "luminous" and "subtle" dimension. Prana is related to material breathing as the soul is to the body. This life-force is naturally evasive and resists coercion; it is the restless "mercury," the "volatile," the "bird" (the hamsah bird of the Hindu tradition, ham and sah being respectively the sound of inhaling and exhaling), which the initiate has to "ride" and to "immobilize." The practice consists in focused breathing and in becoming lost in it; then, boldly, in letting go, in sinking. This is what the expression "the Dragon flies away" is supposed to mean.

According to the initiatory disciplines found in Hinduism, breath has four dimensions: a material dimension (sthula), related to the state of wakefulness and to the cerebral-psychological faculties; a subtle, luminous dimension (sukshma), related to the dream state and to the nervous system; a causative, igneous dimension (karana), related to the state of deep sleep and to the blood system; and finally a dimension which the Hindu texts call turiya (the fourth), which is related to the

special state observed in catalepsy: a state of apparent death, related to the skeleton and the reproductive function.

Mithras, who after taking hold of the bull "lets himself be carried" in a wild ride without ever letting go, symbolizes the Self which, as it sinks, goes through these four stages and through the neutral areas separating them. By contrast, ordinary people simply lose consciousness and fall asleep at the very first stage. The bull gives up only when Mithras shows enough boldness and a subtle enduring strength, or until the process of "sinking" reaches the fourth stage. At this point, the basic mechanisms of the primitive life-force are seized and brought to a halt; the mercury is fixed and congealed; the "bull" is slain. The life-force, finally deprived of all support, is suspended, broken, burnt to the roots.

Once this climactic point is reached a miraculous transformation occurs. A blazing, whirling, divine life arises from the deep, quick as lightning. This new life-force permeates the whole body with a gleaming which transfigures it. It recreates the body ab imo, as an entity of pure activity, as a glorious body of immortal splendor; this is the "radiating body," the augoeides, the Hvareno, the vajra, the Dorje. These are all different names recurring in various Eastern and Western traditions, describing the same force. This new life-force, which has the nature of diamond and of irresistible thunderbolt, transforms the mortal and deprived condition into one of immortality.

What oozes from the bull's wound is not blood, but wheat, the Bread of Life, as a perennial source created by the surrounding desert and as the miracle of a new kind of vegetation. However one obstacle still needs to be overcome: swarms of impure animals crowd around the dying bull to drink its blood and to bite its genitals, thus poisoning the source of life. This is the last episode in this saga; the meaning of this is that the prodigious and superhuman power, called kundalini in Hindu tradition, is awakened once the bull is slain. This power immediately floods all the principles and the functions which support the physical being. If during this process all these elements have not been purified, organized and unified, they become unleashed, absorbing and transforming to their advantage the higher power which was supposed to transform them into a spiritual body. What ensues, therefore, is a terrible setback, an emanation, a gushing forward of those forces which belong to the animal and emotive nature, and which are now extraordinarily excited. This phenomenon has been variously called the "clouding of the sky," "the storm," or the "deluge." In the alchemical and Taoist traditions, this "storm" is said to occur after somebody has drunk the "Virgin's milk," which is the "Dragon's blood." In the myth of Mithras this phenomenon corresponds to the swarming of the impure animals.

It is unlikely that this experience could be entirely avoided, since it is the very last trial. But lo, after it has taken place, the sky opens up and the miracle continues. The last obscure obstacles are swept away by the rising flood of light and sound, illuminating what is latent, obscure, buried, contracted in the form of bodily organs, in gestures, in a powerful and cosmic enlightenment. This constitutes the ascent of the man-god to the heavenly spheres, to the hierarchy of the "seven planets."

Here the external dimension of things fades away, becomes inwardly bright, and then bums up. Everything becomes alive, awakens and is reborn from within; everything becomes symbolic, meaningful, radiant - the spirit of an unlimited and eternal body.

Beyond the seventh sphere lies the ULTIMATE, where there no longer is a "here" or a "there," but calmness, enlightenment and solitude as an infinite ocean. It is the dimension of the "Father," beyond which lies the dimension of the "Eagle," the apex, the substratum of the flaming, whirling world of powers.

This is the path and the challenge open to man, according to Mithraic wisdom, which competed with Christianity to inherit the legacy of the Roman empire. Once it was pushed back and relegated to the external, exoteric plane, the efficiency of the mystery wisdom was preserved in the occult tradition, but it continued to operate on Western historical events, exercising a subtle, invisible influence. Today, once again, it surfaces again beyond that world which science has "liberated" and which philosophy has "internalized." It re-emerges in attempts still very confused; in beings who have been broken under the weight of a truth too heavy for them, which however others will know how to take up and to affirm. It re-emerges in Nietzsche, in Weininger, in Braum, in the most radical trajectories of the most recent Idealism. It re-emerges in myself, in my yearning for the infinite, in the only value that I cherish: a regal and solar life, a life of light, freedom and power.

Modern Music's Primitivism & Ecstatic Possibilities
as a Challenge that Demands the Right Response

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] The enormous and spontaneous spread of jazz in the modern world shows that meanings no different from those of the physico-cerebral "classical" music, which superseded nineteenth-century bourgeois melodrama and pathos, have in fact thoroughly penetrated the younger generation. But there are two sides to this phenomenon. Those who once went crazy for the waltz or delighted in the treacherous and conventional paths of melodrama, now find themselves at ease surrounded by the convulsive-mechanical or abstract rhythms of recent jazz, both "hot" and "cool," which we must consider as more than a deviant, superficial vogue. We are facing a rapid and central transformation of the manner of listening, which is an integral part of that complex that defines the nature of the present. Jazz is undeniably an aspect of the resurfacing of the elemental in the modern world, bringing the bourgeois epoch to its dissolution. Naturally, the young men and women who like to dance to jazz today do so simply "for fun" and are not concerned with this; yet the change exists, its reality unprejudiced by its lack of recognition, since its true meaning and possibilities could only be noted from the particular point of view employed by us in all of our analyses.

Some have included jazz among the forms of compensation that today's man resorts to when faced with his practical, arid, and mechanical existence; jazz is supposed to provide him with raw contents of rhythm and elemental vitality. If there is any truth in this idea, we must consider the fact that to arrive at this, Western man did not create original forms, nor utilize elements of European folk music, which, for example in the rhythms of southeastern Europe (Romanian or Hungarian), has a fascination and an intensity comprising not only rhythm but also authentic dynamics. He instead looked for inspiration in the patrimony of the lower and more exotic races, the Negroes and mulattoes of the tropical and subtropical zones.

According to one of the scholars of Afro-Cuban music, Fernando Ortiz, all the primary elements of modern dance actually have these origins, including those whose origins are obscured by the fact that they have come through Latin America. One can deduce that modern man, especially North American man, has regressed to primitivism in choosing, assimilating, and developing a music of such primitive qualities as Negro music, which was even originally associated with dark forms of ecstasy.

In fact, it is known that African music, the origin of the principal rhythms of modern dances, has been one of the major techniques used to open people up to ecstasy and possession. Both Alfons Dauer and Ortiz have rightly seen the characteristic of this music as its polyrhythmic structure, developed in such a way that the static [on-beat] accents that mark the rhythm constantly act as ecstatic [off-beat] accents; hence the special rhythmic figures that generate a tension intended to "feed an uninterrupted ecstasy." The same structure has been preserved in all so-called syncopated jazz. These syncopations are like delays that tend to liberate energy or generate an impulse: a technique used in African rites to induce possession of the dancers by certain entities, the Orisha of the Yoruba or the Loa of the Voodoo of Haiti, who took over their personalities and "rode" them. This ecstatic potential still exists in jazz. But even here there is a process of dissociation, of abstract development of rhythmic forms separated from the whole to which they originally belonged. Thus, given the desacralization of the environment and the nonexistence of any institutional framework or corresponding ritual tradition, any suitable atmosphere or appropriate attitude, one cannot expect the specific effects of authentic African music with its evocative function; the effect always remains a diffuse and formless possession, primitive and collective in character.

This is very apparent in the latest forms, such as the music of the so-called beat groups. Here the obsessive reiteration of a rhythm prevails (similar to the use of the African tom-tom), causing paroxysmal contortions of the body and inarticulate screams in the performers, while the mass of the listeners joins in, hysterically shrieking and throwing themselves around, creating a collective climate similar to that of the possessions of savage ritual and certain Dervish sects, or the Macumba and the Negro religious revivals.

The frequent use of drugs both by performers of this music and by the enraptured young people is also significant, causing a true, frenetic

"crowd mentality," as in beat or hippie sessions in California involving tens of thousands of both sexes.

Here we are no longer concerned with the specific compensation that one can find in syncopated dance music as the popular counterpart and extension of the extremes reached, but not maintained, by modern symphonic music; we are concerned with the semi-ecstatic and hysterical beginnings of a formless, convoluted escapism, empty of content, a beginning and end in itself. Hence, it is completely inappropriate when some compare it to certain frenetic, collective, ancient rites, because the latter always had a sacred background.

Quite apart from similar extreme and aberrant forms, one can still consider the general problem of all these methods that provide elemental, ecstatic possibilities, which the differentiated man, not the masses, can use in order to feed that particular intoxication described earlier, which is the only nourishment he can existentially draw from an epoch of dissolution. The processes of recent times tend precisely toward these extremes; and whereas some of the present youth merely seek to dull their senses and to use certain experiences merely for extreme sensations' others can use such situations as a challenge that demands the right response: a reaction that arises from "being."

Modern Nationalism, the Masses & the Democracy of the Dead

(from "Revolt Against The Modern World")

[...] From what has been said previously it is possible to see that in modern society the opposite direction is prevailing, that is, the direction of regress toward the collective rather than progress toward the universal, with the single individual becoming increasingly unable to have a meaning other than as a function of something in which he ceases to have a personality. This becomes increasingly evident as the world of the Fourth Estate approaches. Thus, modern nationalism may be regarded as at best a transition phase.

It is necessary to distinguish between nationality and nationalism. The Middle Ages knew nationalities but not nationalisms. Nationality is a natural factor that encompasses a certain group of common elementary characteristics that are retained both in the hierarchical differentiation and in the hierarchical participation, which they do not oppose. Therefore, during the Middle Ages, castes, social bodies, and orders were articulated within various nationalities, and while the types of the warrior, noble, merchant, and artisan conformed to the characteristics of this or of that nation, these articulations represented at the same time wider, international units. Hence, the possibility for the members of the same caste who came from different nations to understand each other better than the members of different castes within the same nation.

Modern nationalism represents, with regard to this, a movement in the opposite direction. Modern nationalism is not based on a natural unity, but on an artificial and centralizing one. The need for this type of unity was increasingly felt at the same time as the natural and healthy sense of nationality was lost and as individuals approached the state of pure quantity, of being merely the masses, after every authentic tradition and qualitative articulation was destroyed. Nationalism acts upon these masses through myths and suggestions that are likely to galvanize them, awaken elementary instincts in them, flatter them with the perspectives and fancies of supremacy, exclusivism, and power. Regardless of its myths, the substance of modern nationalism is not an ethnos but a demos, and its prototype always remains the plebeian one produced by the French Revolution.

This is why nationalism has a double face. It accentuates and elevates to the state of absolute value a particularistic principle; therefore, the possibilities of mutual understanding and cooperation between nations are reduced to a bare minimum, without even considering the forms of leveling guaranteed by modern civilization. What seems to continue here is the same tendency through which the arising of national states corresponded to the disintegration of the European ecumene. It is well known that in Europe during the nineteenth century, nationalism was synonymous with revolution and acted in the precise sense of a dissolution of the surviving supernational organisms and a weakening of the political principle of "legitimate" sovereignty in the traditional sense of the word. Yet, when considering the relationships between the whole and the single individual as personality, what emerges in nationalism is an opposite aspect, namely, the cumulative and collectivizing element. In the context of modern nationalism what emerges is the previously mentioned inversion; the nation, the homeland, becomes the primary element in terms of being a self-sustaining entity that requires from the individual belonging to it an unconditional dedication, as if it were a moral and not merely a natural and "political" entity. Even culture stops being the support for the formation and elevation of the person and becomes essentially relevant only by virtue of its national character. Thus in the most radical forms of nationalism, the liberal ideal and the ideal of "neutral culture" undergo a crisis and are regarded with suspicion, though from the opposite perspective to the one in which liberalism and the neutral, secular, and apolitical culture appeared as a degeneration or as a crumbling in comparison to previous organic civilizations.

Even when nationalism speaks of "tradition," it has nothing to do with what used to go by that name in ancient civilizations; it is rather a myth or fictitious continuity based on a minimum common denominator that consists in the mere belonging to a given group. Through the concept of "tradition," nationalism aims at consolidating a collective dimension by placing behind the individual the mythical, deified, and collectivized unity of all those who preceded him. In this sense, Chesterton was right to call this type of tradition "the democracy of the dead." Here the dimension of transcendence, or of what is superior to history, is totally lacking.

According to these aspects, it can be said that modern nationalism on the one hand confirms the renunciation of the pursuit of the upwards-oriented

direction and the unification through what is supernatural and potentially universal, while on the other hand it distinguishes itself only by virtue of a mere difference of degree from the anonymity proper to the ideal of the Fourth Estate with its "Internationals," bent, as a matter of principle, on perverting every notion of homeland and of the national state. In reality, wherever the people have become sovereign and the king or the leader is no longer considered as being "from above," or to be ruling "by God's grace," but instead "by the will of the nation" (even where the expression "to rule by God's grace" has been preserved, it amounts to an empty formula) - it is precisely at this point that the abyss that separates a political organism of a traditional type from communism is virtually overcome - the fracture has occurred, all the values have shifted and been turned upside down; at this point one can only wait for the final stage to be ushered in. Thus, it is more than for mere tactical purposes that the leaders of world subversion in the last form, as it has been embodied in Soviet communism, have as their main goal the excitement, nourishing, and supporting of nationalism even where nationalism, by virtue of being anticommunist, should at least in principle turn against them. They see far away, just like those who employed nationalism for their own purposes during the early revolution (i.e., liberalism) when they said "nation" but really meant "antitradition" or the denial of the principle of true sovereignty. They recognize the collective potential of nationalism, which beyond contingent antitheses will finally dispose of the organisms that it controls.

Hence, the difference in degree between nationalism and the tendencies of a democratic and communitarian character that oppose the forces of particularism and spirit of division inherent in nationalism. In these tendencies the regressive phenomenon that is at the foundation of modern nationalism is also visible; at work in it is the impulse toward a wider agglomerate, leveled on a global scale. As Julian Benda said, the last perspective is that humanity, and not just a fraction of it, will take itself as the object of its cult. There is today a trend toward universal brotherhood; this brotherhood, far from abolishing the nationalist spirit and its particularisms and pride, will eventually become its supreme form, as the nation will be called Man and God will be regarded either as an enemy (1) or as an "inoperative fiction." When mankind becomes unified in an immense enterprise and accustomed to organized production, technology, division of labor, and "prosperity," despising any free activity oriented to transcendence, it will achieve what in similar currents is conceived as the ultimate goal of the true civilizing effort.

(1) Proudhon had already declared that the true remedy does not consist in identifying mankind with God, but in proving that God, if he exists, is mankind's sworn enemy.

One final consideration concerning modern nationalism: while on the one hand it corresponds to a construction and an artificial entity, on the other hand, through the power of the myths and the confusing ideas that are evoked in order to hold together and galvanize a given human group, this entity remains open to influences that make it act according to the general plan of subversion. Modern nationalisms, with their intransigence, blind egoism and crude will to power, their antagonisms, social unrest

and the wars they have generated have truly been the instruments for the completion of a destructive process: the shift from the age of the Third Estate to that of the Fourth Estate; in so doing they have dug their own graves. [...]

National Socialist State Based on an Order: an Adequate Foundation

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] As is generally known, the expression 'Third Reich' was not coined by Hitler, who rather borrowed it from the writers of the 'Conservative Revolution'. Such writers, however, had vested the expression with a spiritual and traditionalist meaning by referring to ideas not dissimilar to my own; hence, some of these writers, who later came to oppose Hitler's regime, perceived the Nazi use of the expression and of the symbolism of the Third Reich as a contaminating usurpation. By contrast, a secret front of the Right sought to gradually trace the idea back to its original significance: it is in this respect that my own work might have proven useful. In theory, some of the principles of National Socialism might have provided an adequate foundation; this was particularly the case with the Ordensstaatsgedanke or National Socialist idea of a state based not on a democratic 'leadership' but on an Order - an elite founded on an ideal, a tradition, an austere discipline and a common lifestyle. [...]

Nature as a School of Distance, mere Facts without Meaning, Finality, or Intention

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] Also for us, it is a matter of a human type whom nature no longer interests by offering him what is "artistic," rare, characteristic; he who no longer seeks in nature the "beauty" that merely feeds confused nostalgias and speaks to fantasy. For this human type, there can be no landscape more beautiful than another, but some landscapes can be more distant, boundless, calm, cool, harsh, and primordial than others. He hears the language of things of the world not among trees, brooks, beautiful gardens, before oleographic sunsets and romantic moonlight, but rather in deserts, rocks, steppes, glaciers, murky Nordic fjords, the implacable, tropical sun, great ocean currents - in fact, in everything primordial and inaccessible. It naturally follows that the man with this sentiment of nature relates to it more actively - almost by absorbing its own pure, perceived force - than in a vague, lax, and rambling contemplation.

If for the bourgeois generation nature was a kind of idyllic Sunday interlude of small-town life, and if for the latest generation it is the stage for acting out its vacuous, invasive, and contaminating vulgarity,

it is for our differentiated man a school of objectivity and distance; it is something fundamental in his sense of existence, exhibiting an absolute character. At this point one can clearly speak of a nature that in its elementarity is the great world where the stone and steel panoramas of the metropolis, the endless avenues, the functional complexes of industrial areas are on the same level, for example, as great, solitary forests as symbols of a fundamental austerity, objectivity, and impersonality.

With regard to the problems of inner orientation in our epoch, I have always valued ideas present in traditional esoteric doctrines. This also applies to what I have just said. The liberation of nature from the human, the access to it through the language of silence and the inanimate seems congenial to one who would turn the objective, destructive processes of the modern world to his own advantage. But the direction is no different from that which schools of traditional wisdom, like Zen, knew through a real cleansing and transparency of the glance or an opening of the eye, an enlightening revelation of the consciousness that has overcome the fetters of the physical I, of the person, and his values.

The result here is an experience that already belongs to a different level from that of ordinary consciousness. It does not exactly concern the matter of this book, but it is still interesting to point out its relationship with the vision of the world centered on free immanence, which was mentioned in an earlier chapter (in which a fleeting allusion to Zen itself was made) and which I now reconsider as the limit of a new realism. Ancient tradition has a saying: "The infinitely distant is the return." Among the maxims of Zen that point in the same direction is the statement that the "great revelation," acquired through a series of mental and spiritual crises, consists in the recognition that "no one and nothing 'extraordinary' exists in the beyond"; only the real exists. Reality is, however, lived in a state in which "there is no subject of the experience nor any object that is experienced," and under the sign of a type of absolute presence, "the immanent making itself transcendent and the transcendent immanent." The teaching is that at the point at which one seeks the Way, one finds oneself further from it, the same being valid for the perfection and "realization" of the self. The cedar in the courtyard, a cloud casting its shadow on the hills, falling rain, a flower in bloom, the monotonous sound of waves: all these "natural" and banal facts can suggest absolute illumination, the satori. As mere facts they are without meaning, finality, or intention, but as such they have an absolute meaning. Reality appears this way, in the pure state of "things being as they are." The moral counterpart is indicated in sayings such as: "The pure and immaculate ascetic does not enter nirvana, and the monk who breaks the rules does not go to hell," or: "You have no liberation to seek from bonds, because you have never been bound." [...]

New Europe must be Based on Warrior Asceticism
& Direct - Clear - Loyal Relations
Based on Fidelity & Honor

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] Warrior spirit is characterized by direct, clear and loyal relations, based on fidelity and honor and a sound instinct for the various dignities, which it can well distinguish: it opposes everything which is impersonal and trivial. In every civilization based on warrior spirit all order depends on these elements, not on legal paragraphs and abstract 'positivist' norms. And these are also the elements which can organize the forces, aroused by the experience of combat and consecrated by victory, into a new unity. That is why, in a certain sense, the type of warrior organization which was peculiar to some aspects of the feudal Roman-Germanic civilization can give us an idea of what, perhaps, will work, in an adapted form, for the new Europe for which today we fight. In dealing with relationships, not only man-to-man, but also State-to-State and race-to-race, it is necessary to be able to conceive again of that obedience which does not humiliate but exalts, that command or leadership which commits one to superiority and a precise responsibility. Instead of the legislation of an abstract 'international law' comprising peoples of any and all sorts, an organic right of European peoples based on these direct relationships must come about.

Suum cuique. This Aryan and Roman principle defines the true concept of justice on the international plane as on the personal and is intimately connected to the warrior vision of life: everyone must have a precise sense of their natural and legitimate place in a well-articulated hierarchical whole, must feel pride in this place and adapt themselves to it perfectly. To this end, in fact, the 'ascetic' element also comprised in the warrior spirit will have a particular importance. To realize a new European order various conditions are necessary: but there is no doubt that in the first place must be the 'asceticism' inherent in warrior discipline: the ability to see reality, suppressing every particularistic haughtiness, every irrational affection, every ephemeral pride; scorn for comfortable life and for all materialistic ideas of well-being; a style of simplicity, audacity and conscious force, in the common effort, on all planes.

New Order's Men of a Silent Revolution
vs. Activism, Terrorist or Clandestine Actions and Agitators or Politicos

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] As for a certain activism, I have often urged against furnishing arms to the adversary in that way, since no serious person thinks that there is any basis in Italy, given the international situation, for a real revolution or an antidemocratic coup d'état. I have not only written this in a letter that the Questura has confiscated (but which it has taken care not to produce), but also elsewhere: for instance, in an article for *Il Nazionale* entitled "Trarre partito dall'ostacolo" [Taking Advantage of the Obstacle]. There I said that the increased severity in antifascist repression intended by the new drafting of Scelba's law ought to

encourage the salutary renunciation of external and fairly anachronistic forms of expression and activism, in favor of concentration on a serious doctrinal preparation.

In general—since there has been talk of being an "ideological accessory"—in none of my writings has there been any incitement, even indirect or involuntary, to terrorist or clandestine actions. The Questura's statement has tried to establish an absurd relationship between the constitution of the "Legione nera" and a point in my booklet *Orientamenti*, where it is said that the tragic character of our times demands a sort of "Legionairism." But I specify exactly what that means: legionairism not as an organization, but as a spirit, an inward attitude. Here are the exact words: "The attitude of him who can choose the hardest life, who is able to continue fighting even when he knows that the battle is materially lost, and who holds to the ancient precept that loyalty is mightier than fire" (*Orientamenti*, pp. 5-6). The same meaning is expressed further on (p. 22), speaking of the "man standing upright among the ruins." It concerns nothing other than an ethical, heroic, and spiritual attitude. Misunderstandings are not possible, and where they have occurred, I cannot take responsibility for them.

I have never encouraged the formation of parties—I deny the very concept of the party—or of subversive movements. This is how I indicate what is to be done (p. 6): "A silent revolution, proceeding in the depths, where the premises are created, first inwardly and in the individual, of that Order which, when the time is ripe, will also manifest externally, supplanting like lightning the forms and forces of a world of decadence and corruption." Permit me to cite two other passages. On page 5: "To get up again, to arise inwardly, to give oneself a form, to create an order and a direction within oneself," instead of "furthering the demagoguery and materialism of the masses," taking a position—I say just that—"against those who can think only in terms of programs, organizational and partisan problems." On pp. 6-7: "In the face of a slovenly world, whose principles are 'Who'll make you do that?' or 'First the belly, then morality,' or again 'These aren't times that allow one the luxury to demonstrate character,' or finally 'I've got a family'—one can retort: 'We cannot be otherwise than we are: this is our life, this is our being.' Whatever of positive value that can be achieved today or tomorrow will not be thanks to the abilities of agitators or politicians, but through the natural prestige and recognition of men who are equal to it, and thereby become the guarantors for their ideas." After exhorting them to maintain this level of high ethical tension despite this whole ruined world, I am said to be—in the exact words of the Questura—a "malefic and shady character," instigator of fanatical youth! [...]

Nietzsche: Confused Thirst for Eternity that Runs Through his Works
can be Retained of his Views

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] Later we shall examine the specific themes of existentialism. For now, we shall see what can be retained of Nietzsche's views, not as a nihilist but as one who thought that he had left nihilism behind him, and thus created the premises for a higher existence and a new state of health.

Once the idols have fallen, good and evil have been surpassed, along with all the surrogates of the old God, and the mist has lifted from one's eyes, nothing is left to Nietzsche but "this world," life, the body; he remains "faithful to the earth." Thereupon, as we know, the theme of the superman appears. "God is dead, now we want the superman to come." The superman will be the meaning of the earth, the justification of existence. Man is "a bridge, not a goal," "a rope stretched between the brute and the superman, a rope stretched above an abyss." This is not the place for a deep analysis of the manifold and divergent themes that crystallize in Nietzsche's work around this central motif. The essential can be spelled out as follows.

The negative, destructive phase of Nietzsche's thought ends with the affirmation of immanence: all transcendent values, systems of ends and of higher truths, are interpreted as functions of life. In its turn, the essence of life - and more generally of nature - is the will to power. The superman is also defined as a function of the will to power and domination. One can see from this that Nietzsche's nihilism stops halfway. It sets up a new table of values, including a good and an evil. It presents a new ideal with dogmatic affirmation, whereas in reality this ideal is only one of many that could take shape in "life," and which is not in fact justified in and of itself, without a particular choice and without faith in it. The fact that the fixed point of reference set up beyond nihilism lacks a true foundation so long as one insists on pure immanence is already apparent in the part of Nietzsche's thought that deals with historical criticism and sociology. The entire world of "higher" values is interpreted there as reflecting a "decadence." But at the same time these values are seen as the weapons of a hidden will to power on the part of a certain human group, which has used them to hamper another group whose life and ideals resemble those of the superman. The instinct of decadence itself is then presented as a special variety of the will to power. Now, it is obvious that in function of a mere will to power, all distinctions vanish: there are no more super-men or sheep-men, neither affirmers nor negators of life. There is only a variety of techniques, of means (far from being reducible to sheer physical force), tending to make one human class or another prevail; means that are indiscriminately called good in proportion to their success. If in life and the history of civilization there exist phases of rise and decline, phases of creation and destruction and decadence, what authorizes us to ascribe value to one rather than to the others? Why should decadence be an evil? It is all life, and all justifiable in terms of life, if this is truly taken in its irrational, naked reality, outside any theology or teleology, as Nietzsche would have wished. Even "anti-nature" and "violence against life" enter into it. Once again, all firm, ground gives way.

Nietzsche moreover wanted to restore its "innocence" to becoming by freeing it from all finality and intentionality, so as to free man and

let him walk on his own feet - the same Nietzsche who had justly criticized and rejected evolutionism and Darwinism because he could see that the higher figures and types of life are only sporadic and fortuitous cases. They are positions that man gains only in order to lose them, and they create no continuity because they consist of beings who are more than usually exposed to danger and destruction. The philosopher himself ends with a finalistic concession when, in order to give meaning to present-day humanity, he proposes the hypothetical future man in the guise of the superman: a goal worth dedicating oneself to, and even sacrificing oneself and dying for. Mutatis mutandis, things here are not very different from the Marxist-communist eschatology, in which the mirage of a future human condition after the worldwide revolution serves to give meaning to everything inflicted on the man of today in the areas controlled by this ideology. This is a flagrant contradiction of the demands of a life that is its own meaning. The second point is that the pure affirmation of life does not necessarily coincide with the will to power in the strict, qualitative sense, nor with the affirmation of the superman.

Thus Nietzsche's solution is only a pseudo-solution. A true nihilism does not spare even the doctrine of the superman. What is left, if one wants to be radical and follow a line of strict coherence, and what we can accept in our investigations, is the idea that Nietzsche expressed through the symbol of the eternal return. It is the affirmation, now truly unconditional, of all that is and of all that one is, of one's own nature and one's own situation. It is the attitude of one whose self-affirmation and self-identity come from the very roots of his being; who is not scared but exalted by the prospect that for an indefinite repetition of identical cosmic cycles he has been what he is, and will be again, innumerable times. Naturally we are dealing with nothing more than a myth, which has the simple, pragmatic value of a test of strength. But there is another view that in fact leads beyond the world of becoming and toward an eternalization of the being. Nietzsche differs little from Neoplatonism when he says: "For everything to return is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being." And also: "To impose the character of being upon becoming is the supreme test of power." At its base, this leads to an opening beyond immanence unilaterally conceived, and toward the feeling that "all things have been baptized in the font of eternity and beyond good and evil." The same thing was taught in the world of Tradition; and it is incontestable that a confused thirst for eternity runs through Nietzsche's works, even opening to certain momentary ecstasies. One recalls Zarathustra invoking "the joy that wills the eternity of everything, a deep eternity" like the heavens above, "pure, profound abyss of light."

Nietzsche & Modern Thinkers: Incidental & Opportune References to Them could have been Dispensed with Altogether

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] I repeat here what I have said already: that it is only for incidental and opportune reasons that I have taken into consideration themes from modern thinkers, especially Nietzsche. They serve to create a link with the problems that preoccupy Europeans who have already witnessed the arrival of nihilism and of the world without God, and have sought to go beyond these in a positive way. It must be emphasized that such references could have been dispensed with altogether.

Nihilism, Nietzsche
& Ride the Tiger's Individual Possessing Two Natures:
One 'Personal' and One Transcendent

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] These preliminary remarks led to the more general section of Ride the Tiger, entitled 'In the World Where God Is Dead'. In this section, I described the various phases that modern nihilism has gone through following the severing of all true bonds between man and the transcendent. Here, morality can be seen to lose all superior legitimacy - the surrogate morality based on the 'autonomy' of reason soon leading to social or utilitarian morality, and the process progressing until the existence of any genuine principle has been denied. As a counterpart to this process, man experiences the spiritual 'trauma' of his growing awareness of the absurdness and irrationality of existence: a feeling that characterizes significant segments of the younger generations in their more anarchic, feverish and desperate manifestations. Likewise, I felt the need to denounce the nihilism implied by the economic myth prevalent both in the 'West' (the idea of prosperity) and in the 'East' (Marxism): a myth merely serving as a degrading an-aesthetic to prevent the spread of existential crises in a world where God is dead.

In the same chapter, and for the last time, I examined Nietzsche, whose thought remains as valid today as it ever was. The central question Nietzsche raised was: What shall come after European nihilism? Or more exactly: Where shall it be possible to find an adequate meaning for life after having experienced nihilism - an awareness destined to produce irrevocable and irreversible results?

I do not wish to dwell on my analysis of the existential problem posed by Nietzsche in any detail. After all, if Nietzsche's definition of the problem is clear, the solutions he suggested are both hazy and dangerous - particularly in the case of his theory of the Übermensch and the will to power, and his naturalistic, almost physical praise of 'life'. To 'be oneself' and to follow one's own law as an absolute law can certainly be a positive and legitimate option - or, rather, the only remaining option: but this is true only in the case of the human type I addressed in Ride the Tiger: an individual possessing two natures, one 'personal' and one transcendent. The idea of 'being oneself', therefore - of achieving self-realization and of severing all bonds - will have a different meaning according to what nature it is that expresses it. Transcendence ('that which is more than life'), understood as a central and conscious element

present within immanence ('life'), provides the foundation for the existential path I outlined - a path that includes elements such as: 'Apollonian Dionysism' (i.e., an opening towards the most intense and diverse aspects of life, here experienced through the lucid inebriation brought about by the presence of a superior principle), impersonal activism (pure action that transcends good and evil, prospects of success or failure, happiness and unhappiness) and the challenging of oneself without any fear that the 'I' might suffer (internal invulnerability). The origin of some of these ideas should be self-evident to those who have followed my discussion so far.

In *Ride the Tiger*, I attributed Nietzsche's more ambiguous views, as well as various individual traits of his character and his fate, to the awakening of a form of transcendence that was never consciously and actively embraced by Nietzsche. Such a situation inevitably leads to tragedy and distortion, if not utter destruction. A similar case, after all, is that of existentialism, which I discussed in a different section of the book - existentialism, however, understood not as a philosophical system, but as a distinguishing trait of the times we live in. Again, the ground of existentialism is essentially a passive form of transcendence that is experienced 'unwillingly': here, the freedom achieved by the means of nihilism can be seen to turn against the 'I' - to the point that it was described by Sartre as something to which we are 'condemned'. This process engenders disgust and an increased feeling of existential absurdity and non-involvement: a negative feeling of non-involvement, which is not marked by the calm presence of a superior principle. It is only natural, therefore, that existentialism has proven incapable of maintaining its position. In *Ride the Tiger*, I spoke of both the 'dead end' and 'collapse' of existentialism: on the one hand, a 'dead end' that - as in the case of Heidegger - leads one to envisage 'living to die' as the sole meaning of life - death being regarded as the sole means towards 'de-conditioning' (as if any death might serve such a purpose!); on the other hand, a 'collapse' that leads individuals - such as Jaspers and Marcel (among many others) - to turn to religious worship.

What I considered next in the book was the ambiguity of the whole process that began with Humanism and the Renaissance. Naturally, from the perspective of the philosophy of civilization, this process is entirely negative: I here confirmed the points I had raised in *Revolt Against the Modern World*, and which are accepted by all traditionalists. However, I also pointed out that this very process might be seen as putting to the test certain individuals whom it historically affects with its nihilism (the test of fire or emptiness, as it were): for nothingness and freedom can either be the cause of inner defeat, or provide the incentive for the manifestation of a hidden and superior dimension of being. In the latter case, new inner developments occur, such as the transcendence of both theism and atheism: for the individual comes to realize that the only god who 'is dead' is the humanized god of morality and devotion, and not the god of metaphysics and traditional inner doctrines. [...]

Occult War

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

Various causes have been adduced to explain the crisis that has affected and still affects the life of modern peoples: historical, social, socioeconomic, political, moral, and cultural causes, according to different perspectives. The part played by each of these causes should not be denied. However, we need to ask a higher and essential question: are these always the first causes and do they have an inevitable character like those causes found in the material world? Do they supply an ultimate explanation or, in some cases, is it necessary to identify influences of a higher order, which may cause what has occurred in the West to appear very suspicious, and which, beyond the multiplicity of individual aspects, suggest that there is the same logic at work?

The concept of occult war must be defined within the context of the dilemma. The occult war is a battle that is waged imperceptibly by the forces of global subversion, with means and in circumstances ignored by current historiography. The notion of occult war belongs to a three-dimensional view of history: this view does not regard as essential the two superficial dimensions of time and space (which include causes, facts, and visible leaders) but rather emphasizes the dimension of depth, or the "subterranean" dimension in which forces and influences often act in a decisive manner, and which, more often than not, cannot be reduced to what is merely human, whether at an individual or a collective level.

Having said that, it is necessary to specify the meaning of the term subterranean. We should not think, in this regard, of a dark and irrational background which stands in relation to the known forces of history as the unconscious stands to consciousness, in the way the latter relationship is discussed in the recently developed "Depth Psychology." If anything, we can talk about the unconscious only in regard to those who, according to the three-dimensional view, appear to be history's objects rather than its subjects, since in their thoughts and conduct they are scarcely aware of the influences which they obey and the goals that they contribute toward achieving. In these people, the center falls more in the unconscious and the pre-conscious than in the clear reflected consciousness, no matter what they - who are often men of action and ideologues - believe. Considering this relation, we can say that the most decisive actions of the occult war take place in the human unconscious. However, if we consider the true agents of history in the special aspects we are now discussing, things are otherwise: here we cannot talk of the subconscious or the unconscious, since we are dealing with intelligent forces that know very well what they want and what are the means most suited to achieve their objectives.

The third dimension of history should not be diluted in the fog of abstract philosophical or sociological concepts, but should rather be thought of as a "backstage" dimension where specific "intelligences" are at work.

An investigation of the secret history that aspires to be positivist and scientific should not be too lofty or removed from reality. However, it is necessary to assume as the ultimate reference point a dualistic scheme

not dissimilar from the one found in an older tradition. Catholic historiography used to regard history not only as a mechanism of natural, political, economic, and social causes, but also as the unfolding of divine Providence, to which hostile forces are opposed. These forces are sometimes referred to in a moralistic fashion as "forces of evil," or in a theological fashion as the "forces of the Anti-Christ." Such a view has a positive content, provided it is purified and emphasized by bringing it to a less religious and more metaphysical plane, as was done in Classical and Indo-European antiquity: forces of the cosmos against forces of chaos. To the former correspond everything that is form, order, law, spiritual hierarchy, and tradition in the higher sense of the word; to the latter correspond every influence that disintegrates, subverts, degrades, and promotes the predominance of the inferior over the superior, matter over spirit, quantity over quality. This is what can be said in regard to the ultimate reference points of the various influences that act upon the realm of tangible causes, behind known history. These must be taken into account, though with some prudence. Let me repeat: aside from this necessary metaphysical background, let us never lose sight of concrete history.

[...] When measured against that of their disguised opponents, the mentality of the great majority of modern men of action appears to be quite primitive. The latter concentrate their energies on what is tangible and "concrete", and are unable to perceive the interplay of concordant actions and reactions, causes and effects, beyond a very limited and almost always coarsely materialistic horizon.

The deeper causes of history - here we can refer to both those that act in a negative sense and those that may act in an equilibrating and positive sense - operate prevalently through what can be called "imponderable factors," to use an image borrowed from natural science. These causes are responsible for almost undetectable ideological, social and political changes, which eventually produce remarkable effects: they are like the first cracks in a layer of snow that eventually produce an avalanche. These causes almost never act in a direct manner, but instead bestow to some existing processes an adequate direction that leads to the designated goal. Thus, men and groups who believe they are pursuing something willed by themselves become the means through which something different is realized and made possible: it is precisely in this that a super-ordained influence and meaning are revealed. This was noticed by Wundt, who talked about the "heterogeneity of the effects", and by Hegel as well, who introduced the notion of the *List der Vernunft* (cunning of reason) in his philosophy of history; however, neither of these thinkers was able to fruitfully develop his intuitions. Unlike what happens in the domain of physical phenomena, an insightful historian encounters several instances where the "causal" explanation (in the deterministic, physical sense) is unsatisfactory, because things do not add up and the total does not equal the sum of the apparent historical factors - almost as if someone adding five, three, and two ended up not with ten, but with fifteen or seven. This differential, especially when it appears as a differential between what is willed and what has really happened, or between ideas, principles, and programs on the one hand and their effective consequences in history on the other, offers the most valuable material for the investigation of the secret causes of history.

Methodologically speaking, we must be careful to prevent valid insights from degenerating into fantasies and superstition, and not develop the tendency to see an occult background everywhere and at all costs. In this regard, every assumption we make must have the character of what are called "working hypotheses" in scientific research - as when something is admitted provisionally, thus allowing the gathering and arranging of a group of apparently isolated facts, only to confer on them a character not of hypothesis but of truth when, at the end of a serious inductive effort, the data converge in validating the original assumption. Every time an effect outlasts and transcends its tangible causes, a suspicion should arise, and a positive or negative influence behind the stages should be perceived. A problem is posited, but in analyzing it and seeking its solution, prudence must be exercised. The fact that those who have ventured in this direction have not restrained their wild imaginations has discredited what could have been a science, the results of which could hardly be overestimated. This too meets the expectations of the hidden enemy.

This is all I have to say concerning the general premises proper to a new three-dimensional study of history. Now let us return to what I said earlier on. After considering the state of society and modern civilization, one should ask if this is not a specific case that requires the application of this method; in other words, one should ask whether some situations of real crisis and radical subversion in the modern world can be satisfactorily explained through "natural" and spontaneous processes, or whether we need to refer to something that has been concerted, namely a still unfolding plan, devised by forces hiding in the shadows.

In this particular domain, many red flags have gone up: too many elements have concurred to alarm the less superficial observers. In the middle of the past century, Disraeli wrote these significant and often quoted words: "The world is governed by people entirely different from the ones imagined by those who are unable to see behind the scenes." Malinsky and De Poncins, when considering the phenomenon of revolution, have remarked that in our age, where it is commonly acknowledged that every disease of the individual organism is caused by bacteria, people pretended that the diseases of the social body - revolutions and disorder - are spontaneous, self-generated phenomena rather than the effect of invisible agents, acting in society the way bacteria and pathogenic germs act in the organism of the individual [...]

On Catholicism

(from "Revolt Against the Modern World")

[...] In order to follow the development of forces that shaped the Western world, it is necessary to briefly consider Catholicism. Catholicism developed through (a) the rectification of various extremist features of primitive Christianity; (b) the organization of a ritual, dogmatic, and

symbolic corpus beyond the mere mystical, soteriological element; and (c) the absorption and adaptation of doctrinal and organizational elements that were borrowed from the Roman world and from classical civilization in general. This is how Catholicism at times displayed "traditional" features, which nevertheless should not deceive us: that which in Catholicism has a truly traditional character is not typically Christian and that which in Catholicism is specifically Christian can hardly be considered traditional. Historically, despite all the efforts that were made to reconcile heterogeneous and contradictory elements, and despite the work of absorption and adaptation on a large scale, Catholicism always betrays the spirit of lunar, priestly civilizations and thus it continues, in yet another form, the antagonistic action of the Southern influences, to which it offered a real organization through the Church and her hierarchy.

This becomes evident when we examine the development of the principle of authority that was claimed by the Church. During the early centuries of the Christianized empire and during the Byzantine period, the Church still appeared to be subordinated to imperial authority; at Church councils the bishops left the last word to the ruler not only in disciplinary but also in doctrinal matters. Gradually, a shift occurred to the belief in the equality of the two powers of Church and empire; both institutions came to be regarded as enjoying a supernatural authority and a divine origin. With the passage of time we find in the Carolingian ideal the principle according to which the king is supposed to rule over both clergy and the people on the one hand, while on the other hand the idea was developed according to which the royal function was compared to that of the body and the priestly function to that of the soul; thereby the idea of the equality of the two powers was implicitly abandoned, thus preparing the way for the real inversion of relations.

By analogy, if in every rational being the soul is the principle that decides what the body will do, how could one think that those who admitted to having authority only in matters of social and political concern should not be subordinated to the Church, to whom they willingly recognized the exclusive right over and direction of souls? Thus, the Church eventually disputed and regarded as tantamount to heresy and a prevarication dictated by pride that doctrine of the divine nature and origin of regality; it also came to regard the ruler as a mere layman equal to all other men before God and his Church, and a mere official invested by mortal beings with the power to rule over others in accordance with natural law. According to the Church, the ruler should receive from the ecclesiastical hierarchy the spiritual element that prevents his government from becoming the *civitas diaboli*. Boniface VIII, who did not hesitate to ascend to the throne of Constantine with a sword, crown, and scepter and to declare: "I am Caesar, I am the Emperor," embodies the logical conclusion of a theocratic, Southern upheaval in which the priest was entrusted with both evangelical swords (the spiritual and the temporal); the imperium itself came to be regarded as a beneficium conferred by the pope to somebody, who in return owed to the Church the same vassalage and obedience a feudal vassal owes the person who has invested him. However, since the spirituality that the head of the Roman Church incarnated remained in its essence that of the "servants of God," we can say that far from representing the restoration of the

primordial and solar unity of the two powers, Guelphism merely testifies to how Rome had lost its ancient tradition and how it came to represent the opposite principle and the triumph of the Southern weltanschauung in Europe. In the confusion that was beginning to affect even the symbols, the Church, who on the one hand claimed for herself the symbol of the sun vis-à-vis the empire (to which she attributed the symbol of the moon), on the other hand employed the symbol of the Mother to refer to herself and considered the emperor as one of her "children." Thus, the Guelph ideal of political supremacy marked the return to the ancient gynaeocratic vision in which the authority, superiority, and privilege of spiritual primacy was accorded to the maternal principle over the male principle, which was then associated with the temporal and ephemeral reality. [...]

On Homosexuality, Plato's Inappropriateness
& Sex at the Level of "Mutual Masturbation"

(from "Eros and the Mysteries of Love")

[...] Homosexuality is so widespread a practice that it cannot be overlooked in a doctrine of sex. Goethe wrote that "it is as old as mankind and therefore can be said to be a part of nature although it is contrary to nature." If it is "an enigma which appears more mysterious the more we attempt to analyze it scientifically" (Ivan Bloch), it also forms a complex problem from the point of view of the metaphysics of sex as formulated in the foregoing pages.

We have already mentioned that in his theory of eros Plato often referred not only to heterosexual love but also to love for epheboi and male paramours. Now let us consider "eros" in those of its exalted forms that are linked to the aesthetic factor, according to the Platonic sequence already mentioned. We should pass gradually from beauty as seen by a given being to rapture that can be aroused by incorporeal beauty not linked to any particular person: divine beauty in an abstract sense. There is no real problem if the accidental starting point is a being of the same sex. The word "uranism," which some use to mean homosexuality, springs from Plato's distinction between Aphrodite Urania and Aphrodite Pandemia; Aphrodite Urania is the goddess of a noble love which is not carnal and unconcerned with procreation, as is the love which has woman as its object. It may be that pederasty (paidon eros, or love of boys) had in the beginning and to a certain degree a noble character when it was honored by ancient writers and poets and practiced by important personages. But it is now enough to read the last pages of the Symposium and the speech of Alcibiades in order to realize how little this eros remained "Platonic" in Hellas and how it also led increasingly to carnal developments as the ancient customs in Greece and Rome declined.

If, therefore, we assume homosexuality to conform to these carnal conditions or to correspond to ordinary sexual relations between man and woman, then we may well describe it as a deviation, not from a conventional or ethical point of view, but precisely from the standpoint of the metaphysics of sex.

It is inappropriate to apply, as Plato does, the metaphysical meaning made evident by the myth of the hermaphrodite to homosexual love or to love as practiced between pederasts or lesbians. In fact, in the case of such love, it is no longer allowable to speak of the impulse of the male or female principle, as present in the primordial being, to be reunited. The mythical being of our origin would, in such a case, have to be not hermaphroditic but homogeneous and of one sex only, either all man (in the case of pederasts) or all woman (in the case of lesbians), and the two lovers would seek to unite themselves as simple parts of one and the same substance. Thus the essential, which gives each myth its whole value, loses its meaning, namely, the idea of the polarity and the complementary nature of the two sexes as the basis of the magnetism of love and of a "transcendancy" in eros, and of the blinding and destructive revelation of the One.

To find an explanation it is necessary to descend to a lower level and examine various empirical possibilities. Normally two forms of homosexuality are distinguished in sexology: One has an inborn, natural character, whereas the other has an acquired character and is conditioned by psychological and sociological factors influenced by a person's environment. But in the second of these forms it is necessary to give a proper value to the distinction between forms having a vicious nature and forms that presuppose a latent predisposition which is aroused under given circumstances. It is necessary to set forth this condition because, given the same situation, different types behave in different ways and may not become homosexual. It is important, however, not to consider the inborn form of homosexuality in a rigid way but to allow a certain possibility of variation.

In natural homosexuality or in the predisposition to it, the most straightforward explanation is provided by what we said earlier about the differing levels of sexual development and about the fact that the process of sexual development in its physical and, even more so, in its psychic aspects can be incomplete. In that way, the original bisexual nature is surpassed to a lesser extent than in a "normal" human being, the characteristics of one sex not being predominant over those of the other sex to the same extent (see chapter 1). Next we must deal with what M. Hirschfeld called the "intermediate sexual forms." In cases of this kind (for instance, when a person who is nominally a man is only 60 percent male), it is impossible that the erotic attraction based on the polarity of the sexes in heterosexuality - which is much stronger the more the man is male and the woman is female - can also be born between individuals who, according to the birth registry and as regards only the so-called primary sexual characteristics, belong to the same sex, because in actual fact they are "intermediate forms." In the case of pederasts, Ulrichs said rightly that it is possible to find "the soul of a woman born in the body of a man."

But it is necessary to take into account the possibility of constitutional mutations, a possibility that has been given little consideration by sexologists; that is, we must also bear in mind cases of regression. It may be that the governing power on which the sexual nature of a given individual depends (a nature that is truly male or truly

female) may grow weak through neutralization, atrophy, or reduction of the latent state of the characteristics of the other sex, and this may lead to the activation and emergence of these recessive characteristics. And here the surroundings and the general atmosphere of society can play a not unimportant part. In a civilization where equality is the standard, where differences are not linked, where promiscuity is in favor, where the ancient idea of "being true to oneself" means nothing anymore - in such a splintered and materialistic society, it is clear that this phenomenon of regression and homosexuality should be particularly welcome, and therefore it is in no way a surprise to see the alarming increase in homosexuality and the "third sex" in the latest "democratic" period, or an increase in sex changes to an extent unparalleled in other eras.

But the reference to "intermediate sexual forms," to an incomplete process of the development of sex or to a regression, does not explain all the varieties of homosexuality. In fact, there have been male homosexuals who have not been effeminate or "intermediate forms" but even men of war, individuals decidedly manly in their appearance and behavior, powerful men who have had or could have had the most beautiful women at their disposal. Such homosexuality is hard to explain, and we have the right here to speak of deviation and perversion, or "vice" linked, perhaps, to a fashion. Indeed, it is hard to understand what can drive a man who is truly a man sexually toward an individual of the same sex. If appropriate material for the realization of the zenith of the orgasm of heterosexual love is almost nonexistent, this is even more the case in the embraces of homosexual love. However, there is reason to suppose that it is merely a matter of "mutual masturbation" and that the conditioned reflexes are exploited for "pleasure" since not only the metaphysical but also the physical premises for a whole and destructive union are lacking.

On the other hand, classical antiquity bears witness not so much to a homosexuality having sole rights and being the foe of women and wedlock, but rather to a bisexual attitude in which both women and young men were used (as a counterpart, there are generally many cases of very highly sexed and also very feminine women who are at the same time lesbians, with bisexual practices). Here it seems that the governing motivation was simply the desire to try everything. However, not even this point is very clear because, apart from the fact that there was femininity in the ephedoi and youths who were the favorite object of those pederasts, we may also refer to the crude saying, taken by Goethe from a Greek writer, that if one has had enough from a girl as a girl, she can always play the part of a boy ("Habe ich als Mädchen sie satt, dient es als Knabe noch").

As to the claim for an ideal nature of hermaphroditic wholeness in the pederast who acts both as man and as woman sexually, that is obvious fallacious beyond the level of straightforward sensations; hermaphroditic wholeness can only be "sufficiency," for it has no need of another being and is to be sought at the level of a spiritual realization that excludes the nuances that the "magic of the two" can offer in heterosexual unions.

Even the rationale sometimes found in countries such as Turkey and Japan, that homosexual possession gives a feeling of power, is not convincing. The pleasure of domination can also be felt with women and with other

beings in situations free of sexual intercourse. Besides, such a pleasure could be involved only in a completely pathological context where it would develop into a true orgasm.

Thus overall, when homosexuality is not "natural" or else cannot be explained in terms of incomplete inborn forms of sexual development, it must have the character of a deviation, a vice, or a perversion. And if some instances of extreme erotic intensity in relations between homosexuals should be adduced, the explanation is to be sought in the possibility of the displacement of eros. Indeed, it is enough to go through any treatise on sexual psychopathology to see in how many unthinkable situations the erotic potential of a human being can be aroused, sometimes to the level of orgasmic frenzy (from fetishism even to animal sodomy and necrophilia). The same anomalous background could include the case of homosexuality, although the latter is much more frequent: a displaced eros for which a being of the same sex can serve as a simple, occasional cause or support, as in so many cases of psychopathy, although it must wholly lack every profound dimension and every meaning higher than experience because of the absence of the necessary ontological and metaphysical premises. As we shall see in certain aspects of sadism and masochism, it is possible to find elements that can be included in the deepest structures of heterosexual erotics and that become perversions only when freed from limitations. No similar recognition can be given in respect to homosexuality. [...]

On Pre-Birth Superconsciousness
& the Power of Occult Forces over 'Backward', 'Primitive' People
or Going Beyond René Guénon

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] In Rome, therefore, at the time of the German occupation, I made a secret attempt to establish a 'Movement for the Rebirth of Italy'. Involved in this project, among others, were Senator Carlo Costamagna - whom I had worked with in the past - and the Senator and former Minister, Balbino Giuliano. The purpose of our Movement, which after the war would have become a political party, would have been analogous to that of the Movimento Sociale Italiano - although our own Movement would have been conceived in more traditionalist terms as an expression of the Right devoid of one-sided references to Fascism (the negative as well as positive aspects of which we would have taken into account). Our political project came to an end at the time of the Allied occupation of Rome for a number of reasons (apparently, including an act of betrayal). I ought to have stayed in Rome, but the force of events led me away from the capital. I then crossed the frontier and moved to Vienna, where I had been summoned, by way of northern Italy. In the Austrian city, a similar political project was underway as the one which had failed in Rome. However, not long before the Russian occupation of the city, a bombing raid caused an injury to my spinal cord. The injury, which appeared lethal at first, caused the partial paralysis of my lower limbs.

I thus found myself confined to hospital. Such an accident, no doubt, was not unrelated to a rule I had long chosen to follow: not to avoid, but, on the contrary, to seek dangers as a tacit way of putting fate to the test. For this very reason, in the past, I had pursued mountain climbing at dangerous altitudes. I remained faithful to this very principle during the war, when a world was crumbling and the future was shrouded in uncertainty. The accident I fell victim to, however, lent itself to no obvious explanation. Not much changed in my life following the accident, as my handicap was merely physical: aside from the practical disadvantages, and the limitations it entailed from the point of view of my profane existence, the handicap hardly bothered me, for my spiritual and intellectual work remained unaffected by the accident. In my heart, I have always thoroughly subscribed to the traditional doctrine I often quoted in my writing, which teaches that we have wished all relevant events in our life before our birth. I could not, therefore, avoid applying such a doctrine to the aforementioned event. To remember why I had wished such an accident upon myself, and to understand its most profound significance, is what truly mattered in my eyes - more than 'recovery' itself (something I cared little about). (Besides, as I saw it, had I been capable of grasping the 'memory' of such a wish by the light of knowledge, I would no doubt also have been capable of removing the physical handicap itself - if I had wished to do so.) To this day, however, the fog which clouds my memory has yet to lift. For the time being, I have come to adapt myself to the circumstances. Occasionally, I am humorously led to believe that it is gods who might be responsible for the situation, having used a little too much force when playing with me.

Someone has spread the rumor that my accident was caused by pursuit of a 'Promethean' endeavor of some sort. This, of course, is sheer fantasy, not least because, at the time of the accident, I had long interrupted any work in the realm of the supernatural. Besides, I was living in Vienna incognito and under a false name. It is rather odd, however, that René Guénon himself favored a similar interpretation at first. For when I got in touch with Guénon after the war, and informed him of my accident (in the secret hope that Guénon might help me to 'understand' the event), I was asked whether I suspected that someone might have acted against me by occult means. Guénon added that he himself had been confined to his bed for several months, apparently on account of arthritis, but actually as a consequence of an outside attack; and that he had recovered from his illness once the person responsible had been discovered and neutralized. I told Guénon that a similar attack would be an unlikely cause in my case, not least because an extraordinarily powerful spell would have been necessary to cause such damage: for the spell would have had to determine a whole series of objective events, including the occurrence of the bombing raid, and the time and place in which the bombs were dropped.

It is interesting to note that when I questioned Guénon concerning his accident (his case of pseudo-arthritis), and asked him whether an individual who has attained a certain spiritual level might not be safe from all attacks of 'magic' and wizardry, Guénon replied by reminding me that, according to tradition, the Prophet Mohammed himself was not invulnerable in this regard. Apparently, the reason for this is that 'subtle', 'psychic' processes operate in a deterministic fashion, not unlike physical processes (a knife stab, for instance, causes damage

regardless of the kind of person it hits). (Actually, I have some further reservations on the matter: for I believe that the process of materialization of the individual - what contributes to distance him from the subtle forces of nature - can actually act as a protection against occult attacks of the kind I have just been discussing. Such attacks, therefore, would have little power over modern man, an intellectual type and city-dweller, whereas they would prove effective against more 'backward' and 'primitive' human groups.) [...]

On the Dark Age

(from "Revolt Against the Modern World")

[...] In reference to what I previously said concerning what ancient traditions called the Dark Age (Kali Yuga), I will now describe some of the features of this age found in an ancient Hindu text, the Visnu Purana. I will put in brackets what I consider to be the contemporary applications.

Outcastes and barbarians will be masters of the banks of the Indus, Darvika, the Chandrabhaga and Kashmir. These will all be contemporary rulers [of this age] reigning over the earth: kings [rulers] of violent temper ... They will seize upon the property of their subjects; they will be of limited power and will for the most part rapidly rise and fall; their lives will be short, their desires insatiable, and they will display but little piety. The people of various countries intermingling with them will follow their example ... The prevailing caste will be the Shudra ... Vaisyas will abandon agriculture and commerce and gain a livelihood by servitude or the exercise of mechanical arts [proletarianization and industrialization] ... Kshyatrias instead of protecting will plunder their subjects: and under the pretext of levying customs will rob merchants of their property [crisis of capitalism and of private property; socialization, nationalization, and communism] ... Wealth [inner] and piety [following one's dharma] will decrease day by day until the whole world will be wholly deprived. Then property alone will confer rank [the quantity of dollars - economic classes]; wealth [material] will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation....

Earth will be venerated but for its mineral treasures [unscrupulous exploitation of the soil, demise of the cult of the earth] ...

Brahmanical clothes will constitute a Brahman ... weakness will be the cause of dependence [cowardice, death of fides and honor in the modern political forms] ... simple ablution [devoid of the power of the true rite] will be purification [can there really be anything more in the alleged salvation procured in the Christian sacraments?] ...

In the Kali age men corrupted by unbelievers ... will say: "Of what authority are the Vedas? What are gods or Brahmins? ..."

Observance of caste, order and institutes [traditional] will not prevail in the Kali age. Marriages in this age will not be conformable to the ritual, nor will the rules that connect the spiritual preceptor and his disciple be in force. ... A regenerated man will be initiated in any way whatever [democracy applied to the spiritual plane] and such acts of penance as may be performed will be unattended by any results [this refers to a "humanistic" and conformist religion] ... all orders of life will be common alike to all persons. ...

He who gives away much money will be the master of men and family descent will no longer be a title of supremacy [the end of traditional nobility, advent of bourgeoisie, plutocracy]. ...

Men will fix their desires upon riches, even though dishonestly acquired. ... Men of all degrees will conceit themselves to be equal with Brahmans [the prevarication and presumption of the intellectuals and modern culture]. ... The people will be almost always in dread of dearth and apprehensive of scarcity; and will hence ever be watching the appearances of the sky [the meaning of the religious and superstitious residues typical of modern masses]. ...

The women will pay no attention to the commands of their husbands or parents.... They will be selfish, abject and slatternly; they will be scolds and liars; they will be indecent and immoral in their conduct and will ever attach themselves to dissolute men....

Men having deviated into heresy, iniquity will flourish, and the duration of life will therefore decrease. *

Nevertheless, in the Visnu Purana there are also references to elements of the primordial or "Manu's" race that have been preserved in this Dark Age in order to be the seed of new generations; what appears again is the well-known idea of a new and final epiphany "from above":

When the practices taught by the Vedas and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased, and the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being who exists of his own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and who is the beginning and the end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon the earth. ... He will then reestablish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali age shall be awakened, and shall be as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed by virtue of that peculiar time shall be as the seeds of [new] human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Krita age, or age of purity [primordial age].

In the same text and chapter it is said that the stock from which this divine principal will be born lives in the village of Shambhala; Shambhala - as I previously suggested - refers to the metaphysics of the "center" and the "pole," to the Hyperborean mystery and the forces of primordial tradition.

*This prophecy appears to have been contradicted by facts, unless we distinguish the case in which a longer life is due to contact with that which transcends time from the case of artificial "devices" to prolong life (which is meaningless and just a parody of the first type of life), realized through the means of profane science and modern hygiene.

On the Hebrew Cycle & Islam:
a more Recent Tradition among Semitic Races

(from "Revolt against the Modern World")

[...] The failure of the attempt of the Chaldean hero Gilgamesh corresponds to the fall of Adam in the myth of another civilization within the Semitic cycle, the Hebrew civilization. Here we find a fundamental and characteristic motif: the transformation into sin of what in the Aryan version of the myth was regarded as a heroic, bold deed, often crowned by success, but that in Gilgamesh's myth had a negative outcome only because the hero was caught asleep. In the context of Hebrew Semitism, the one who attempts to take possession of the symbolic Tree is univocally transformed into a victim of woman's seduction and a sinner. The curse he has to suffer and the punishment that has been meted out to him by a jealous, terrible, and omnipotent god, follow him; there is no better hope, in the end, than that for a "redeemer" who will provide a vicarious atonement.

In the ancient Hebrew tradition there are also elements of a different type. Moses himself, though he owed his life to a woman of the royal family (i.e., pharaoh's daughter, Exod. 2:5), was conceived of as having been "rescued from the waters"; likewise, the events described in the book of Exodus are capable of esoteric interpretation. Besides Elijah and Enoch, Jacob too was a heroic type, because he fought an angel and won; in relation to this, even the name "Israel," which the angel gave him, conveys the idea of a "victory over the deity" (Gen. 32:29). These elements are still sporadic and reveal a curious oscillation, which is typical of the Jewish soul, between a sense of guilt, self-humiliation, deconsecration, and carnality and an almost Luciferian pride and rebelliousness. Maybe this could be explained by the fact that even the initiatory tradition, which is also found in Judaism (e.g., the Kabbalah) and which played an important role in the European Middle Ages, has some particularly involuted traits, which characterize it at times as an "accursed science."

The Jews originally conceived the otherworld as the dark and mute Sheol, or as some kind of Hades without the counterpart of an "Island of Heroes"; not even sacred kings such as David could escape it. This is the theme of the "way of the ancestors" (pitr-yana in Hinduism), which in this context has special relevance as the idea of an ever greater distance between man and God. Even on this plane, however, we find a double characteristic. On the one hand, according to the ancient Hebrews, Jehovah is the true king; thus, the Jews saw in the full and traditional understanding of regal dignity a disparagement of God's privilege

(whether historical or not, Samuel's opposition to the establishment of a monarchy is very significant). On the other hand, the Jewish people considered themselves to be a "chosen people" and "God's people," who had been promised dominion over all the other peoples and possession of all the riches of the earth. They even derived from the Iranian tradition the theme of the hero Saoshyant, who in Judaism became the "Messiah," retaining for some time the traits typical of a manifestation of the "Lord of Hosts."

Not without relation to all this, in ancient Judaism we find a very visible effort on the part of a priestly elite to dominate and coalesce a turbid, multiple, and turbulent ethnical substance by establishing the divine Law as the foundation of its "form," and by making it the surrogate of what in other people was the unity of the common fatherland and the common origins. From this formative action, which was connected to sacred and ritualistic values and preserved from the first redactions of the ancient Torah to the elaboration of the Talmuds, the Jewish type arose as that of a spiritual rather than a physical race. (1) But the original substratum was never totally eliminated, as ancient Jewish history shows in the form of the recurrent betrayals of God and his becoming reconciled with Israel. This dualism and the ensuing tension help to explain the negative forms that Judaism assumed in later times.

(1) Originally Israel was not a race, but a people, or an ethnical mixture of various elements. This was a typical case in which a tradition "created" a race, and especially a race of the soul.

For Judaism, as in the case of other civilizations, the time frame between the seventh and the sixth century B.C. was characterized by upheaval. Once the military fortunes of Israel declined, defeat came to be understood as a punishment for "sins" committed, and thus an expectation developed that after a dutiful expiation Jehovah would once again assist his people and restore their power. This theme was dealt with in Jeremiah and in Isaiah. But since this did not happen, the prophetic expectations degenerated into an apocalyptic, messianic myth and in the fantastic eschatological vision of a Savior who will redeem Israel; this marked the beginning of a process of disintegration. What derived from the traditional component eventually turned into a ritualistic formalism and thus became increasingly abstract and separated from real life. To be aware of the role the Chaldean priestly sciences played in this cycle would allow one to connect to this source everything that was successively articulated in Judaism in the form of abstract thought and even of mathematical insights (up to and including Spinoza's philosophy and the modern "formal" physics in which the Jewish component is very strong). Moreover, a connection was established with a human type, who in order to uphold values that he cannot realize and that thus appear to him increasingly abstract and Utopian, eventually feels dissatisfied and frustrated before any existing positive order and any form of authority (especially when we find in him, though in an unconscious way, the old idea according to which the state of justice willed by God is only that in which Israel rules) so as to be a constant source of disorder and of revolution. Finally we must consider another dimension of the Jewish soul: it is like somebody who, having failed to realize the values typical of the sacred and transcendent dimension in

the course of the attempt to overcome the antithesis between spirit and "flesh" (which he exasperates in a characteristic way), eventually rejoices wherever he discovers the illusion and the irreality of those values and wherever he ascertains the failure of the yearning for redemption; this becomes for him some kind of alibi and self-justification. These are specific developments of the original "guilt" motif, which acted in a disaggregating way as Judaism became increasingly secularized and widespread during the most recent Western civilization.

It is necessary to point out a characteristic moment in the development of the ancient Jewish spirit. The abovementioned period of crisis witnessed the loss of anything that was pure and virile in the ancient cult of Jehovah and in the warrior figure of the Messiah. Already in Jeremiah and in Isaiah there emerged a rebellious spirituality that condemned and disdained the hieratic, ritual element; such was the meaning of Hebrew "prophetism," which originally displayed traits that were very similar to the cults of inferior castes, and to the pandemic and ecstatic forms of the Southern races. The figure of the "seer" (roeh) was replaced by the figure of the one obsessed by the spirit of God. (2) Other features of prophetism were the pathos of the "servants of the Eternal," which replaced the proud and fanatical self-confidence of being "God's people," and also an equivocal mysticism with apocalyptic overtones. The latter feature, once freed from the ancient Hebrew context, played a relevant role in the general crisis that affected the ancient Western world. The Diaspora, or the scattering of the Jewish people, corresponded to the by-products of the spiritual dissolution of a cycle that did not have a "heroic" restoration and in which some sort of inner fracture promoted processes of an antitraditional character. There are ancient traditions according to which Typhon, a demon opposed to the solar God, was the father of the Hebrews; various Gnostic authors considered the Hebrew god as one of Typhon's creatures. These are references to a demonic spirit characterized by a constant restlessness, by an obscure contamination, and by a latent revolt of the inferior elements; when this substance returned to a free state and when it separated itself from the "Law," that is, from the tradition that had formed it, all these factors acted upon the Jewish substratum in a more dramatic and decisive way than in other people.

(2) Originally the prophets (nebiim) were possessed people who, through a natural disposition or through artificial means achieved a state of excitement in which they felt dominated and guided by a higher power, superior to their own wills. When they spoke it was no longer themselves but the spirit of God who made utterances. See J. Reville, *Le Prophetisme hebreux* (Paris, 1906). Thus the prophets were regarded by the priestly caste as raving lunatics; opposed to the prophet (nabi) originally there was the higher and "Olympian" figure of the seer (roeh): "In former times in Israel, anyone who sent to consult God used to say: 'Come, let us go to the seer,' for he who is now called prophet was formerly called seer." 1 Sam. 9:9.

This is the origin of one of the main hotbeds of those forces that exercised an often unconscious, though negative influence during the last phases of the Western cycle of the Iron Age.

Even though it began relatively recently, I will briefly refer to another tradition, Islam, which originated among Semitic races and succeeded in overcoming those negative motifs. As in the case of priestly Judaism, the center in Islam also consisted of the Law and Tradition, regarded as a formative force, to which the Arab stocks of the origins provided a purer and nobler human material that was shaped by a warrior spirit. The Islamic law (shariah) is a divine law; its foundation, the Koran, is thought of as God's very own word (kalam Allah) as well as a nonhuman work and an "uncreated book" that exists in heaven ab eterno. Although Islam considers itself the "religion of Abraham," even to the point of attributing to him the foundation of the Kaaba (in which we find again the theme of the "stone," or the symbol of the "center"), it is nevertheless true that (a) it claimed independence from both Judaism and Christianity; (b) the Kaaba, with its symbolism of the center, is a pre-Islamic location and has even older origins that cannot be dated accurately; (c) in the esoteric Islamic tradition, the main reference point is al-Khadir, a popular figure conceived as superior to and predating the biblical prophets (Koran 18:59-81). Islam rejects a theme found in Judaism and that in Christianity became the dogma and the basis of the mystery of the incarnation of the Logos; it retains, sensibly attenuated, the myth of Adam's fall without building upon it the theme of "original sin." In this doctrine Islam saw a "diabolical illusion" (talbis Iblis) or the inverted theme of the fall of Satan (Iblis or Shaitan), which the Koran (18:48) attributed to his refusal, together with all his angels, to bow down before Adam. Islam also not only rejected the idea of a Redeemer or Savior, which is so central in Christianity, but also the mediation of a priestly caste. By conceiving of the Divine in terms of an absolute and pure monotheism, without a "Son," a "Father," or a "Mother of God," every person as a Muslim appears to respond directly to God and to be sanctified through the Law, which permeates and organizes life in a radically unitary way in all of its juridical, religious, and social ramifications. In early Islam the only form of asceticism was action, that is, jihad, or "holy war"; this type of war, at least theoretically, should never be interrupted until the full consolidation of the divine Law has been achieved. It is precisely through the holy war, and not through preaching or missionary endeavor, that Islam came to enjoy a sudden, prodigious expansion, originating the empire of the Caliphs as well as forging a unity typical of a race of the spirit, namely, the umma or "Islamic nation." Finally, Islam presents a traditional completeness, since the shariah and the sunna, that is, the exoteric law and tradition, have their complement not in a vague mysticism, but in full-fledged initiatory organizations (turuq) that are characterized by an esoteric teaching (tawil) and by the metaphysical doctrine of the Supreme Identity (tawhid). In these organizations, and in general in the shia, the recurrent notions of the masum, of the double prerogative of the isma (doctrinal infallibility), and of the impossibility of being stained by any sin (which is the prerogative of the leaders, the visible and invisible Imams and, the mujtahid), lead back to the line of an unbroken race shaped by a tradition at a higher level than both Judaism and the religious beliefs that conquered the West. [...]

On the Secret of Degeneration

(from "Deutsches Volkstum", Nr. 11, 1938)

Anyone who has come to reject the rationalist myth of "progress" and the interpretation of history as an unbroken positive development of mankind will find himself gradually drawn towards the world-view that was common to all the great traditional cultures, and which had at its centre the memory of a process of degeneration, slow obscuration, or collapse of a higher preceding world. As we penetrate deeper into this new (and old) interpretation, we encounter various problems, foremost among which is the question of the secret of degeneration.

In its literal sense, this question is by no means a novel one. While contemplating the magnificent remains of cultures whose very name has not even come down to us, but which seem to have conveyed, even in their physical material, a greatness and power that is more than earthly, scarcely anyone has failed to ask themselves questions about the death of cultures, and sensed the inadequacy of the reasons that are usually given to explain it.

We can thank the Comte de Gobineau for the best and best-known summary of this problem, and also for a masterly criticism of the main hypotheses about it. His solution on the basis of racial thought and racial purity also has a lot of truth in it, but it needs to be expanded by a few observations concerning a higher order of things. For there have been many cases in which a culture has collapsed even when its race has remained pure, as is especially clear in certain groups that have suffered slow, inexorable extinction despite remaining as racially isolated as if they were islands. An example quite close at hand is the case of the Swedes and the Dutch. These people are in the same racial condition today as they were two centuries ago, but there is little to be found now of the heroic disposition and the racial awareness that they once possessed. Other great cultures seem merely to have remained standing in the condition of mummies: they have long been inwardly dead, so that it takes only the slightest push to knock them down. This was the case, for example, with ancient Peru, that giant solar empire which was annihilated by a few adventurers drawn from the worst rabble of Europe.

If we look at the secret of degeneration from the exclusively traditional point of view, it becomes even harder to solve it completely. It is then a matter of the division of all cultures into two main types. On the one hand there are the traditional cultures, whose principle is identical and unchangeable, despite all the differences evident on the surface. The axis of these cultures and the summit of their hierarchical order consist of metaphysical, supra-individual powers and actions, which serve to inform and justify everything that is merely human, temporal, subject to becoming and to "history." On the other hand there is "modern culture," which is actually anti-tradition and which exhausts itself in a construction of purely human and earthly conditions and in the total development of these, in pursuit of a life entirely detached from the "higher world."

From the standpoint of the latter, the whole of history is degeneration, because it shows the universal decline of earlier cultures of the traditional type, and the decisive and violent rise of a new universal civilization of the "modern" type.

A double question arises from this.

First, how was it ever possible for this to come to pass? There is a logical error underlying the whole doctrine of evolution: it is impossible that the higher can emerge from the lower, and the greater from the less. But doesn't a similar difficulty face us in the solution of the doctrine of involution? How is it ever possible for the higher to fall? If we could make do with simple analogies, it would be easy to deal with this question. A healthy man can become sick; a virtuous one can turn to vice. There is a natural law that everyone takes from granted: that every living being starts with birth, growth, and strength, then come old age, weakening, and disintegration. And so forth. But this is just making statements, not explaining, even if we allow that such analogies actually relate to the question posed here.

Secondly, it is not only a matter of explaining the possibility of the degeneration of a particular cultural world, but also the possibility that the degeneration of one cultural cycle may pass to other peoples and take them down with it. For example, we have not only to explain how the ancient Western reality collapsed, but also have to show the reason why it was possible for "modern" culture to conquer practically the whole world, and why it possessed the power to divert so many peoples from any other type of culture, and to hold sway even where states of a traditional kind seemed to be alive (one need only recall the Aryan East).

In this respect, it is not enough to say that we are dealing with a purely material and economic conquest. That view seems very superficial, for two reasons. In the first place, a land that is conquered on the material level also experiences, in the long run, influences of a higher kind corresponding to the cultural type of its conqueror. We can state, in fact, that European conquest almost everywhere sows the seeds of "Europeanization," i.e., the "modern" rationalist, tradition-hostile, individualistic way of thinking. Secondly, the traditional conception of culture and the state is hierarchical, not dualistic. Its bearers could never subscribe, without severe reservations, to the principles of "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and "My kingdom is not of this world." For us, "Tradition" is the victorious and creative presence in the world of that which is "not of this world," i.e., of the Spirit, understood as a power that is mightier than any merely human or material one.

This is a basic idea of the authentically traditional view of life, which does not permit us to speak with contempt of merely material conquests. On the contrary, the material conquest is the sign, if not of a spiritual victory, at least of a spiritual weakness or a kind of spiritual "retreat" in the cultures that are conquered and lose their independence. Everywhere that the Spirit, regarded as the stronger power, was truly present, it never lacked for means - visible or otherwise - to enable the

entire opponent's technical and material superiority to be resisted. But this has not happened. It must be concluded, then, that degeneracy was lurking behind the traditional facade of every people that the "modern" world has been able to conquer. The West must then have been the culture in which a crisis that was already universal assumed its acutest form. There the degeneration amounted, so to speak, to a knockout blow, and as it took effect, it brought down with more or less ease other peoples in whom the involution had certainly not "progressed" as far, but whose tradition had already lost its original power, so that these peoples were no longer able to protect themselves from an outside assault.

With these considerations, the second aspect of our problem is traced back to the first one. It is mainly a question of explicating the meaning and the possibility of degeneracy, without reference to other circumstances.

For this we must be clear about one thing: it is an error to assume that the hierarchy of the traditional world is based on a tyranny of the upper classes. That is merely a "modern" conception, completely alien to the traditional way of thinking. The traditional doctrine in fact conceived of spiritual action as an "action without acting"; it spoke of the "unmoved mover"; everywhere it used the symbolism of the "pole", the unalterable axis around which every ordered movement takes place (and elsewhere we have shown that this is the meaning of the swastika, the "arctic cross"); it always stressed the "Olympian" spirituality, and genuine authority, as well as its way of acting directly on its subordinates, not through violence but through "presence"; finally, it used the simile of the magnet, wherein lies the key to our question, as we shall now see.

Only today could anyone imagine that the authentic bearers of the Spirit, or of Tradition, pursue people so as to seize them and put them in their places - in short, that they "manage" people, or have any personal interest in setting up and maintaining those hierarchical relationships by virtue of which they can appear visibly as the rulers. This would be ridiculous and senseless. It is much more the recognition on the part of the lower ones that is the true basis of any traditional ranking. It is not the higher that needs the lower, but the other way round. The essence of hierarchy is that there is something living as a reality in certain people, which in the rest is only present in the condition of an ideal, a premonition, an unfocused effort. Thus the latter are fatefully attracted to the former, and their lower condition is one of subordination less to something foreign, than to their own true "self." Herein lays the secret, in the traditional world, of all readiness for sacrifice, all heroism, all loyalty; and, on the other side, of a prestige, an authority, and a calm power which the most heavily-armed tyrant can never count upon.

With these considerations, we have come very close to solving not only the problem of degeneration, but also the possibility of a particular fall. Are we perhaps not tired of hearing that the success of every revolution indicates the weakness and degeneracy of the previous rulers? An understanding of this kind is very one-sided. This would indeed be the case if wild dogs were tied up, and suddenly broke loose: that would be proof that the hands holding their leashes had become impotent or weak.

But things are arranged very differently in the framework of spiritual ranking, whose real basis we have explained above. This hierarchy degenerates and is able to be overthrown in one case only: when the individual degenerates, when he uses his fundamental freedom to deny the Spirit, to cut his life loose from any higher reference-point, and to exist "only for himself." Then the contacts are fatefully broken, the metaphysical tension, to which the traditional organism owes its unity, gives way, every force wavers in its path and finally breaks free. The peaks, of course, remain pure and inviolable in their heights, but the rest, which depended on them, now becomes an avalanche, a mass that has lost its equilibrium and falls, at first imperceptibly but with ever accelerating movement down to the depths and lowest levels of the valley. This is the secret of every degeneration and revolution. The European had first slain the hierarchy in himself by extirpating his own inner possibilities, to which corresponded the basis of the order that he would then destroy externally.

If Christian mythology attributes the Fall of Man and the Rebellion of the Angels to the freedom of the will, then it comes to much the same significance. It concerns the frightening potential that dwells in man of using freedom to destroy spiritually and to banish everything that could ensure him a supra-natural value. This is a metaphysical decision: the stream that traverses history in the most varied forms of the traditional-hating, revolutionary, individualistic, and humanistic spirit, or in short, the "modern" spirit. This decision is the only positive and decisive cause in the secret of degeneration, the destruction of Tradition.

If we understand this, we can perhaps also grasp the sense of those legends that speak of mysterious rulers who "always" exist and have never died (shades of the Emperor sleeping beneath the Kyffhäuser Mountain!). Such rulers can be rediscovered only when one achieves spiritual completeness and awakens a quality in oneself like that of a metal that suddenly feels "the magnet", finds the magnet and irresistibly orients itself and moves towards it. For now, we must restrict ourselves to this hint. A comprehensive explanation of legends of that sort, which come to us from the most ancient Aryan source, would take us too far. At another opportunity we will perhaps return to the secret of reconstruction, to the "magic" that is capable of restoring the fallen mass to the unalterable, lonely, and invisible peaks that are still there in the heights.

On the 'Spiritualist Threat'
& Super-Consciousness beyond Rational Thought
or Self-Transcendence by Ascent vs. Self-Transcendence by Descent

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] My aim was to address a broader readership by directly addressing the need to defend human personality from the dangerous allure of the 'supernatural'. My main argument was that the modern world is facing not

merely the threat of 'materialism', but also a 'spiritualist threat'. People in our day, I argued, are at the mercy of the materialism, rationalism, empiricism and activism of a dying civilization; but, at the same time, they derive no satisfaction from mainstream religion. Consequently, many of our contemporaries experience an uncontrollable attraction for 'Otherness' and supra-sensible phenomena, particularly when these are seen as being grounded within actual personal experiences. In almost all cases, this supra-sensible level of experience has been confused, simplistically, with that of the 'supernatural'.

This momentous confusion, I argued, is due to a lack of genuine ideals. In my book, I outlined the doctrine according to which human personality, with its ordinary capabilities and its perception of the physical world and nature, is situated between two different realms. The first of these two realms is superior to the ordinary human condition, while the other is inferior to it. The first is the level of what is supernatural and super-personal, while the other is sub-natural and sub-personal. Nor are these different levels to be understood in merely theoretical and abstract terms, for they refer to concrete and possible levels of being: 'In all that transcends mere nature' - I argued - 'two separate, or, rather, two opposite levels exist.' Hence the possibility of self-transcendence either by descent (i.e., by plunging into what is pre- and sub-personal and unconscious) or by ascent (i.e., by rising above the closed - and in a sense defensive and protective - condition of ordinary human personality). In my work, I emphasized how it is self-transcendence by descent which is most commonly pursued in contemporary Spiritualism: Spiritualism, when not merely theoretical, fosters a regressive process which potentially leads to encounters with dark forces that can only further weaken the feeble spiritual framework of modern man.

I described the opposite process in the following terms: as 'A path leading to experiences which, far from diminishing consciousness, turn it into a super-consciousness that not only does not abolish the distinction between material objects and rational thought - a distinction easily maintained by a healthy and wakeful mind - but has the power to elevate such a distinction to a higher level - not by altering the foundations of human personality, but by supplementing them.' I concluded that it is this path alone that can lead to the supernatural. Known by the 'inner doctrines' of the world of Tradition, such a path stands in contrast to all ecstatic regressions and openings to what is sub-intellectual and subconscious. [...]

Protestantism, the Reformation, Luther

(from "Revolt Against The Modern World")

[...] The ancient world had witnessed the degeneration of symbolism into a mythology that became increasingly opaque and mute and that eventually became the object of artistic fantasy. When the experience of the sacred was reduced to faith, sentiment, and moralism, and when the intuitive intellectualism was reduced to a mere concept of Scholastic philosophy,

the unrealism of the spirit entirely took over the domain of the supernatural. This course underwent a further development with Protestantism, the contemporaneity of which with humanism and with the Renaissance is significant.

Prescinding from its final meaning in the history of civilization, its antagonistic role during the Middle Ages, and its lack of an initiatic and esoteric dimension, we nevertheless must acknowledge a certain traditional character to the Church that lifted it above what had been mere Christianity, because it established a system of dogmas, symbols, myths, rituals, and sacred institutions in which, though often indirectly, elements of a superior knowledge were sometimes preserved. By rigidly upholding the principle of authority and dogma, by defending the transcendent and superrational character of "revelation" in the domain of knowledge and the principle of the transcendence of grace in the domain of action, the Church defended from any heresy - almost desperately - the nonhuman character of its deposit. This extreme effort of Catholicism (which explains much of whatever is crude and violent in its history), however, encountered a limit. The "dam" could not hold and some forms that could be justified in a merely religious context could not retain the character of absoluteness that is proper to what is nonhuman; this was especially true not only because a superior knowledge was lacking, but also considering that the secularization of the Church, the corruption, and the unworthiness of a great number of its representatives and the increasing importance that political and contingent interests acquired within it became increasingly visible. Thus, the stage was set for a reaction destined to inflict a serious blow to the traditional element that was added to Christianity, to exasperate the unrealist subjectivism, and to uphold individualism in a religious context. For this is what the Reformation accomplished.

It is not a coincidence that Luther's invectives against the "papacy, the devil's creature in Rome" and against Rome as the "kingdom of Babylon" and as a radically pagan reality totally inimical to the Christian spirit were very similar to those invectives employed by the early Christians and by the Jewish apocalyptic texts against the city of the eagle and of the battle-axe. By rejecting everything in Catholicism that was Tradition and opposed to the simple Gospels, Luther demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding of that superior content that cannot be reduced either to the Jewish-Southern substratum, or to the world of mere devotion, which in the Church had developed through secret influences from above.

(1) The Ghibelline emperors rose up against papal Rome in the name of Rome, thus upholding again the superior idea of the *Sacrum Imperium* against both the merely religious spirituality of the Church and her hegemonic claims. Instead, Luther rose up against papal Rome out of an intense dislike for what was a positive aspect, that is, the traditional, hierarchical, and ritual component that existed within the Catholic compromise.

(1) Naturally, this lack of understanding was typical of the representatives of Catholicism as well. Paracelsus was right when he said: "What is this commotion about Luther's and Zwingli's writings? It truly reminds me of a shallow bacchanalia. If I had to make a

recommendation about this controversy I would have these gentlemen and the pope himself go back to school."

In many regards Luther facilitated a mutilating emancipation, even in the domain of politics. By supporting the Reformation the Germanic princes, instead of assuming the legacy of Frederick II, went over to the anti-imperial coalition. In the author of the *Warnung an seine lieben Deutschen*, who presented himself as the "prophet of the German people," these princes saw one who legitimated their revolt against the imperial principle of authority with his doctrines and who allowed them to disguise their insubordination in the form of an anti-Roman crusade waged in the name of the Gospel, according to which they had no other goal than to be free German rulers and to be emancipated from any supernatural hierarchical bond. Luther also contributed to an involutive process in another way; his doctrine subordinated religion to the state in all of its concrete manifestations. Because the government of the states was the responsibility of mere secular rulers; because Luther foreshadowed a democratic theme that was later on perfected by Calvin (the rulers do not govern by virtue of their nature, but because they are the representatives of the community); because a characteristic of the Reformation was the radical negation of the "Olympian" or "heroic" ideal, or any possibility on man's part to go beyond his limitations either through asceticism or consecration and so to be qualified to exercise even the right from above, which is typical of true leaders - because of all these reasons, Luther's views concerning "secular authority" (*die weltliche Obrigkeit*) practically amounted to an inversion of the traditional doctrine concerning the regal primacy and thus left the doors open for the usurpation of spiritual authority on the part of the temporal power. When defining the theme of the Leviathan, or of the "absolute state," Hobbes similarly proclaimed: "*civitatem et ecclesiam eadem rem esse.*"

From the point of view of the metaphysics of history, the positive and objective contribution of Protestantism consists in having emphasized that in mankind living in recent times a truly spiritual principle was no longer immediately present and that, therefore, mankind had to portray this principle as something transcendent. On this basis, Catholicism itself had already assumed the myth of original sin. Protestantism exasperated this myth by proclaiming the fundamental powerlessness of man to achieve salvation through his own efforts; generally speaking, it regarded the whole of humankind as a damned mass, condemned to automatically commit evil. To the truth obscurely foreshadowed by that myth, Protestantism added tints typical of an authentic Syrian masochism that were expressed in rather revolting images. Over and against the ancient ideal of spiritual virility Luther did not hesitate to call a "royal wedding" one in which the soul, portrayed as a "prostitute" and as "the most wretched and sinful creature," plays the role of the woman (see Luther's *De libertate christiana*); and to compare man to a beast of burden on which either God or the devil ride at will, without his being able to do anything about it (see Luther's *De servo arbitrio*).

While what should have followed from the acknowledgment of the above-mentioned existential situation was the affirmation of the need for the support proper to a ritual and hierarchical system, or the

affirmation of the strictest type of asceticism, Luther denied both things. The entire system of Luther's thought was visibly conditioned by his personal equation and the gloomy character of his inner life as a failed monk and a man who was unable to overcome his own nature, influenced as it was by his passions, sensuality, and anger. This personal equation was reflected in the peculiar doctrine according to which the Ten Commandments had not been given by God to men to be implemented in this life but so that man, after acknowledging his inability to fulfill them, his nothingness, as well as concupiscence's invincibility and his inner tendency to sin, would entrust himself to a personal God and trust desperately in His free grace. This "justification by faith alone" and the ensuing condemnation of the power of "works" led Luther to attack the monastic life and the ascetical life, which he called "vain and hopeless," thus deterring Western man from pursuing those residual possibilities of reintegration available in the contemplative life that Catholicism had preserved and that had produced figures like Bernard of Clairvaux, Jan van Ruysbroeck, Bonaventure, and Meister Eckhart. (2) Secondly, the Reformation denied the principle of authority and hierarchy in the dimension of the sacred. The idea that a human being, as a pontifex, could be infallible in matters of sacred doctrine and also legitimately claim the right to an authority beyond criticism was regarded as aberrant and absurd. According to the reformers, Christ did not give to any church, not even to a Protestant church, the privilege of infallibility; (3) thus, anybody is able to reach conclusions in matters of doctrine and interpretation of the sacred text through a free and individual examination outside any control and any tradition. Not only was the distinction between laity and priesthood in the field of knowledge basically abolished, but also denied was the priestly dignity understood not as an empty attribute, but in reference to those who, unlike other people, are endowed with a supernatural chrism and who carry an *indoles indelebilis* that allows them to activate the rites (these being residues of the ancient notion of the "Lord of the rites"). (4) Therefore, the objective, nonhuman meaning that not only the dogma and the symbols but the system of rites and the sacraments could have as well, was denied and rejected.

(2) This is the main difference between Buddhism and Protestantism, which confers a positive character to the former and a negative to the latter. Both movements are characterized by pessimist premises - Luther's *concupiscentia invincibilis* corresponds somewhat to Buddhism's "thirst for life" - and by a revolt against a corrupted priestly caste. However, Buddhism indicated a path to follow since it created a strict system of asceticism and of self-discipline, unlike Protestantism, which rejected even the mitigated forms of asceticism found in the Catholic tradition.

(3) De Maistre (Du pape [Lyon, 1819]) correctly remarked that this situation is paradoxical: Protestantism in fact upholds the idea that God did not bestow infallibility to man or to the Church as if it were a dogma. In Islam, infallibility (*isma*) is not regarded as the natural possession of an individual, but of all the legitimate interpreters of the *tawil*, the esoteric teaching.

(4) Within Catholicism, due to a confusion between what is proper to asceticism and what is proper to the priesthood, the clergy never was a

real caste. Once the principle of celibacy was established, by virtue of this very principle Catholicism irremediably lost the possibility of connecting the deposit of certain spiritual influences with the deep-seated forces of a blood legacy that had been preserved from any corrupt influence. The clergy, unlike the noble class, was always affected by the promiscuity of the origins since it recruited its members from all social strata and therefore always lacked an "organic" (i.e., biological and hereditary) basis for those spiritual influences.

One might object that all this no longer existed in Catholicism or that it existed only formally or indirectly. But in that case the way leading to an authentic reformation should have been one and one alone: to act in earnest and replace the unworthy representatives of the spiritual principle and tradition with worthy ones. Instead, Protestantism has led to a destruction and a denial that were not balanced with any true constructive principle, but rather only with an illusion, namely, sheer faith. According to Protestantism, salvation consisted in the mere subjective assurance of being counted in the ranks of those who have been saved by faith in Christ, and "chosen" by divine grace. In this fashion, mankind progressed along the path of spiritual unrealism; the materialistic repercussion did not delay its appearance.

After rejecting the objective notion of spirituality as a reality ranking higher than profane existence, the Protestant doctrine allowed man to feel, in all aspects of life, as a being who was simultaneously spiritual and earthly, justified and sinner. In the end this led to a radical secularization of all higher vocations; again, not to sacralization, but to moralism and puritanism. It was in the historical development of Protestantism, especially in Anglo-Saxon Calvinism and Puritanism, that the religious idea became increasingly dissociated from any transcendent interest and thus susceptible to being used to sanctify any temporal achievement to the point of generating a kind of mysticism of social service, work, "progress," and even profit. These forms of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism were characterized by communities of believers with no leader to represent a transcendent principle of authority; thus, the ideal of the state was reduced to that of the mere "society" of "free" Christian citizens. In this type of society, profit became the sip of divine election that, once the prevalent criterion became the economic one, corresponds to wealth and to prosperity. In this we can clearly distinguish one of the aspects of the abovementioned degrading regression: this Calvinist theory was really the materialistic and lay counterfeit of the ancient mystical doctrine of victory. For quite a long time this theory has supplied an ethical and religious justification for the rise to power of the merchant class and of the Third Estate during the cycle of the modern democracies and capitalism. [...]

Priority of the Person over the State
or the Antiliberal, Antidemocratic, and Organic State vs. 'Cold Monster'

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] Moreover, there are cases in which I am willing to acknowledge the priority of the person even before the State. The statolatry of the modern age has nothing to do with the traditional political view; the impersonal State, when regarded as a heavy juridical and bureaucratic entity (e.g., Nietzsche's "cold monster"), is also an aberration. Every society and State is made of people; individual human beings are their primary element. What kind of human beings? Not people as they are conceived by individualism, as atoms or a mass of atoms, but people as persons, as differentiated beings, each one endowed with a different rank, a different freedom, a different right within the social hierarchy based on the values of creating, constructing, obeying, and commanding. With people such as these it is possible to establish the true State, namely an antiliberal, antidemocratic, and organic State. The idea behind such a State is the priority of the person over any abstract social, political, or juridical entity, and not of the person as a neuter, leveled reality, a mere number in the world of quantity and universal suffrage. [...]

Pythagorean Doctrine of Little Transcendent Value
but also Containing some Hyperborean Features

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The first is The Pythagorean Golden Verses (I Versi d'Oro pitagorei), published for Atanor in 1959. In all truth, I only worked on this short book because the editors had requested me to do so: for Pythagorean doctrine does not really meet my taste. I agree with Bachofen that Pythagorean doctrine chiefly reflects the pre-Indo-European and Pelasgian 'civilization of the Mother'; I also believe that to some extent it reflects the Etruscan substrate of pre-Roman Italy. Yet Pythagorean doctrine - which is to say: the collected evidence that constitutes our understanding of the subject - is more complex and more hybrid than that. As is generally known, the Golden Verses are a rather late collection of material - dated to the Second, or even Third or Fourth century AD; despite the degree of renown they enjoyed in certain milieus in Antiquity, the Verses merely espouse a series of moral principles of little doctrinal and transcendent value. My edition of the Verses offers one of the best available translations of the text (a translation that already featured in the pages of Introduction to Magic); in order to provide the reader with a general overview of the subject, the volume also includes a commentary and introduction that takes account of the most important surviving evidence on Pythagorean doctrine, including Hierocles' commentary on the Verses.

The hybrid character of Pythagorean doctrine might also be discerned from the actual presence within such a doctrine, and particularly in relation to the myth of Pythagoras, of features of the Apollonian or even Hyperborean tradition - which, in themselves, are far removed from the 'Woman Mysteries' that influenced Pythagorean doctrine in other respects. Among the Pythagorean elements that most clearly betray Indo-European and Hellenic origins, I mentioned the Pythagorean 'notion of the universe as

cosmos: a composite and harmoniously ordered whole (Pythagoras, in fact, is regarded as the first ever to have used the term "cosmos"). To this I added the Pythagorean emphasis on limit, proportion and form; its doctrine of the harmonious unification of the various powers of the soul; its notion of eurhythmic; its appreciation of and care for the human body (an element which stands in contrast to the Pythagorean - and originally Orphic - view of the body as a prison); its experimental method of applying given principles - something that reflects the Pythagorean love of clarity and exactitude, and aversion to pseudo-metaphysical and mystical vagueness; its esteem for artistic beauty; its aristocratic and Doric conceptualization of political power (Pythagorean emphasis on the doctrinal, rather than the warrior and regal foundations of power not withstanding); its affirmation of the ideal of hierarchy, at least with regard to true knowledge. I here added 'at least' because in the social - as opposed to initiatory - field, Pythagoreans have generally been regarded as defending the doctrine of natural law - a view that would also agree with the Pythagorean valorization and divinization of the feminine, and with other dubious views ascribed to the followers of Pythagoras. In contrast, it is interesting to note - as Hierocles himself has recorded - that Pythagoreans understood apotheosis not as a vaguely mystical and pantheistic process, but as the divinization and immortalization of the individual - who, following apotheosis, would have been numbered among the gods. This view of apotheosis, if correctly ascribed to Pythagoreans, would bring Pythagorean doctrine into line with the Classical and Hellenic spirit - which contemplates 'heroic' forms of immortality; such a view also appears close to the initiatic doctrine concerning the so-called 'transformed' or 'perfect body' (i.e., the doctrine of 'resurrection'), a classic formulation of which was provided by Taoism (as I noted in my new edition of Lao Tzu's Tao-té-ching). Other sources, however, describe the Pythagorean conceptualization of apotheosis in a way that suggests the influence of a worldview opposite from that of the Classical. [...]

Relationship with Super-Human Order

Source of Force & Indomitability Not to be Underestimated

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] And naturally, the modern and, above all, Western atmosphere for thousands of reasons which have become, so to speak, constitutive of our being over the centuries makes it extremely difficult to feel and to move forces behind the scenes and to give every gesture, every sacrifice, every victory, transfiguring meanings, such as those discussed above. It is however certain that, even today, in this unleashed vicissitude one should not feel alone on the battlefields - one should sense, in spite of everything, relationships with a more than merely human order, and paths which cannot be assessed solely by the values of this visible reality can be the source of a force and an indomitability whose effects on any plane, in our view, should not be underestimated.

René Guénon and the Guénonian Scholasticism

(from "René Guénon: a Teacher for Modern Times")

René Guénon should certainly be considered as a Master of our times. His contributions to the critique of the modern world and to the comprehension of the "world of Tradition", of symbols and of metaphysical teachings, are truly invaluable. I have been myself, for more than thirty years now, one of the very first writers to make Guénon known in Italy (and even in central Europe), by means of essays, translations and quotes. I remained in a cordial epistolary relationship with him almost until the time of his death. If, on the one hand, one hopes that Guénon's thought will exercise an adequate influence, on the other hand, one should beware of a danger, namely the emerging of a Guénonian "scholasticism." This kind of "scholasticism" consists in following passively just about every view ever formulated by Guénon, with a pedantic attitude, without any true investigation or discrimination, and with a real fear to make even the slightest change in the master's formulations.

While it remains true that "originality" is definitely out of place in this domain, the influence of a teacher is truly effective not when it generates slavish and stereotypical repetitions, but when it generates the impulse for further developments, and, if necessary, for revisions, thanks to an abundance of perspectives. While an acknowledgment of what is valid and unique in Guénon's work is due, this should not prevent the observation of some of his limits, due to his "personal equation" and to his *forma mentis*. It is precisely this critical approach that leaves room for potentially fruitful work. The personal orientation of Guénon has essentially been intellectual and "sapiential." In all of his works, anything which is "existential" and practical, his personal experience, any specific directive facilitating the inner realization beyond pure doctrine, all this is almost nonexistent. Hence the danger of a Guénonian "scholasticism" (in the negative sense of the term), which can reduce everything to something which is both inoperative and abstract, despite the claims (without a proof) advanced by many followers of Guénon, of having attained a knowledge which should be "realizing" as well.

The proof that such a danger is real, is given by the orientation taken by some Guénonian cliques of "strict observance." An example is also found in Italy, by the periodical "Review of Traditional Studies," which was started last year in Turin, and which imitates the French Guénonian periodical *Études traditionnelles* even in its editorial contents. The translations made in it of old articles written by Guénon, along with some texts or theoretical orientations, may be helpful. However the tone of this review is a pedantic one. One can frequently notice in it an academic inclination, namely the style of speaking *ex cathedra* and *ex tripode* in a final and pedagogical tone, and with an authority which no member of the editorial staff possesses, either because of spiritual stature or because of valid works being published. In this way, that contemptible "individualism" (one shudders only at hearing phrases such as "individual realization") finds a viable outlet; what in

psychoanalysis is called Geltungstrieb has the possibility of affirming itself, under the cover of impersonality, whenever somebody puts on the air of being a spiritual "teacher."

It is rather strange that I was the victim of such a "know-it-all" attitude in an essay featured on the fourth issue of this review. Since this essay was featured in the section called "Book Reviews," it would be natural to think that a recent book of mine had just been reviewed. That was not the case, as the book reviewed was *The Doctrine of the Awakening* (London, 1951), which was published twenty years ago, and is now out of print. Considering that this review was not limited to this book of mine, but that it takes issue with various ideas upheld by me in other places, the author of the review should have considered this book in the context of my entire production. The critic mistook open doors for massive walls, and vice versa, all the while displaying a partisan and tendentious spirit.

This is not the place to set things right, since, among other things, that review does not deserve too much importance, and I would have to repeat considerations which I have already expounded several times in other places. I will therefore limit myself to say that the author of that book review is wrong in thinking that the special formulation given by Guénon to traditional teachings, on the basis of his "personal equation," is the only one possible and that it has the character of an absolute revelation, and that therefore everything which I thought I could and should have expounded in a different sense, is not as legitimate. The supremacy of contemplation ("knowledge") over action, upheld by Guénon, is disputable, since it is based on an arbitrary schematization of the two concepts, which bestows on action only negative attributes and on contemplation ("knowledge") positive ones. There is a traditional path of action as well as a path of knowledge, both being qualified to lead toward the objective of overcoming of the human condition. See for instance what Krishna said in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Chapter 11) when he exalts the way of action by attributing to it his supreme form of manifestation.

From a practical point of view, in order to prevent the growth of any "scholasticism," action must be granted the primacy. The traditional principle of *post laborem scientia* must be upheld; the specific practical and ascetical attitude of early Buddhism is the only adequate one. Today as never before, the challenge to the primacy of spiritual authority over regal authority constitutes a particular topic relative to a greater domain, and is the cause of the problem of establishing what are the most adequate traditional forms for the West, especially when the spiritual authority is abusively and unilaterally identified with that of a Brahmanic and priestly type. This is amply contradicted by all the main traditional civilizations. In China, ancient India, Japan, Egypt, Peru, Greece, and in old Nordic stocks, at the top of the hierarchy, one always finds sacred regality, and never a king subject to a priestly class; the early Ghibelline tradition, for instance, was inspired by these aspects of the primordial Tradition.

In the initiatory domain, specific reservations must be made about the semi-bureaucratic view of initiation, as it was understood by Guénon. I

am talking about the view which only takes into account the aggregation (which many times is totally inoperative) to "regular" organizations. These organizations in the modern world have either ceased to exist or are almost unreachable, or continue to exist in dead and even perverted forms (such as in Masonry, which is another area of my disagreement with Guénon).

Guénon's initial evaluation of Buddhism was plagued by an astonishing lack of understanding. This evaluation was suppressed in the English edition of *Orient et Occident* (Paris, 1924); Guénon later modified it in part, by making some concessions to a "Brahmanic" version of Buddhism, which is truly a Buddhism evirated of the specific and valid elements it possessed at its inception. These specific elements concerned an autonomous way of realization. In this realization, the action of a qualified individual who strives to attain the Unconditioned, even by means of violent efforts is the necessary counterpart of the descent of a force from above, which does not need "initiatory bureaucracies." What Guénon had to say in an unfortunate essay concerning "The Need for a Traditional Exotericism," must also be rejected, since it offers dangerous incentives and alibis to a reactionary and petty-bourgeois conformism. The pedantic representatives of Guénonian scholasticism should rather strive to reach a deeper understanding of the true meaning of the Way of the Left Hand, which is not any less traditional than the Way of Right Hand, and which has the advantage of emphasizing the transcendent dimension proper of every truly initiatory realization and aspiration.

An abstract and intellectualizing Guénonian scholasticism, typical of "research institutes," may well ignore the real meaning of the Way of the Left Hand. In our day and age, there is a deep and irreversible scission between the forms of the external life or traditional exoteric residues and any possible transcendent orientation. This gulf is deep and irreversible. Therefore, almost all of those who do not have the possibility or the vocation to completely detach themselves from the world, will find it very difficult to realize a "traditional" orientation in other terms than the ones which I have illustrated in my last book, *Cavalcare la tigre* [Riding the Tiger].

I cannot refer here to other distortions which my critic's review in the *Review of Traditional Studies* was guilty of. As I have said, these are things which I have discussed in books and in articles which my critic either does not know or pretends to be unaware of. Let me give you one more instance of his lack of objectivity. He makes me say that when I reviewed Buddhist ethics I recommended the use of women as objects to those who are not capable to follow the precept of chastity. Never mind reading in my *Metafisica del Sesso* [Metaphysics of Sex / Eros and the Mysteries of Love] what I have said about sex and the possibilities which it affords; what I have written in the incriminating passage, provided it is properly understood, is that one should grant to a physical impulse toward sex the mere satisfaction which is also given to the need for food. In fact, any puritanical repression of this impulse could build inner tensions and intoxications which are notorious impediments to the spiritual life, or the cause of its pollution by means of "transpositions," as in the case of certain forms of Christian mysticism.

I am told that the author of the review is a judge. I sincerely hope that in the court he will not demonstrate the same "objectivity" and lack of understanding which he displayed toward me throughout his criticisms.

René Guénon's Spiritual Understanding
Influenced by an Unacceptable Un-Aryan Vision of Life

(from "Metaphysics of War")

The decline of the modern West, according to the view of a famous critic of civilization, clearly possesses two salient characteristics: in the first place the pathological development of activity for its own sake; in the second place contempt for the values of knowledge and contemplation.

By knowledge this critic does not mean rationalism, intellectualism or the vain games of men of letters - nor by contemplation does he mean cutting oneself off from the world, renunciation or a misunderstood form of monastic detachment. Knowledge and contemplation represent for him, rather, the most normal and appropriate forms of participation of man in super-natural, superhuman and supra-rational reality. Notwithstanding this clarification his view involves what is, to us, an unacceptable presupposition. In fact, he has already tacitly implied that every act in the material domain is limiting and that the highest spiritual sphere is accessible only in ways different from those of action.

In this premise the influence of a vision of life is clearly recognizable which, in its essence, remains strange to the spirit of the Aryan race, even if it is so embedded in the thought of the Christianized West that it can even be found revived in the imperial conception of Dante. The opposition between action and contemplation, however, was unknown to the ancient Aryans. Action and contemplation were not regarded as the two terms of an opposition. They designated merely two distinct paths to the same spiritual realization. In other words, it was thought that man could overcome the conditioning of individuality and participate in the supernatural reality by means of contemplation or, equally, by means of action. [...]

Revolutionary-Conservative vs. Revolutionary Mentality

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] Methodologically, in the quest for reference points, a given historical form must be considered exclusively as the exemplification and more or less faithful application of certain principles: this is a perfectly legitimate procedure, comparable to what in mathematics is called the shift from the differential to the integral. In such a case there is no anachronism or regression; nothing has been turned into an idol, or made absolute, that was not already so, since this is the nature

of principles. Otherwise it would be like accusing of anachronism those who defend certain peculiar virtues of the soul merely because the latter are inspired by some person in the past, in whom those virtues were exhibited to a high degree. As Hegel himself said, "It is a matter of recognizing in the apparitions of temporal and transitory things, both the substance, which is immanent, and the eternal, which is actual."

With this in mind, we can see the ultimate premises of two opposing attitudes. The axiom of the revolutionary-conservative or revolutionary-reactionary mentality is that the supreme values and the foundational principles of every healthy and normal institution are not liable to change and to becoming: among these values we may find, for instance, the true State, the imperium, the auctoritas [authority], hierarchy, justice, functional classes, and the primacy of the political element over the social and economic elements. In the domain of these values there is no "history," and to think about them in historical terms is absurd. Such values and principles have an essentially normative character. In the public and political order they have the same dignity as, in private life, is typical of values and principles of absolute morality: they are imperative principles requiring a direct, intrinsic acknowledgment (it is the capacity for such an acknowledgment that differentiates existentially a certain category beings from another). These principles are not compromised by the fact that in various instances an individual, out of weakness or due to other reasons, was unable to actualize them or to even implement them partially at one point in his life rather than another: as long as such an individual does not give up inwardly, he will be acknowledged even in abjection and in desperation. The ideas to which I am referring have the same nature: Vico called them "the natural laws of an eternal republic that varies in time and in different places." Even where these principles are objectified in a historical reality, they are not at all conditioned by it; they always point to a higher, meta-historical plane, which is their natural domain and where there is no change. The ideas that I call "traditional" must be thought of along the same lines.

The fundamental premise always revealed, more or less distinctly, in the revolutionary mentality is the total opposite. The truths it professes are historicism and empiricism. According to the revolutionary mentality, "Becoming" rules in the spiritual realm as well: everything is believed to be conditioned and shaped by the age and by the times. According to the revolutionary mentality, there are no principles, systems, and norms with values independent from the period in which they have assumed a historical form, on the basis of contingent and very human aspects such as physical, social, economic, and irrational factors. According to the most extreme and up-to-date trajectory of this deviant mind-set, the truly determining factor of every structure, and of what resembles an autonomous value, is the contingency proper to the various forms and development of the means of production, according to its consequences and social repercussions.

In chapter 7 I will discuss at greater length the historicist thesis I have merely outlined here, in order to clarify the fundamental and unbridgeable gap between the two premises. It is therefore useless to engage in a discussion when this gap is not acknowledged as given, a

priori. The two views are as irreconcilable as the patterns of thought behind them. The former is the truth upheld by the revolutionary conservative, and by any group that, in the political realm, can be properly characterized as part of an authentic "Right"; the latter is the myth upheld by world subversion, the common background of all its forms, no matter how extreme, moderate, or watered down they may be. The previous considerations concerning the method and the meaning of some historical references also have a practical value. As a matter of fact, in a nation there is not always a sufficient living traditional continuity, whereas referring to existing or relatively young institutions may serve directly as a reference to the corresponding ideas. Conversely, it may happen that, when the continuity is broken, the previous procedure is adopted: then one must look to other eras, but only in order to derive from them ideas that are valid per se. This is especially the case for Italy. In previous books of mine I have often wondered what could actually be "preserved" in this country. In Italy we find no basis of political forms that have been preserved sufficiently intact from a traditional past; this is due mainly to the fact that such a past is lacking and that, unlike in major European states, in Italy there was no secular and continuous unitary formation connected to a symbol and to a central, dynastic political power. More specifically, in Italy there is no trace of a strong ideological legacy (not even as the legacy of a few) that would enable people to feel everything connected with the ideologies that arose with the French Revolution as extraneous, unnatural, and destructive. In fact, it was precisely these ideologies, in various forms, that propitiated the unification of Italy, continued to prevail in the unified Italy, and multiplied in the most virulent forms after the Fascist era. Thus, there is a hiatus and a vacuum—and, in the case of Italy, the reference to traditional principles will necessarily have an ideal rather than a historical character. And even if we refer to historical forms, we should only acknowledge them to be the mere basis for an integration that will immediately leave them behind, having in mind ideas instead; the historical distance being (as in the case of the ancient Roman world, or certain aspects of medieval civilization) too great for that reference to serve any other purpose.

Such a circumstance does not represent a disadvantage from all points of view—for instance, if the ideas to which I allude were implemented by a new movement, they would appear in an almost pure state, with only a minimum of historical dross.

Unfortunately, Italian representatives of these principles will not be able to benefit from what some states, especially the central European ones, displayed as a residual historical positive basis or as a predisposition for a conservative revolution; the positive counterpart of this disadvantage is that if the formation I have in mind will come into existence, it will be endowed with an absolute and uncompromising character. Precisely because there is no material support still alive emanating from a traditional past and made concrete in historical forms that are still valid, the conservative revolution in Italy must emerge as a predominantly spiritual phenomenon, based on a pure idea. However, since the present world looks more and more like a world of ruins, sooner or later the same line of action will assert itself everywhere: in other words, people will realize that it is useless to lean on what still has

vestiges of more normal institutions, but which is compromised by several negative historical factors, and that it is imperative to go back to the origins and to start anew from them, as if they towered over history, moving ahead with pure forces along the path of an avenging and reconstructive reaction. [...]

Ride the Tiger: Written for the Man of Tradition Ready to Experience the Contemporary Decline of the World of the Bourgeoisie

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The following book I wrote, *Ride the Tiger*, partly returns to the issue of the 'worker', which it develops and integrates. This book essentially sprung from the negative conclusions I had reached from my experience and a realistic assessment of the present situation; its roots, that is, lie in my awareness of the fact that nothing can be done either to bring about a significant change at the present, or to halt a series of processes which, following the latest collapses, now have free rein. In particular, the incentive for me to write *Ride the Tiger* came from various people who had followed the 'traditional' phase of my career. These people had come to acknowledge the superior validity of a model of existence and society based on those traditional ideals I had emphasized in my writing (especially in *Revolt Against the Modern World*), and had sought to address the question of what might be done in a society and culture such as ours. I thus felt the need to outline a different approach for such people. I argued that any prospect of external reconstruction is to be abandoned, for it is unrealistic in the present age of disintegration: rather, I suggested, what ought to be addressed is the purely individual problem, which is to be solved in such a way that 'what I hold no power over, may hold no power over me.'

Such, then, is the problem I tackled in *Ride the Tiger*; yet not from Everyman's perspective, but from the perspective of a given human type: the man of Tradition, the man who inwardly does not belong to the modern world, and whose fatherland and spiritual homeland lies in a different civilization; a man, therefore, who possesses a specific interiority. Nor is this the only restriction of *Ride the Tiger*: in the introduction to the book, I point out that those whom I am addressing are not the individuals willing to wage a lost war, nor those possessing the inclination and material resources to abandon the contemporary world. Nor does the book address the few individuals called forth to act as witnesses by the publication of books or other means in order to ensure that at least the mere memory of different existential horizons and levels of being - as attested in the traditional past - might not be lost forever. Rather, *Ride the Tiger* is intended for all those people who cannot or do not wish to abandon the contemporary world, but are ready to face it and to experience it even in its most feverish aspects, all the while preserving a differentiated personality and avoiding any capitulation. It is precisely this approach which the expression 'riding the tiger' refers to: for the individuals in question are to take those forces that cannot be directly opposed upon themselves and neutralize

them, along with those processes which have become unstoppable and irreversible. The forces and processes, therefore, which, for the overwhelming majority of our contemporaries, represent a cause of destruction, must firmly be allowed to act in such a way as to foster transcendence and liberation. In the book, the formula 'riding the tiger' merely applies to the inner problems of the individual - his behavior, actions and reactions in an age of dissolution - and in no way pertains to either external goals or to the future (i.e., to the prospect of the end of the current cycle and the beginning of the new one). I here pointed out that if the theory of cycles - understood in a different sense from that outlined by either Spengler or Vico - represents an integral component of traditional doctrine, it nevertheless should not be treated as a crutch in the present day: for the prospect that 'those who have kept watch during the long night might greet those who will arrive with the new dawn' remains shrouded in mist.

An important question I felt the need to address was the following: ours is often described as a time of crisis and decline; yet few attempt to define just what it is that is affected by this crisis and decline. Is it the world of Tradition? Certainly not. Rather, it is the world of the bourgeoisie, which represents the antithesis of the world of Tradition. Hence, the contemporary crisis might be described, in Hegelian terms, as a 'negation of negation': as a phenomenon, that is, not of an exclusively negative nature. The prospect we face is that this 'negation of negation' will either lead to nothingness ('either the kind of nothingness from which erupts the multiplicity of chaos, dispersion and revolt which characterizes many trends of the younger generations, or that which is concealed behind the organized system of material civilization'); or that it will lead, in the case of the kind of man I was addressing in *Ride the Tiger*, to the freeing of new space. In such a way, I both confirmed my opposition to the bourgeois world, and rejected the 'rule of residues': the futile attempt to oppose the various processes of dissolution that are currently underway by means of any surviving form of bourgeois life. I particularly felt the need to emphasize this last point, as certain individuals at the time were suggesting a strengthening of the aforementioned residues (in the form, for instance, of bourgeois Catholicism) with traditionalist ideas, without realizing that any such attempt would merely serve to put traditionalist ideas at risk without accomplishing any concrete goal. [...]

Riding the Tiger: No Fixation on Present
but Conduct of Autonomous Character and Immanent, Individual Value

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] We shall now examine the principle of "riding the tiger" as applied to the external world and the total environment. Its significance can be stated as follows: When a cycle of civilization is reaching its end, it is difficult to achieve anything by resisting it and by directly opposing the forces in motion. The current is too strong; one would be overwhelmed. The essential thing is not to let oneself be impressed by

the omnipotence and apparent triumph of the forces of the epoch. These forces, devoid of connection with any higher principle, are in fact on a short chain. One should not become fixated on the present and on things at hand, but keep in view the conditions that may come about in the future. Thus the principle to follow could be that of letting the forces and processes of this epoch take their own course, while keeping oneself firm and ready to intervene when "the tiger, which cannot leap on the person riding it, is tired of running." The Christian injunction "Resist not evil" may have a similar meaning, if taken in a very particular way. One abandons direct action and retreats to a more internal position.

The perspective offered by the doctrine of cyclical laws is implicit here. When one cycle closes, another begins, and the point at which a given process reaches its extreme is also the point at which it turns in the opposite direction. But there is still the problem of continuity between the two cycles. To use an image from Hoffmansthal, the positive solution would be that of a meeting between those who have been able to stay awake through the long night, and those who may appear the next morning. But one cannot be sure of this happening. It is impossible to foresee with certainty how, and on what plane, there can be any continuity between the cycle that is nearing its end and the next one. Therefore the line of conduct to be followed in the present epoch must have an autonomous character and an immanent, individual value. I mean to say that the attraction of positive prospects, more or less short-term, should not play an important part in it. They might be entirely lacking right up to the end of the cycle, and the possibilities offered by a new movement beyond the zero point might concern others coming after us, who may have held equally firm without awaiting any direct results or exterior changes. [...]

Sacred War's Essence
beyond Inherent Duty towards Race & Fatherland

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] Those who regard the Crusades, with indignation, as among the most extravagant episodes of the 'dark' Middle Ages, have not even the slightest suspicion that what they call 'religious fanaticism' was the visible sign of the presence and effectiveness of a sensitivity and decisiveness, the absence of which is more characteristic of true barbarism. In fact, the man of the Crusades was able to rise, to fight and to die for a purpose which, in its essence, was supra-political and supra-human, and to serve on a front defined no longer by what is particularistic, but rather by what is universal. This remains a value, an unshakeable point of reference.

Naturally, this must not be misunderstood to mean that the transcendent motive may be used as an excuse for the warrior to become indifferent, to forget the duties inherent in his belonging to a race and to a fatherland. This is not at all our point, which concerns rather the essentially deeply disparate meanings according to which actions and

sacrifices can be experienced, despite the fact that, from the external point of view, they may be absolutely the same. There is a radical difference between the one who engages in warfare simply as such, and the one who simultaneously engages in 'sacred war' and finds in it a higher experience, both desired and desirable for the spirit.

We must add that, although this difference is primarily an interior one, nevertheless, because the powers of interiority are able to find expression also in exteriority, effects derive from it also on the exterior plane, specifically in the following respects:

First of all, in an 'indomitability' of the heroic impulse: the one who experiences heroism spiritually is pervaded with a metaphysical tension, an impetus, whose object is 'infinite', and which, therefore, will carry him perpetually forward, beyond the capacity of one who fights from necessity, fights as a trade, or is spurred by natural instincts or external suggestion.

Secondly, the one who fights according to the sense of 'sacred war' is spontaneously beyond every particularism and exists in a spiritual climate which, at any given moment, may very well give rise and life to a supra-national unity of action. This is precisely what occurred in the Crusades when Princes and Dukes of every land gathered in the heroic and sacred enterprise, regardless of their particular utilitarian interests or political divisions, bringing about for the first time a great European unity, true to the common civilization and to the very principle of the Sacred Roman Empire.

Now, in this respect as well, if we are able to leave aside the 'integument', if we are able to isolate the essential from the contingent, we will find an element whose precious value is not restricted to any particular historical period. To succeed in referring heroic action also to an 'ascetic' plane, and in justifying the former according to the latter, is to clear the road towards a possible new unity of civilization, to remove every antagonism conditioned by matter, to prepare the environment for great distances and for great fronts, and, therefore, to adapt the outer purposes of action gradually to its new spiritual meaning, when it is no longer a land and the temporal ambitions of a land for which one fights, but a superior principle of civilization, a foreshadowing of what, even though itself metaphysical, moves ever forward, beyond every limit, beyond every danger, beyond every destruction.

Sport in the Modern World

(from "Revolt Against The Modern World")

[...] Regarding the degenerated forms of asceticism, I would like to point out the spirit of a phenomenon that is more properly connected to the plane of "work" (that is, of the fourth caste). The modern world knows a sublimated version of work in which the latter becomes "disinterested,"

disjoined from the economic factor and from the idea of a practical or productive goal and takes an almost ascetic form; I am talking about sport. Sport is a way of working in which the productive objective no longer matters; thus, sport is willed for its own sake as mere activity. Someone has rightly pointed out that sport is the "blue collar" religion. " Sport is a typical counterfeit of action in the traditional sense of the word. A pointless activity, it is nevertheless still characterized by the same triviality of work and belongs to the same physical and lightless group of activities that are pursued at the various crossroads in which plebeian contamination occurs. Although through the practice of sport it is possible to achieve a temporary evocation of deep forces, what this amounts to is the enjoyment of sensations and a sense of vertigo and at most, the excitement derived from directing one's energies and winning a competition without any higher and transfiguring reference, any sense of "sacrifice" or deindividualizing offering being present. Physical individuality is cherished and strengthened by sport; thus the chain is confirmed and every residue of subtler sensibility is suffocated. The human being, instead of growing into an organic being, tends to be reduced to a bundle of reflexes, and almost to a mechanism. It is also very significant that the lower strata of society are the ones that show more enthusiasm for sports, displaying their enthusiasm in great collective forms. Sport may be identified as one of the forewarning signs of that type of society represented by Chigalev in Dostoyevsky's *The Obsessed*, after the required time has elapsed for a methodical and reasoned education aimed at extirpating the evil represented by the "I" and by free will, and no longer realizing they are slaves, all the Chigalevs will return to experience the innocence and the happiness of a new Eden. This "Eden" differs from the biblical one only because work will be the dominating universal law. Work as sport and sport as work in a world that has lost the sense of historical cycles, as well as the sense of true personality, would probably be the best way to implement such a messianic ideal. Thus, it is not a coincidence that in several societies, whether spontaneously or thanks to the state, great sports organizations have arisen as the appendices of various classes of workers, and vice versa. [...]

The Concept of Holy War

(- in Islam: an Inheritance of the Persian Tradition)

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] Historically, in order to comprehend what concerns us here, it must first be understood that the Islamic tradition, rather than having such a unique metaphysical point of origin, is essentially dependent upon its inheritance of the Persian tradition - Persia, as is well known, having possessed one of the highest pre-European civilizations. The original Mazdaist conception of religion, as military service under the sign of the 'God of Light', and of existence as a continuous, relentless struggle to rescue beings and things from the control of an anti-god, is at the centre of the Persian vision of life, and should be considered as the metaphysical counterpart and spiritual background to the warrior

enterprises which culminated in the creation by the Persians of the empire of the 'kings of kings'. After the fall of Persia's power, echoes of such traditions persisted in the cycle of medieval Arabian civilization in forms which became slightly more materialistic and sometimes exaggerated, yet not to such an extent that their original elements of spirituality were entirely lost.

We bring up traditions of that kind here, above all, because they introduce a concept which is very useful in clarifying further the order of ideas set out in our latest articles; namely, the concept of the 'greater' or 'holy war', as distinct from the 'lesser war', but at the same time as related to the latter in a special manner. The distinction itself derives from a saying of the Prophet, who, returning from a warrior expedition, declared: "I return now from the lesser to the greater war."

The lesser war here corresponds to the exoteric war, the bloody battle which is fought with material arms against the enemy, against the 'barbarian', against an inferior race over whom a superior right is claimed, or, finally, when the event is motivated by a religious justification, against the 'infidel'. No matter how terrible and tragic the events, no matter how huge the destruction, this war, metaphysically, still remains a 'lesser war'. The 'greater' or 'holy war' is, contrarily, of the interior and intangible order - it is the war which is fought against the enemy, the 'barbarian', the 'infidel', whom everyone bears in himself, or whom everyone can see arising in himself on every occasion that he tries to subject his whole being to a spiritual law. Appearing in the forms of craving, partiality, passion, instinctuality, weakness and inward cowardice, the enemy within the natural man must be vanquished, its resistance broken, chained and subjected to the spiritual man, this being the condition of reaching inner liberation, the 'triumphant peace' which allows one to participate in what is beyond both life and death.

Some may say that this is simply asceticism. The greater, holy war is the ascesis which has always been a philosophical goal. It could be tempting to add as well: it is the path of those who wish to escape from the world and who, using the excuse of inner liberation, become a herd of pacifist cowards. This is not at all the way things are. After the distinction between the two wars there is their synthesis. It is a feature of heroic traditions that they prescribe the 'lesser war', that is to say the real, bloody war, as an instrument in the realization of the 'greater: or 'holy war'; so much so that, finally, both become one and the same thing.

Thus, in Islam, 'holy war' - jihad - and 'the path of God' are interchangeable terms. The one who fights is on the 'path of God'. A well-known and quite characteristic saying of this tradition is: "The blood of heroes is closer to the Lord than the ink of scholars and the prayers of the pious."

Once again, as in the traditions already reviewed by us, as in the Roman ascesis of power and in the classical mors triumphalis, action attains the value of an inner overcoming and of an approximation to a life no longer mixed with darkness, contingency, uncertainty and death. In more concrete terms, the predicaments, risks and ordeals peculiar to the

events of war bring about an emergence of the inner 'enemy', which, in the forms of the instinct of self-preservation, cowardice, cruelty, pity and blind riotousness, arise as obstacles to be vanquished just as one fights the outer enemy. It is clear from this that the decisive point is constituted by one's inner orientation, one's unshakeable persistence in what is spiritual in this double struggle, so that an irresistible and blind changing of oneself into a sort of wild animal does not occur, but, instead, a way is found of not letting the deepest forces escape, a way of seeing to it that one is never overwhelmed inwardly, that one always remains supreme master of oneself, and, precisely because of this sovereignty, one remains able to affirm himself against every possible limitation. In a tradition to which we will dedicate our next article, this situation is represented by a most characteristic symbol: the warrior is accompanied by an impassive divine being who, without fighting, leads and guides him in his struggle, side by side with him in the same war chariot. This symbol is the personified expression of a duality of principles, which the true hero, from whom something sacred always emanates, maintains unceasingly within himself.

[...] As if by a circular path the reader is thus brought back to the same ideas which were examined in our previous writings on the subject of tradition, whether classical or Nordic-medieval: that is to say, to the idea of a privileged immortality reserved for heroes, who alone, according to Hesiod, pass on to inhabit symbolic islands, which image forth the bright and intangible existence of the Olympians.

Additionally, in the Islamic tradition, there are frequent references to the idea that some warriors fallen in the 'sacred war' are in reality not dead, in a sense which is not symbolic in any way, and which need not be referred to supernatural states cut off from the energies and destinies of the living. It is not possible to enter into this domain, which is rather mysterious and requires the support of references which would ill befit the present article. What we can say definitely is that, even today, and particularly in Italy, the rites by which a warrior community declares its most heroically fallen companions still 'present' have regained a special evocative force. He who begins from the belief that everything which, by a process of involution, retains today only an allegorical and, at best, moral character, whereas it originally possessed the value of reality, and every rite contained real action and not mere 'ceremony' - for him these warrior rites of today could perhaps provide material for meditation, and he could perhaps approach the mystery contained in the teaching already quoted: that is, the idea of heroes who really never died, and the idea of victors who, like the Roman Caesar, remain as 'perpetual victors' at the centre of a human stock.

"The Doctrine of Awakening":
Only Work to Reveal the Buddha's True Teachings

(from "The Yoga of Power")

[...] I am not pleased to report that in no work other than my *The Doctrine of Awakening* is it possible to have an idea of what early Buddhism stood for, prior to its ensuing decadence.

The "Elements of Style" of the Original Roman Spirit

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] we should be able to extract from the Roman spirit a living content that has nothing to do with rhetorical assumptions or with museums and scholarly dissertations, such that even a simple man could understand it without the need of erudition and historical notions. To this effect, I have spoken about "elements of style." These elements have to be drawn from what we know about the Roman tradition and customs; in this case too, we need to discriminate among various types of Roman spirit. Alongside the Roman spirit of the origins, which reproduced in a special and original form a type of culture and custom common to the main, higher Indo-European civilizations, there were a Hellenized (in the negative sense of the term), a "Punicized," a "Ciceronian," an "Asiaticized," and a Catholic Roman spirit. The reference points should not be sought in these cases. Everything that is valid in them can be reduced to the first Roman spirit.

This original Roman spirit was based on a human type characterized by a group of typical dispositions. Among them we should include self-control, an enlightened boldness, a concise speech and determined and coherent conduct, and a cold dominating attitude, exempt from personalism and vanity. To the Roman style belong *virtus*, in the sense not of moralism, but of virile spirit and courage; *fortitudo* and *constantia*, namely spiritual strength; *sapientia*, in the sense of thoughtfulness and awareness; *disciplina*, understood as love for a self-given law and form; *fides*, in the specifically Roman sense of loyalty and faithfulness; and *dignitas*, which in the ancient patrician aristocracy became *gravitas* and *solemnitas*, a studied and moderate seriousness. The same style is characterized by deliberate actions, without grand gestures; a realism that is not materialism, but rather love for the essential; the ideal of clarity, which eventually turned into rationalism in only some Latin peoples; an inner equilibrium and a healthy suspicion for every confused form of mysticism; a love for boundaries; the readiness to unite, as free human beings and without losing one's identity, in view of a higher goal or for an idea. We may also add *religio* and *pietas*, which do not mean "religiosity" in the Christian sense of the word, but instead signify for a Roman an attitude of respectful and dignified veneration for the gods and, at the same time, of trust and re-connection with the supernatural, which was experienced as omnipresent and effective in terms of individual, collective, and historical forces. Obviously, I am far from suggesting that every Roman man and woman embodied these traits; however, they represented the "dominant factor" and were embodied in the ideal that everybody perceived to be specifically Roman.

Likewise, these elements of style are self-evident. They are not connected to past times; they may act in every period as character-forming influences and effective values as soon as a corresponding calling is awakened. They have a normative value. In the worst case, they might have only the value of a measure. Moreover, we should not think they must be adopted by every individual; this would be absurd and even unnecessary. It would suffice if only a certain social stratum, called to inspire the others, could embody them. [...]

The Instruments of the Occult War

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] For practical purposes, too, it is very important to recognize the instruments of the occult war, namely the means employed by the secret forces of global subversion to conceal their action, prevent their opponents' action, and continue to exercise their influence. I will now say something in this regard, drawing inspiration from some of the points developed by Rene Guénon, who was one of the most perceptive people in reference to the secret backgrounds of many upheavals of modern times.

Let us begin with the tool of scientific suggestion. I believe the "scientific" method of considering events and history is more the consequence of a suggestion spread in modern culture by antitraditional forces in order to conceal their action than the natural orientation of a shortsighted mentality. Those who believe that history is made only by the men on the stage, and determined by the most evident economic, social, political, and cultural factors do not see and do not seek any other explanation; and yet this is exactly what every force operating in secret desires. A civilization dominated by the positivist prejudice offers the most fertile ground to an action arising from what I have called the "third dimension." In great part this is the case with modern civilization. It is a civilization rendered myopic and defenseless by the positivist, rationalist, and scientist prejudice. We have scarcely begun to expose all the ideas that remain as the basis of the modern mentality and education; these ideas are not so much errors and limitations as they are suggestions spread and promoted for precise reasons by antitraditional forces.

I have already mentioned some nonpositivist views of the course of events that introduce various entities, such as the "absolute Spirit," or the élan vital, or "History." In this we can see an example of the possible application of a second instrument of the occult war, the tactic of replacement. This tactic is employed every time there is the danger of an awakening on the part of "history's objects," or when some ideas that facilitate the occult game of the forces of global subversion have lost their power of suggestion. In the above-mentioned case, such confused philosophical views act as a sort of bait for those who are unsatisfied with positivist views, so that their eyes may not look in the direction where they should. Due to the vagueness of these notions, the field is

not any less concealed than by positivist blindness. People will play around with "philosophical ideas" while the plan continues to unfold.

Often the tactic of replacement develops efficaciously in the form of a tactic of counterfeits. It may happen that after the effects of the destructive work reach the material plane, they become so visible as to provoke a reaction, and thus ideas and symbols are employed for a defense and a reconstruction. In the best scenario they are values of the traditional past, which come back to life thanks to this existential reaction of a society or civilization threatened by dissolution. Then the occult war is not waged in a direct manner; often attention is paid to promoting only distortions and counterfeits of these ideas. In this way, the reaction is contained, deviated, or even led in the opposite direction.

Such a tactic may be employed in various domains, from the spiritual and cultural to the political. An example is given by "traditionalism." I have already discussed what the term tradition signifies in the higher sense of the word: it is the form bestowed by forces from above upon the overall possibilities of a given cultural area and specific period, through super-individual and even antihistorical values and through elites that know how to derive an authority and natural prestige from such values. In the present day it often happens that a confused desire to return to "tradition" is purposely channeled to the form of "traditionalism." The content of this "traditionalism" consists of habits, routines, surviving residues and vestiges of what once was, without a real understanding of the spiritual world and of what in them is not merely factual but has a character of perennial value. Thus, such nontraditional or, should we say, "traditionalist" attitudes offer an easy target to the enemy, whose attack mounted against traditionalism is only the opening barrage preceding an attack against Tradition itself: to this purpose the slogans of "anachronism," "anti-history," "immobilism," and "regression" are employed. Thus, reaction is paralyzed as the maneuver leads successfully to the preestablished goal.

From the general plane it is easy to shift to particular cases, since recent history is full of them. Thus, in the political context, the Roman idea with its symbols, the "Aryan" idea, and the idea of the Empire or Reich—to all this the tactic of misleading substitutions and counterfeits has been applied with depreciable effects that cannot elude an attentive observer. Therefore, it is possible to understand the validity of the points I made in the first chapter.

Fourth, we must point out the tactic of inversion. Let us take a typical example. The secret forces of global subversion knew exactly that the basis of the order to be destroyed consisted in the supernatural element—that is, in the spirit-conceived not as a philosophical abstraction or as an element of faith, but as a superior reality, as a reference point for the integration of everything that is human.

After limiting the influence that could be exercised in this regard by Christianity, through the spread of materialism and scientism, the forces of global subversion have endeavored to conveniently divert any tendency toward the supernatural arising outside the dominant religion and the

limitation of its dogmas. So-called "neo-spiritualism," not only in its more deleterious spiritualist forms, but also in its pseudo-Eastern and occultist forms (not to mention the theories concerning the unconscious, the irrational, and so on), is greatly influenced by the tactic of inversion. Instead of rising toward what is beyond the person as a really supernatural element, here we remain in the subpersonal and in the infrarational, according to an inversion that quite often has sinister characteristics.

The results achieved in this way are twofold. First, it was easy to extend the discredit that in numerous cases rightly affected these ideas to different ideas that might appear related, even though in their innermost essence they have nothing in common; thus, the latter genuine ideas are put in a condition to no longer pose a threat. A good part of what the West has learned about the East, outside the dry and sterile domain of philology and academic specialization, is often affected by this maneuver. The results seem to be for the most part something distorted; this severely limits the positive influence that various aspects of the legacy of ancient Eastern spirituality are liable to exercise, provoking the reaction of the most obtuse and inappropriate "defenses of the West." Another example lies in the milieus that, when it comes to symbols and esotericism, can think only of Masonry or Theosophy, even when the reference goes back to ancient and noble traditions that have nothing to do with the latter; the positivist and rationalist prejudice of a certain critical "culture" identifies all this as superstition and fantasy, thus completing the smear campaign. This is the case with examples of some militant Catholic apologetics that see only naturalism and pantheism in everything outside their perspective; these are misunderstandings and effects of an interplay of concordant actions and reactions, to which several representatives of Catholicism are liable.

The second result does not concern the domain of ideas but rather the practical and concrete domain. The inverted tendencies toward the spiritual and the supernatural can favor the emergence of dark forces, and be resolved in a deceitful action against the human personality. Many reactions against rationalism and intellectualism lead exactly to this, especially the theories of the unconscious, which through psychoanalysis have either generated a well-established practice or encouraged various forms of morbid fascination.

Another method is the tactic of ricochet. This occurs when the traditional forces being targeted take the initiative through an action against other traditional forces, an action that eventually ricochets back at its promoters. For instance, the secret forces of global subversion, through opportune infiltrations or suggestions, may induce the representatives of a certain tradition to believe that the best way to strengthen it consists of either undermining or discrediting other traditions. Those who do not realize what is going on and who, because of material interests, attack Tradition in like-minded people sooner or later must expect to see Tradition attacked in themselves, by ricochet. The forces of global subversion rely very much on this tactic; thus, they attempt in every possible way to cause any higher idea to give in to the tyranny of individual interests or proselytizing, prideful, and power-

hungry tendencies. They know perfectly well that this is the best way to destroy every unity and solidarity and to favor a state of affairs in which their overall scheme will be implemented. They know well that there is an objective law of immanent justice and that "the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine," and thus they act accordingly; they wait for the fruits of these inconsiderable initiatives to mature and then they intervene.

In the political domain, the case of every Machiavellian employment of revolutionary forces falls within this category. Shortsighted political leaders have often believed that to arouse or to support revolution in hostile nations is, in certain circumstances, an excellent means to benefit their own people. Without realizing it, or in becoming aware of it too late, they have obtained the opposite result. While they thought they were using the revolution as a means, it was the revolution that used them as tools; eventually, the revolution spread to other countries, catching up with the politicians who unleashed it and wiping them out. Modern history has been in part the theater of a subversion that has tragically spread in this way.

Thus, we can never emphasize too much that unconditioned loyalty to an idea is the only possible protection from occult war; where such loyalty falls short and where the contingent goals of "real politics" are obeyed, the front of resistance is already undermined. The ricochet should be seen in an analogous context, in the case of "peoples' right to self-determination." This principle, after having been employed by modern democracies as an ideological instrument during World War II, eventually affected white peoples, thus putting an end to Europe's prestige and preeminence.

When the secret forces of world subversion are fearful of exposure or realize that, due to special circumstances, the direction imparted from backstage has become obvious, at least in its major effects, they employ the scapegoat tactic. They try to shift the enemy's attention onto elements that are responsible only partially, or in a subordinated fashion, for their own wrongful deeds. A reaction is unleashed against those elements, which then become the scapegoats. Thus, after a pause, the secret front may resume its work, because its opponents believe they have identified the enemy and dealt with it. Talking about the Protocols, I have mentioned a possible example of such tactics in reference to the part attributed to Jews and Masons. Thus, we must beware of any unilaterality and never lose sight of the overall picture of the secret front.

Let us now discuss the tactic of dilution, which constitutes a particular aspect of the "tactic of surrogates." The main example that I will now introduce must be prefaced with the following: the process that has led to the current crises has remote origins and has developed in several phases. In each of these phases the crisis was already present, though in a latent or potential form. The theory of "progress" may be regarded as one of the suggestions spread by the secret forces of world subversion so that attention would be diverted from the origins and the process of dissolution could proceed, carried forth by the illusion of the triumphs of technological-industrial civilization. The tragic events of recent

times have provoked a partial awakening from this hypnosis. Many people have begun to realize that the march of so-called progress paralleled a race toward the abyss. Thus, to stop and return to the origins as the only way to restore a normal civilization has been the inspiring vision for many. Next, the occult front employed new means to prevent any radical reaction. Here, too, it employed the slogans of "anachronism" and "reactionary and retrograde forces"; then it caused the forces that aimed at a return to the origins to be led toward stages in which the crisis and the disease were present in less extreme forms, though still clearly visible. This trap worked as well. The leaders of world subversion naturally know that, once this is done, there is no longer a real danger: it is enough to wait and soon we will be back at the starting point, by following processes analogous to the ones that have already occurred, but now without the possibility of any resistance to the dissolution.

There are many historical examples of this tactic, which should be rather instructive for those who hope to assume the initiative of a reconstructive action. As a first example, we should examine closely some traits of modern nationalism. We know about the revolutionary, subversive, and antihierarchical function that the collectivist-demagogic concept of "nation" has played against the previous forms of European civilization and political organization. The reference point of many people who have fought against the various internationals (especially against the communist International) has been the concept of the nation; care was rarely taken to define such a concept in a way that would no longer represent what needed to be opposed.

In this regard, it will suffice to recall what I have said earlier about the opposition existing between popular nationalism and the spiritual nation, between national State and traditional State (see chapter 3). In the first case, nationalism has a leveling and antiaristocratic function; it is like the prelude to a wider leveling, the common denominator of which is no longer the nation, but rather the International. In the second case, the idea of the nation may serve as the foundation for a new recovery and an important first reaction against the internationalist dissolution; it upholds a principle of differentiation that still needs to be further carried through toward an articulation and hierarchy within every single people. But where the awareness of this opposition is lacking, as in indiscriminate nationalism, there is a danger of being subjected to the tactic of dilution: this danger, incidentally, has already occurred. It is in view of this—that is, of such a possible meaning of nationalistic orientation—that Soviet communism, while opposing nationalism as a counterrevolutionary phenomenon, favors and supports it in the non-Marxist areas inhabited by the "underdeveloped" peoples, who are the alleged victims of colonialism, waiting for further developments to lead to the stage in which it will be able to reap its fruits.

I will mention here two more examples of the tactic of dilution. The first concerns the socioeconomic domain and is connected to all the "national" and social-conformist versions of Marxism; it is the same disease in diluted form. This is also the case with "socializing" theories, which are Trojan horses to be introduced into the citadel, in order to conquer it not with a direct attack, but rather through a

natural and inevitable inner development. The second example concerns the cultural domain. I have already discussed the meaning of psychoanalytical theories in the context of the modern subversion. Among those who are capable of a healthy discernment there has been a reaction against the coarsest forms of this pseudo-science, which correspond to pure or "orthodox" Freudianism. The tactic of dilution was employed again; the formulation and spread of a spiritualized psychoanalysis for more refined tastes was furthered.

The result was that those who react against Freud and his disciples no longer do so against Jung, without realizing that what is at work here is the same inversion, though in a more dangerous form because it is subtler, and a contaminating exegesis ventures more decidedly into the domain of spirituality than in the case of Freud.

Another tactic is the deliberate misidentification of a principle with its representatives. In many regards the decay of traditional institutions began with the corruption of their worldly representatives. The effective dissolution and destruction has been made possible by the confusion between principles and people; this is another weapon of the occult war. When the representatives of a given principle prove to be unworthy of it, the criticism of them extends immediately to the principle itself and is especially directed against it. Instead of acknowledging that some individuals are not at the level of the principle, and instead of requiring that they be replaced by qualified individuals, in order to restore a situation of normalcy, it is claimed that the principle itself is false, corrupt, or passé and that it should be replaced with a different principle. In almost every revolution this tactic has played a major role. It may also be characterized as that of portraying a crisis in the system as a crisis of the system. Examples of this kind are so prevalent that I hardly need mention them. The attack against monarchies and aristocracies has followed this path. Marxism has applied the same device, using the injustices of capitalism as a pretext in order to attack free-market economy and to proclaim a collectivist economy. In the spiritual domain the examples are numerous. The Lutheran Reformation used the corruption of the representatives of the Roman Church in order to question the principle of authority and many fundamental beliefs of the Catholic tradition, thus shifting over from people to principles.

Finally, I wish to mention one more instrument of the secret war, though it refers to a very particular domain: the tactic of the replacing infiltrations. It is when a certain spiritual or traditional organization falls into such a state of degeneration that its representatives know very little of its true, inner foundation, or the basis of its authority and prestige. The life of such an organization may then be compared to the automatic state of a sleepwalker, or living body deprived of its soul. In a sense a spiritual "void" has been created that can be filled, through infiltrations, by other subversive forces. These forces, while leaving the appearances unchanged, use the organization for totally different purposes, which at times may even be the opposite of those that were originally its own. We should also not rule out the case where such infiltrated elements work for the destruction of the organization that they now control—for example, by creating new scandals, liable to give

rise to serious repercussions. In this particular instance what is employed on the outside is the previously mentioned tactic of mistaking the representatives for the principle. Even the knowledge of this can cast light on many phenomena of the past and present. Having mentioned Masonry, it must be stated that the genesis of modern Freemasonry as a subversive force is due to this tactic of replacement and inversion that is exercised within some of the oldest organizations, which Masonry retained as mere vestiges, structures, symbols, and hierarchies, while the effective guiding influences have a different nature altogether.

I hope that having limited myself to only a few examples and having primarily discussed principles will not prevent the reader from recognizing the multiple possibilities of application of those same principles in various spheres, for there is no sphere in which the occult war has not in some manner been undertaken and is not still being waged today. The most important sphere for the application of the knowledge of the weapons of the occult war is the inner one: the world of one's own thoughts. It is here that one needs to be on guard; it is here one should be able to recognize the subtle influences that try to suggest ideas and reactions to us in certain situations. If this can be accomplished, even if it is still not possible to identify the enemy in our midst, it would at least bar to him the main paths of his secret action.

In what I have expounded there is neither philosophical speculation nor flight of fancy, but rather serious and positive ideas. I am firmly convinced that no fighter or leader on the front of counter-subversion and Tradition can be regarded as mature and fit for his tasks before developing the faculty to perceive this world of subterranean causes, so that he can face the enemy on the proper ground. We should recall the myth of the Learned Elders of the Protocols: compared to them, men who see only "facts" are like dumb animals. There is little hope that anything may be saved when among the leaders of a new movement there are no men capable of integrating the material struggle with a secret and inexorable knowledge, one that is not at the service of dark forces but stands instead on the side of the luminous principle of traditional spirituality.

The Italians' Half-Hearted Attempt at Revolution Ruined Fascism

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The Fascist 'revolution' in Italy had only affected certain political bodies: even from a political perspective, it had only been a half-hearted attempt at revolution, which never led to the development of a coherent, systematic and uncompromising doctrine of the State. This is not the right place to discuss what elements of Fascism might have assumed a traditional character (and thus have acted not as something new, but as the specific adaptations of ideas reflecting the great, traditional politics of Europe); and what features of Fascism, on the

contrary, were the worst (most notably: its promotion of 'totalitarianism' in place of 'organic statehood'; its ambition to embody a regime of the masses; its Napoleonic dictatorship and emphasis on the personal figure of the Leader; its half-hearted corporatism; its attempt to overcome the class divisions established by Marxism in the industrial and economic sphere by means of inefficient bureaucratic superstructures; the grotesque, insolent and pedagogic attitude of Gentile's 'ethical State'). In strictly cultural terms, however, the Fascist 'revolution' was simply a joke. All that was required in order to become a representative of Fascist 'culture' was to be a member of the Party and to pay formal, conformist tribute to the Duce. All else was more or less irrelevant.

Mussolini once said that Party membership did not bestow intelligence. He also ought to have pointed out that intelligence, in itself, has nothing to do with the kind of spiritual education which Fascism sought to cultivate. Instead of starting from scratch, of ignoring fame and big names, instead of subjecting each intellectual candidate to a radical reassessment, Fascism, with provincial and bourgeois ambition, chose to welcome all the 'cultural representatives' of the bourgeoisie, as long as they could give proof of their formal (and irrelevant) adherence to the regime. This led to pathetic cases such as that of the Accademia d'Italia, the members of which were largely agnostic or anti-Fascist in their private beliefs. But the same is also true of many other men who were assigned prominent roles within the Fascist cultural establishment and media. It is not surprising, therefore, to find many of these gentlemen now donning a new uniform in democratic, anti-Fascist Italy.

A particularly pathetic case is that of the so-called Istituto di Studi Romani (Institute of Roman Studies). As Rome had been chosen as the highest symbol of the Fascist 'revolution', it would only have been natural for the Fascist regime to foster a detailed, lively and systematic study of the values and expressions of Roman civilization (even if of a different and less extreme kind from the study I had personally presented in Pagan Imperialism). And yet, the Fascist regime made do with this clerical and bourgeois institute, which confined itself to formal semi-academic exercises in the fields of philology, archaeology, art history and the like. Ironically, it was overseas scholars - such as Bachofen, Altheim, W. Otto, Piganiol, Dumézil and Kerényi - who most contributed towards the Fascist myth of Rome. It was with sarcasm that foreigners acquainted with my own defense of the Roman ideal discussed the only centre that Fascism had officially established to study the subject: the Institute I just mentioned, which, naturally enough, destined to survive the crisis of Fascism and to carry on its squalid activities in the anti-Fascist milieu of democratic Italy (which now mocks the Roman ideal, accusing it of fostering idle rhetoric).

So much, then, for 'Fascist culture'. I will mention one more fact which illustrates how the editorial activities I pursued, even when under the kind of official protection I mentioned, were ignored by the mainstream press then, just as they are today (for the mainstream press has continued to ignore my work, even after the publication of *Revolt Against the Modern World*). Paradoxically, I elicited more interest overseas,

where I was seen as the chief representative of a revolutionary culture (or, rather, of a revolutionary worldview and approach to history) - much to the chagrin of those people who dominated the cultural milieu of Italy and who had secured a place for themselves in the exclusive circuits of official culture. It is only natural, therefore, for the legacy of Fascist 'culture' to be non-existent. It is said that Fascism ruined the Italian people. Military issues notwithstanding, I would rather argue the opposite: that it is the Italians who ruined Fascism; for Italy proved incapable of providing the kind of people who might develop the superior potentialities of Fascism while neutralizing its negative aspects (and this, of course, not merely from the point of view of culture).

The Meaning and Context of Zen

(from "Zen - The Religion of the Samurai")

We know the kind of interest Zen has evoked even outside specialized disciplines, since being popularized in the west by D.T. Suzuki through his books Introduction to Zen Buddhism and Essays in Zen Buddhism. This popular interest is due to the paradoxical encounter between East and West. The ailing West perceives that Zen has something "existential" and surrealist to offer. Zen's notion of a spiritual realization, free from any faith and any bond, not to mention the mirage of an instantaneous and somehow gratuitous "spiritual breakthrough", has exercised a fascinating attraction on many Westerners. However, this is true, for the most part, only superficially. There is a considerable difference between the spiritual dimension of the "philosophy of crisis", which has become popular in the West as a consequence of its materialistic and nihilist development, and the spiritual dimension of Zen, which has been rooted in the spirituality of the Buddhist tradition. Any true encounter between Zen and the West, presupposes, in a Westerner, either an exceptional predisposition, or the capability to operate a metanoia. By metanoia I mean an inner turnabout, affecting not so much one's intellectual "attitudes", but rather a dimension which in every time and in every place has been conceived as a deeper reality.

Zen was a secret doctrine and not to be found in scriptures. It was passed on by the Buddha to his disciple Mahakassapa. This secret doctrine was introduced in China around the sixth century C.E. by Bodhidharma. The canon was transmitted in China and Japan through a succession of teachers and "patriarchs". In Japan it is a living tradition and has many advocates and numerous Zendo ("Halls of Meditation").

As far as the spirit informing the tradition is concerned, Zen may be considered as a continuation of early Buddhism. Buddhism arose as a vigorous reaction against the theological speculation and the shallow ritualism into which the ancient Hindu priestly caste had degraded after possessing a sacred, lively wisdom since ancient times. Buddha made tabula rasa of all this: he focused instead on the practical problem of how to overcome what in the popular mind is referred to as "life's suffering". According to esoteric teachings, this suffering was

considered as the state of caducity, restlessness, 'thirst' and the forgetfulness typical of ordinary people. Having followed the path leading to spiritual awakening and to immortality without external aid, Buddha pointed the way to those who felt an attraction to it. It is well known that Buddha is not a name, but an attribute or a title meaning "the awakened One", "He who has achieved enlightenment", or "the awakening". Buddha was silent about the content of his experience, since he wanted to discourage people from assigning to speculation and philosophizing a primacy over action. Therefore, unlike his predecessors, he did not talk about Brahman (the absolute), or about Atman (the transcendental Self), but only employed the term nirvana, at the risk of being misunderstood. Some, in fact, thought, in their lack of understanding, that nirvana was to be identified with the notion of "nothingness", an ineffable and evanescent transcendence, almost bordering on the limits of the unconscious and of a state of unaware non-being.

So, in a further development of Buddhism, what occurred again, *mutatis mutandis*, was exactly the situation against which Buddha had reacted; Buddhism became a religion, complete with dogmas, rituals, scholasticism and mythology. It eventually became differentiated into two schools: Mahayana and Hinayana. The former was more grandiose in metaphysics and eventually grew complacent with its abstruse symbolism. The teachings of the latter school were more strict and to the point, and yet too concerned about the mere moral discipline, which became increasingly monastic. Thus the essential and original nucleus, namely the esoteric doctrine of the enlightenment, was almost lost.

At this crucial time Zen appeared, declaring the uselessness of these so-called methods and proclaiming the doctrine of satori. Satori is a fundamental inner event, a sudden existential breakthrough, corresponding in essence to what I have called the "awakening". But this formulation was new and original and it constituted a radical change in approach. Nirvana, which had been variously considered as the alleged Nothingness, as extinction, and as the final end result of an effort aimed at obtaining liberation (which according to some may require more than one lifetime), now came to be considered as the normal human condition. By these lights, every person has the nature of Buddha and every person is already liberated, and therefore, situated above and beyond birth and death. It is only necessary to become aware of it, to realize it, to see within one's nature, according to Zen's main expression. Satori is like a timeless opening up. On the one hand, satori is something sudden and radically different from all the ordinary human states of consciousness; it is like a catastrophic trauma within ordinary consciousness. On the other hand, satori is what leads one back to what, in a higher sense, should be considered as normal and natural; thus, it is the exact opposite of an ecstasis, or trance. It is the rediscovery and the appropriation of one's true nature: it is the enlightenment which draws out of ignorance or out of the subconscious the deep reality of what was and will always be, regardless of one's condition in life.

The consequence of satori is a completely new way to look at the world and at life. To those who have experienced it, everything is the same (things, other beings, one's self, "heaven, the rivers and the vast earth"), and yet everything is fundamentally different. It is as if a new

dimension was added to reality, transforming the meaning and value. According to the Zen Masters, the essential characteristic of the new experience is the overcoming of every dualism: of the inner and outer; the I and not I; of finitude and infinity; being and not-being; appearance and reality; "empty" and "full"; substance and accidents. Another characteristic is that any value posed by the finite and confused consciousness of the individual, is no longer discernible. And thus, the liberated and the non-liberated, the enlightened and the non-enlightened, are yet one and same thing. Zen effectively perpetuates the paradoxical equation of Mahayana Buddhism, nirvana = samsara, and the Taoist saying "the return is infinitely far". It is as if Zen said: liberation should not be looked for in the next world; this very world is the next world; it is liberation and it does not need to be liberated. This is the point of view of satori, of perfect enlightenment, of "transcendent wisdom" (prajnaparamita).

Basically, this consciousness is a shift of the self's center. In any situation and in any event of ordinary life, including the most trivial ones, the ordinary, dualistic and intellectual sense of one's self is substituted with a being who no longer perceives an "I" opposed to a "non-I", and who transcends and overcomes any antithesis. This being eventually comes to enjoy a perfect freedom and incoercibility. He is like the wind, which blows where it wills, and like a naked being which is everything and possesses everything because he has let go and abandoned everything, embracing poverty.

Zen, or at least mainstream Zen, emphasizes the discontinuous, sudden and unpredictable character of satori disclosure. In regard to this, Suzuki was at fault when he took issue with the techniques used in Hindu schools such as Samkya and Yoga. These techniques were also contemplated in early Buddhist texts. Suzuki employed the simile of water, which in a moment turns into ice. He also used the simile of an alarm, which, as a consequence of some vibration, suddenly goes off. There are no disciplines, techniques or efforts, according to Suzuki, which by themselves may lead one to satori. On the contrary, it is claimed that satori often occurs spontaneously, when one has exhausted all the resources of his being, especially the intellect and logical faculty of understanding. In some cases satori is said to be facilitated by violent sensations and even by physical pain. Its cause may be the mere perception of an object as well as any event in ordinary life, provided a certain latent predisposition exists in the subject.

Regarding this, some misunderstandings may occur. Suzuki acknowledged that "generally speaking, there are no indications on the inner work preceding satori". However, he talked about the necessity of first going through "a true baptism of fire". After all, the very institution of the so-called "Halls of Meditation" (Zendo), where those who strive to obtain satori submit themselves to a regimen of life which is partially analogous to that of some Catholic religious orders, bespeaks the necessity of a preliminary preparation. This preparation may last for several years. The essence of Zen seems to consist in a maturation process, identical to the one in which one almost reaches a state of an acute existential instability. At that point, the slightest push is sufficient to produce a change of state, a spiritual breakthrough, the

opening which leads to the "intuitive vision of one's nature". The Masters know the moment in which the mind of the disciple is mature and ready to open up; it is then that they eventually give the final, decisive push. This push may sometimes consist of a simple gesture, an exclamation, in something apparently irrelevant, or even illogical and absurd. This suffices to induce the collapse of the false notion of individuality. Thus, satori replaces this notion with the "normal state", and one assumes the "original face, which one had before creation". One no longer "chases after echoes" and "shadows". This under some aspects brings to mind the existential theme of "failure", or of "being shipwrecked" (das Scheitern, in Kierkegaard and in Jaspers). In fact, as I have mentioned, the opening often takes place when all the resources of one's being have been exhausted and one has his back against the wall. This can be seen in relation to some practical teachings methods used by Zen. The most frequently employed methods, on an intellectual plane, are the koan and the mondo. The disciple is confronted with a saying or with questions which are paradoxical, absurd and sometimes even grotesque and "surrealistic". He must labor with his mind, if necessary for years, until he has reached the extreme limit of all his normal faculties of comprehension. Then, if he dares proceed further on that road, he may find catastrophe, but if he can turn the situation upside down, he may achieve metanoia. This is the point where satori is usually achieved.

Zen's norm is that of absolute autonomy; no gods, no cults, no idols. To literally empty oneself of everything, including God. "If you meet Buddha on the road, kill him", a saying goes. It is necessary to abandon everything, without leaning on anything, and then to proceed forward, with one's essence, until the crisis point is reached. It is very difficult to say more about satori, or to compare it with various forms of initiatory mystical experience whether Eastern or Western. One is supposed to spend only the training period in Zen monasteries. Once the disciple has achieved satori, he returns to the world, choosing a way of life that fits his need. One may think of satori as a form of transcendence which is brought into immanence, as a natural state, in every form of life.

The behavior which proceeds from the newly acquired dimension, which is added to reality as a consequence of satori, may well be summarized by Lao Tzu's expression: "To be the whole in the part". In regard to this, it is important to realize the influence which Zen has exercised on the Far-Eastern way of life. Zen has been called "the samurai's philosophy," and it had also been said that "the way of Zen is identical to the way of archery," or to the "way of the sword". This means that any activity in one's life, may be permeated by Zen and thus be elevated to a higher meaning, to a "wholesomeness" and to an "impersonal activity". This kind of activity is based on a sense of the individual's irrelevance, which nevertheless does not paralyze one's actions, but which rather confers calm and detachment. This detachment, in turn, favors an absolute and "pure" undertaking of life, which in some cases reaches extreme and distinct forms of self-sacrifice and heroism, inconceivable to the majority of Westerners (e.g. the kamikaze in WWII).

Thus, what C.G. Jung claims is simply ridiculous, namely that Psychoanalysis, more than any other Western school of thought, is capable

of understanding Zen. According to Jung, satori coincides with the state of wholeness, devoid of complexes or inner splitting, which psychoanalytic treatment claims to achieve whenever the intellect's obstructions and its sense of superiority are removed, and whenever the conscious dimension of the soul is reunited with the unconscious and with "Life". Jung did not realize that the methods and presuppositions of Zen, are exactly the opposite of his own. There is no "subconscious", as a distinct entity, to which the conscious has to be reconnected; Zen speaks of a super-conscious vision (enlightenment, bodhi or "awakening"), which actualizes the "original and luminous nature" and which, in so doing, destroys the unconscious. It is possible though, to notice similarities between Jung's views and Zen's, since they both talk about the feeling of one's "totality" and freedom which is manifested in every aspect of life. However, it is important to explain the level at which these views appear to coincide.

Once Zen found its way to the West, there was a tendency to "domesticate" and to moralize it, playing down its potential radical and "antinomian" (namely, antithetical to current norms) implications, and by emphasizing the standard ingredients which are held so dear by "spiritual" people, namely love and service to one's neighbor, even though these ingredients have been purified in an impersonal and non-sentimental form. Generally speaking, there are many doubts on the "practicability" of Zen, considering that the "doctrine of awakening" has an initiatory character.

Thus, it will only be able to inspire a minority of people, in contrast to later Buddhist views, which took the form of a religion open to everyone, or of a code of mere morality. As the re-establishment of the spirit of early Buddhism, Zen should have remained an esoteric doctrine. It has been so as we can see by examining the legend concerning its origins. However, Suzuki himself was inclined to give a different account; he emphasized those aspects of Mahayana which "democratize" Buddhism (after all, the term Mahayana has been interpreted to mean "Great Vehicle", even in the sense that it extends to wider audiences, and not just to a few elect). If one was to fully agree with Suzuki, some perplexities on the nature and on the scope of satori may arise; more specifically one should ask whether such an experience merely affects the psychological, moral or mental domain, or whether it affects the ontological domain, as is the case in every authentic initiation. In that event, it can only be the privilege a very restricted number of people.

The Men for Whom the New Freedom does Not Spell Ruin

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] To sum up, the man for whom the new freedom does not spell ruin, whether because, given his special structure, he already has a firm base in himself, or because he is in the process of conquering it through an existential rupture of levels that reestablishes contact with the higher dimension of "being" - this man will possess a vision of reality stripped of the human and moral element, free from the projections of subjectivity

and from conceptual, finalistic, and theistic superstructures. This reduction to pure reality of the general view of the world and of existence will be described in what follows. Its counterpart is the return of the person himself to pure being: the freedom of pure existence in the outside world is confirmed in the naked assumption of his own nature, from which he draws his own rule. This rule is a law to him to the degree that he does not start from a state of unity, and to the degree that secondary, divergent tendencies coexist and external factors try to influence him.

In the practical field of action, we have considered a regime of experiments with two degrees and two ends. First there is the proving knowledge of himself as a determined being, then of himself as a being in whom the transcendent dimension is positively present. The latter is the ultimate basis of his own law, and its supreme justification. After everything has collapsed and in a climate of dissolution, there is only one solution to the problem of an unconditioned and intangible meaning to life: the direct assumption of one's own naked being as a function of transcendence.

As for the modes of behavior toward the world, once a clarification and confirmation of oneself has been achieved as described, the general formula is indicated by an intrepid openness, devoid of ties but united in detachment, in the face of any possible experience. Where this involves a high intensity of life and a regime of achievement that enliven and nourish the calm principle of transcendence within, the orientation has some features in common with Nietzsche's "Dionysian state"; but the way in which this state should be integrated suggests that a better term would be "Dionysian Apollonism." When one's relations with the world are not those of lived experience in general, but of the manifestation of oneself through works and active initiatives, the style suggested is that of involvement in every act, of pure and impersonal action, "without desire," without attachment.

Attention was also drawn to a special state of lucid inebriation that is connected with this entire orientation and is absolutely essential for the type of man under consideration, because it takes the place of that animation that, given a different world, he would receive from an environment formed by Tradition, thus filled with meaning; or else from the sub-intellectual adhesion to emotion and impulses at the vital base of existence, in pure bios. Finally, I devoted some attention to the reality of actions and the regime of knowledge that should take the place of the mythology of inner moral sanctions and of "sin."

Those who know my other works will be aware of the correspondence between these views and certain instructions of schools and movements in the world of Tradition, which almost always concerned only the esoteric doctrine. [...]

The Neo-Pagan Trap
& its Superstitious Mysticism
based on the Glorification of Immanence, of Life & Nature

(from "Sintesi di Dottrina della Raza")

This having been said, there remains the real possibility of transcending certain aspects of Christianity. But one must be quite clear: the Latin term "transcendere" means literally leaving something behind as one rises upwards, and not downwards! It is worth repeating that the principal thing is not the rejection of Christianity: it is not a matter of showing the same incomprehension towards it as Christianity itself has shown, and largely continues to show, towards ancient paganism. It would rather be a matter of completing Christianity by means of a higher and an older heritage, eliminating some of its aspects and emphasizing other, more important ones, in which this faith does not necessarily contradict the universal concepts of pre-Christian spirituality.

This, alas, is not the path taken by the radical circles we have mentioned. Many of these neo-pagans seem to have fallen into a trap deliberately set for them, often ending up by advocating and defending ideas that more or less correspond to that invented, nature-bound, particularistic pagandom, lacking light and transcendence, which was the polemical creation of a Christian misunderstanding of the pre-Christian world, and which is based, at most, on a few scattered elements of that world in its decline and devolution. And as if this were not enough, people often resort to an anti-Catholic polemic which, whatever its political justification, often drags out and adapts the old clichés of a purely modern, rationalist and enlightenment type that have been well-used by Liberalism, Democracy, and Freemasonry. This was also the case, to a degree, with H. S. Chamberlain, and it appears again in a certain Italian movement that has been trying to connect racial thinking with the "idealistic" doctrine of immanence.

There is a general and unmistakable tendency in neo-paganism to create a new, superstitious mysticism, based on the glorification of immanence, of Life and Nature, which is in the sharpest contrast to that Olympian and heroic ideal of the great Aryan cultures of pre-Christian antiquity. It would indicate much more a turning towards the materialistic, maternal, and telluric side, if it did not exhaust itself in foggy and dilettantish philosophizing. To give an example, we might ask what exactly is meant by this "Nature," on which these groups are so keen? It is little use to point out that it is certainly not the Nature that was experienced and recognized by ancient, traditional man, but a rational construct of the French Encyclopedist period. It was the Encyclopedists who, with definitely subversive and revolutionary motives, made up the myth of Nature as "good," wise, and wholesome, in opposition to the rottenness of every human "Culture." Thus we can see that the optimistic nature-myth of Rousseau and the Encyclopedists marches in the same ranks as "natural right," universalism, liberalism, humanitarianism, and the denial of any positive and structured form of sovereignty. Moreover, the myth in question has absolutely no basis in natural history. Every honest scientist knows that there is no room for "Nature" in the framework of his theories, which have as their object the determination of purely abstract equivalences and mathematical relationships. As far as biological research and genetics are concerned, we can already see the

disequilibrium that would occur the moment one held certain laws to be final, when they only apply to a partial aspect of reality. What people call "Nature" today has nothing to do with what nature meant to the traditional, solar man, or to the knowledge of it that was accessible to such a man thanks to his Olympian and regal position. There is no sign of this whatever in the advocates of this new mysticism.

Misunderstandings of more or less the same kind arise regarding political thought. Paganism is here often used as the synonym for a merely worldly and yet exclusive concept of sovereignty, which turns the relationships upside-down. We have already seen that in the ancient states, the unity of the two powers meant something quite different. It provided the basis for the spiritualization of politics, whereas neo-paganism results in actually politicizing the spiritual, and thereby treading once again the false path of the Gallicans and Jacobins. In contrast, the ancient concept of State and Empire always showed a connection to the Olympian idea.

What shall we think of the attitude that regards Jewry, Rome, the Catholic Church, Freemasonry, and Communism as more or less one and the same thing, just because their presuppositions differ from the plain thinking of the Folk? The Folk's thinking along these lines threatens to lose itself in the dark, where no differentiation is possible any more. It shows that it has lost the genuine feeling for the hierarchy of values, and that it cannot escape the crippling alternative of destructive internationalism and nationalistic particularism, whereas the traditional understanding of the Empire is superior to both these concepts.

To restrict ourselves to a single example: Catholic dogmatism actually fulfills a useful preventive role by stopping worldly mysticism and suchlike eruptions from below from passing a certain frontier; it makes a strong dam that protects the area where transcendent knowledge and the genuinely supra-natural and non-human elements reign--or at least where they should reign. One may well criticize the way in which such transcendence and knowledge have been understood in Christianity, but one cannot cross over to a "profane" criticism that seizes on some polemical weapon or other, fantasizes over the supposed Aryan nature of the immanence-doctrine, of "natural religion," the cult of "life," etc., without really losing one's level: in short, one does not thereby attain the world of primordial beginnings, but that of the Counter-Tradition or the telluric and primitive modes of being. This would in fact be the very best way of re-converting those people with the best "pagan" talents to Catholicism!

One must be wary of falling into the misunderstandings and errors that we have mentioned, which basically serve only to defend the common enemy. One must try to develop the capacity to place oneself at that level where didactic confusion cannot reach, and where all dilettantism and arbitrary intellectual activity are excluded; where one resists energetically every influence from confused, passionate desires and from the aggressive pleasure in polemics; where, finally and fundamentally, nothing counts but the precise, strict, objective knowledge of the spirit of the Primordial Tradition.

The Only Path Left:
Self-Realization through Inner Drive towards Transcendence
& Allowing its Results in Everyday Life

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The final chapter of Ride the Tiger is entitled 'The Spiritual Problem'. In this chapter, I developed some of the ideas I had first discussed in the course of my critique of contemporary neo-spiritualism: I pointed out that the present is witnessing the spread of 'spiritualist' tendencies, which - generally speaking - reflect not a positive change of direction, but rather the decomposition of an age of twilight, and, in a way, embody the counterpart to the materialism of such an age. I sought to be as clear as possible regarding these matters, at the cost of potentially disillusioning those readers who had followed my work on esotericism, yoga and initiation so far. All 'neo-spiritualist' cases aside - neo-spiritualism usually serving merely as a poor surrogate for religion - when turning to consider genuine traditional sciences, one must always bear in mind that the present conditions of humanity, marked as they are by the rapid retreat and concealment of all true centers capable of exerting a transcendent influence upon man, makes the effective realization of any 'initiatory disclosure of consciousness' impossible, or only possible in exceptional circumstances. This is also true for the human type I sought to address in Ride the Tiger - although this type of person certainly appears more inclined to self-realization than others, and cannot fail to regard self-realization as the center and ultimate purpose of his own existence. What generally remains an available option for similar individuals today is, on the one hand, to foster an inner drive towards transcendence - a drive unmitigated by any external circumstance (in the same way as 'the hinge of a slammed door remains still', or the needle of a compass turns to point north after each oscillation); on the other, to allow such a drive to produce whatever results it may in everyday life, while awaiting the day in which all obstacles will have been removed - either in this life, or in one of the many other states of being - and the accumulated drive will prove unstoppable. One of the effects produced by the inner drive towards transcendence that I just mentioned is the change in one's attitude toward death: a positive contemplatio mortis that allows the individual to remain unaffected by the prospect of dying; in such a way, the individual, so to speak, puts death behind himself. Yet, this new approach to death does not paralyze the individual: on the contrary, it engenders a superior, elated and free mode of living that is accompanied by a magic, lucid inebriation. [...]

The Plurality and Duality of Civilizations

(from "The Hermetic Tradition")

Recently, in contrast to the notion of progress and the idea that history has been represented as the more or less continuous upward evolution of collective humanity, the idea of a plurality of the forms of civilization and of a relative incommunicability between them has been confirmed. According to this second and new vision of history, civilization breaks down into epochs and disconnected cycles. At a given moment and within a given race a specific conception of the world and of life is affirmed from which follows a specific system of truths, principles, understandings, and realizations. A civilization springs up, gradually reaches a culminating point, and then falls into darkness and, more often than not, disappears. A cycle has ended. Perhaps another will rise again some day, somewhere else. Perhaps it may even take up the concerns of preceding civilizations, but any connection between them will be strictly analogical. The transition from one cycle of civilization to another - one completely alien to the other - implies a jump, which in mathematics is called a discontinuity.

Although this view is a healthy reaction to the superstition of history as progress - which came into fashion more or less at the same time as materialism and western scientism - nevertheless, we should be cautious, for in addition to a plurality of civilizations we have to recognize a duality - especially when we limit ourselves to those times and the central structures that we can embrace with some measure of certainty.

Modern civilization stands on one side and on the other the entirety of all the civilizations that have preceded it (for the West, we can put the dividing line at the end of the Middle-Ages). At this point the rupture is complete. Apart from the multitudinous variety of its forms, pre-modern civilization, which we may as well call "traditional", mean something quite different. For there are two worlds, one of which has separated itself by cutting off nearly every contact with the past. For the great majority of the moderns, that means any possibility of understanding the traditional world has been completely lost.

This premise is indispensable for the examination of our subject. The hermetico-alchemical tradition forms part of the cycle of pre-modern "traditional" civilization and in order to understand its spirit we need to translate it inwardly from one world into the other. Who undertakes this study without having acquired the ability to rise above the modern mind-set or who has not awakened to a new sensitivity that can place itself in contact with the general spiritual stream that gave life to the tradition in the first place, will succeed only in filling his head with words, symbols, and fantastic allegories. Moreover, it is not just a question of intellectual understanding. We have to bear in mind that ancient men not only had a different way of thinking and feeling, but also a different way of perceiving and knowing. The heart of the matter that will concern us is to reevoke, by means of an actual transformation of the consciousness, this older basis of understanding and action.

Only then will the unexpected light of certain expressions dawn on us and certain symbols be empowered to awaken our interior perception. Only then will we be conducted through them to new heights of human realization and

to the understanding that will make it possible for designated "rites" to confer "magical" and operant power, and for the creation of a new "science" that bears no resemblance to anything that goes by that name today.

The Real Outcome of World War II

(from "Revolt Against The Modern World")

[...] With World War I, the Russian Revolution, and World War II the decisive events of the last age are ushered in. In 1914 the central empires still represented within the Western world a remainder of the feudal and aristocratic Europe, despite the undeniable aspects of militaristic hegemonism and some questionable collusions with capitalism, especially in Wilhelm's Germany. The coalition against the central empires was expressly a coalition of the Third Estate against the residual forces of the Second; it was a coalition of nationalisms and the great democracies more or less inspired by the "immortal principles" of the French Revolution, which some people wanted to replicate on an international scale and which fact did not prevent the humanitarian and patriotic ideology from playing into the hands of a greedy and supremacist high finance. As few other times before, World War I displays the traits of a conflict not between states and nations, but rather between ideologies of different castes. The immediate and willfully pursued results of this war were the destruction of the German monarchy and Catholic Austria; the indirect results were the collapse of the Czars' empire, the communist revolution, and the establishment in Europe of a sociopolitical situation that was so chaotic and contradictory as to contain all the premises of a new conflagration.

World War II was this new conflagration. In this war the ideological line-ups were not as precise as in the previous war. States like Germany and Italy that had appropriated the authoritarian and antidemocratic idea and had sided against leftwing forces, by their initially upholding in this war the right of "nations in need of living space" as they struggled against world plutocracy, almost appeared to espouse Marxism on the international plane by giving to the war they waged the meaning of an insurrection of the Fourth Estate against the great democracies in which the power of the Third Estate had been consolidated. But overall, and especially after the United States entered into the conflict, what appeared to be a prevalent ideology was one that had already shaped World War I, namely, the crusade of the democratic nations bent on "liberating" the people still enslaved to what were looked upon as "backward political systems," (1) The latter was destined rapidly to become a mere facade with regard to new political alignments. In their alliance with the Soviet Union, which was willed in order to bring down the powers of the Axis, and in their persevering in a mindless radicalism, the democratic powers repeated the error of those who think they can employ with impunity and for their own purposes the forces of subversion. and who, by following a fatal logic, ignore the fact that when the forces representing two different degrees of subversion meet or clash, those

corresponding to the higher degree will eventually prevail. In reality it can clearly be seen how, from the Soviet side, the "democratic crusade" had been conceived only as a preparatory stage in the global plans of communism. The end of the war marked the end of the hybrid alliance and the real outcome of World War II was the elimination of Europe as a main protagonist in world politics, the sweeping away of any intermediate form, and the opposition of America and Russia as supemational exponents of the forces of the Third and Fourth Estates, respectively.

(1) With regard to the dubious ideological alignments during World War II, one should notice in the two powers of the Axis, Italy and Germany, the negative element proper to "totalitarianism" and the new forms of dictatorial "Bonapartism." With regard to the other power of the Tripartite Pact (Japan), it would have been interesting to see the results of an unprecedented experiment, that is, of an external "Europeanization" coupled with an internal retention of the traditional spirit of an empire of divine right. Concerning the appraisal of both positive and negative elements of Fascism, see my *Il fascismo: saggio di una analisi ciltica dal punto di vista della Destra* (Rome, 1964).

It really does not matter what the outcome of an eventual conflict between these two powers will be. The determinisms of some kind of immanent justice are at work; in any event, the process will reach the end. A third world war in its social repercussions will eventually determine the triumph of the Fourth Estate, either in a violent way, or as an "evolution," or in both forms.

There is more. On the plane of the political powers pursuing world domination. Russia and America appear today in an antagonistic relationship. And yet if one examines in their essence the dominant themes in both civilizations, and if their ideals are closely scrutinized as well as the effective transformations that, following a central tendency, all the values and the interests of life have undergone in both of them, then it is possible to notice a convergence and a congeniality. Russia and America appear as two different expressions of the same thing, as two ways leading to the formation of that human type that is the ultimate conclusion of the processes that preside over the development of the modern world. It may be worthwhile to focus briefly on these convergences. Not only as political convergences but also as "civilizations," Russia and America are like two ends of the same pair of pincers.. that are closing in from the East and the West around the nucleus of ancient Europe. which is too depleted in its energies and in its men to put up an effective resistance. The external conflicts, new crises, and new destructions will only be the means to definitely open the way for the varieties of the world of the Fourth Estate. [...]

The Secret Causes of History
& The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] The deeper causes of history—here we can refer to both those that act in a negative sense and those that may act in an equilibrating and positive sense—operate prevalently through what can be called "imponderable factors," to use an image borrowed from natural science. These causes are responsible for almost undetectable ideological, social, and political changes, which eventually produce remarkable effects: they are like the first cracks in a layer of snow that eventually produce an avalanche. These causes almost never act in a direct manner, but instead bestow to some existing processes an adequate direction that leads to the designated goal. Thus, men and groups who believe they are pursuing something willed by themselves become the means through which something different is realized and made possible: it is precisely in this that a super-ordained influence and meaning are revealed. This was noticed by Wundt, who talked about the "heterogeneity of the effects," and by Hegel as well, who introduced the notion of the List der Vernunft [Cunning of Reason] in his philosophy of history; however, neither of these thinkers was able to fruitfully develop his intuitions. Unlike what happens in the domain of physical phenomena, an insightful historian encounters several instances where the "causal" explanation (in the deterministic, physical sense) is unsatisfactory, because things do not add up and the total does not equal the sum of the apparent historical factors—almost as if someone adding five, three, and two ended up not with ten, but with fifteen or seven. This differential, especially when it appears as a differential between what is willed and what has really happened, or between ideas, principles, and programs on the one hand and their effective consequences in history on the other, offers the most valuable material for the investigation of the secret causes of history.

Methodologically speaking, we must be careful to prevent valid insights from degenerating into fantasies and superstition, and not develop the tendency to see an occult background everywhere and at all costs. In this regard, every assumption we make must have the character of what are called "working hypotheses" in scientific research—as when something is admitted provisionally, thus allowing the gathering and arranging of a group of apparently isolated facts, only to confer on them a character not of hypothesis but of truth when, at the end of a serious inductive effort, the data converge in validating the original assumption. Every time an effect outlasts and transcends its tangible causes, a suspicion should arise, and a positive or negative influence behind the stages should be perceived. A problem is posited, but in analyzing it and seeking its solution, prudence must be exercised. The fact that those who have ventured in this direction have not restrained their wild imaginations has discredited what could have been a science, the results of which could hardly be overestimated. This too meets the expectations of the hidden enemy.

This is all I have to say concerning the general premises proper to a new three-dimensional study of history. Now let us return to what I said earlier on. After considering the state of society and modern civilization, one should ask if this is not a specific case that requires the application of this method; in other words, one should ask whether some situations of real crisis and radical subversion in the modern world can be satisfactorily explained through "natural" and spontaneous processes, or whether we need to refer to something that has been

concerted, a still unfolding plan devised by forces hiding in the shadows.

In this particular domain, many red flags have gone up: too many elements have concurred to alarm the less superficial observers. In the middle of the past century, Disraeli wrote these significant and often quoted words: "The world is governed by people entirely different from the ones imagined by those who are unable to see behind the scenes." Malinsky and De Poncins, when considering the phenomenon of revolution, have remarked that in our age, where it is commonly acknowledged that every disease of the individual organism is caused by bacteria, people pretended that the diseases of the social body—revolutions and disorder—are spontaneous, self-generated phenomena rather than the effect of invisible agents, acting in society the way bacteria and pathogenic germs act in the organism of the individual. Disraeli, in the mid-nineteenth century, wrote:

The public does not realize that in all the conflicts within nations and in the conflicts between nations there are, besides the people apparently responsible for them, hidden agitators who with their selfish plans make these conflicts unavoidable. . . . Everything that happens in the confused evolution of peoples is secretly prepared in order to ensure the dominion of certain people: it is these people, known and unknown, that we must find behind every public event.

In this order of ideas, there is an interesting document known as The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. I have discussed the nature and scope of this document in the introduction to its last Italian edition (Rome, 1937). Here I will only mention some fundamental points.

This document was purported to be a protocol stolen from a secret Judeo-Masonic organization and allegedly reveals a plan that was devised and implemented with the subversion and the destruction of traditional Europe in mind. Regarding the authenticity of the Protocols a rabid and complex debate has erupted, which can be dismissed, however, by Guénon's correct observation that a truly occult organization, no matter what its nature, never leaves behind written documents or "protocols." Thus, in the most favorable hypothesis, the Protocols could have been the work of someone who had contacts with some representatives of this alleged organization. However, we cannot agree either with those who wish to dismiss this document as a vulgar mystification, forgery, and work of plagiarism. The main argument adduced by the latter is that the Protocols reproduce and paraphrase in many parts the ideas found in a short book written by a certain Maurice Joly during the period of Napoleon's Second Empire. Allegedly, mysterious provocateurs of the Czar's secret police were responsible for writing the Protocols. This argument is truly irrelevant: those who decry plagiarism should keep in mind that this is not a matter of a literary work or of copyright. For example, when a general writes a plan, he could employ previous materials and writings as long as they contain ideas fit for his purpose. This would be a case of plagiarism, but it would not affect at all the question of whether or not this plan has really been conceived and carried out. Cutting short all this—that is, leaving aside the issue of the "authenticity" of the document in terms of real protocols stolen from an international secret organization—

the only important and essential point is the following: this writing is part of a group of texts that in various ways (more or less fantastic and at times even fictional) have expressed the feeling that the disorder of recent times is not accidental, since it corresponds to a plan, the phases and fundamental instruments of which are accurately described in the Protocols. Hugo Wast wrote: "The Protocols may well be a fake, but their predictions have been fulfilled in an amazing way." Henry Ford added: "The only comment that I can make about the Protocols is that they perfectly correspond to what is happening today. They were published sixteen years ago, and ever since then they have corresponded to the world situation and today they still dictate its rhythm." In a sense, we can speak of a prophetic premonition. In any event, the value of the document as a working hypothesis is undeniable: it presents the various aspects of global subversion (among them, some aspects that were destined to be outlined and accomplished only many years after the publication of the Protocols) in terms of a whole, in which they find their sufficient reason and logical combination.

As I have said, this is not the place to engage in a detailed analysis of the text; it will suffice to recall the main points. First of all, the primary ideologies that are responsible for the modern disorder did not arise spontaneously, but have been evoked and supported by forces that knew they were false and had in mind only the latter's destructive and demoralizing effects. This would apply to democratic and liberal ideas; the Third Estate had purposely been mobilized to destroy the previous feudal and aristocratic society, while in a second phase the workers were mobilized to undermine the bourgeois. Another basic idea of the Protocols is that, despite all, the capitalist and the proletarian Internationals are in agreement, being almost two columns with distinct ideas but which act in unison at a tactical level in order to achieve the same strategy. Likewise, the economization of life, especially in the context of an industry that develops at the expense of agriculture, and a wealth that is concentrated on liquid capital and finance, proceeds from a secret design. The phalanx of the modern "economists" followed this design, just as those who spread a demoralizing literature attack spiritual and ethical values and scorn every principle of authority. Among other things, mention is made of the success that the secret front achieved not only for Marxism, but for Darwinism and Nietzsche's nihilism as well. The Protocols at times even encourage the spread of anti-Semitism, while in other cases mention is made of the secret monopoly of the press and of the media in democratic countries as well as the power to paralyze or destroy the most prestigious banks. This power concentrates the rootless, financial wealth in a few hands, and through it controls peoples, parties, and governments. One of the most important objectives is to remove the support of spiritual and traditional values from the human personality, knowing that when this is accomplished it is not difficult to turn man into a passive instrument of the secret front's direct forces and influences. The counterpart of the action of cultural demoralization, materialization, and disorganization causes unavoidable social crises to grow increasingly worse and collective situations to grow increasingly desperate and unbearable; in this way, a final conflict will eventually be considered as the means to finally sweep away the last residual resistance.

It is difficult to deny that such a "fiction" exposed at the beginning of this century has indeed reflected and anticipated much of what has taken place in the modern world, not to mention the predictions of what is in store for us. It is therefore no surprise that the Protocols received so much attention from those movements of the past that intended to react against and stem the currents of national, social, and moral dissolution in their own day and age. However, these movements often upheld dangerously unilateral positions, due to the lack of adequate discernment; this was a weakness that, again, has played into the enemy's hands.

In relation to this, we must deal with the issue raised by this document concerning the leaders of the occult war. According to the Protocols, the leaders of the global plot are Jews who planned and undertook the destruction of the traditional and Christian European civilization in order to achieve the universal rule of Israel, or God's "chosen people." This is obviously an exaggeration. At this point we may even wonder whether a fanatical anti-Semitism, which always sees the Jew as a *deus ex machina*, is not unwittingly playing into the hands of the enemy. One of the means employed by the occult forces to protect themselves consists of directing their opponents' attention toward those who are only partially responsible for certain upheavals, thus concealing the rest of the story, namely a wider sequence of causes. It could be shown that even if the Protocols were a forgery perpetrated by provocateurs, nonetheless they reflect ideas very congenial to the Law and spirit of Israel. Second, it is true that many Jews have been and still are among the promoters of modern disorder in its more radical cultural expressions, whether political or social. This, however, should not prevent a deeper analysis, capable of exposing forces that may have employed modern Judaism merely as an instrument. After all, despite the fact that many Jews are among the apostles of the main ideologies regarded by the Protocols as instruments of global subversion (i.e., liberalism, socialism, scientism, and rationalism), it is also evident that these ideas would have never arisen and triumphed without historical antecedents, such as the Reformation, Humanism, the naturalism and individualism of the Renaissance, and the philosophy of Descartes. Such phenomena cannot be attributed to Judaism, but rather point to a wider web of influences.

In the Protocols the concepts of Judaism and Masonry are interwoven; therefore, in the literature that this text spawned, mention is often made in careless terms of a Jewish-Masonic plot. Here caution must be exercised. While recognizing the Jewish predominance in many sectors of modern Masonry, as well as the Jewish origin of several elements in the Masonic symbolism and rituals, the anti-Semitic thesis, according to which Masonry has been the creation and tool of Israel, must be rejected. Modern Masonry (with this designation I allude essentially to the Freemasonry that developed since the creation of London's Grand Lodge in 1717) has undoubtedly been one of the societies that promoted the modern political subversions, and especially their ideological background. However, here too the danger is to be distracted by explaining everything with the action of ordinary Masonry.

Among those who regard the Protocols as a forgery, there are some who have noticed that various ideas in this text are similar to those that

have been implemented by centralizing and dictatorial regimes, so much so that the Protocols can be an excellent manual for those who wish to install a new Bonapartism or totalitarianism. This view is partially correct. This amounts to saying that the "occult war" should be conceived, from a positive point of view, within a wide and elastic context, and we should expose the part played in it by phenomena that are apparently contradictory and hardly reducible to the simplistic formula of a Jewish-Masonic global plot.

Regardless of the role played by Jews and Masonry in the modern subversion, it is necessary to recognize clearly the real historical context of their influence, as well as the limit beyond which the occult war is destined to develop by employing forces that not only are no longer those of Judaism and of Masonry, but that could even totally turn against them. To realize this, consider the law of the regression of the castes, which I have employed as a hermeneutic tool in my Revolt Against the Modern World in order to assess the effective meaning of history. From a civilization led by spiritual leaders and by a sacred regality, a shift occurred to civilizations led by mere warrior aristocracies; the latter were eventually replaced by the civilization of the Third Estate. The last stage is the collectivist civilization of the Fourth Estate. When we reflect carefully on things, modern Judaism as a power (quite apart from the concomitant, widespread, and instinctive action of individual Jewish thinkers and writers) is inseparable from capitalism and finance, which fall within the civilization of the Third Estate. The same applies to modern Masonry, which prepared ideologically for and supported the advent of the Third Estate. Masonry still presents itself today as the custodian of the principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, its doctrines acting as a kind of secular religion of modern democracy; its militant action has revealed and continues to reveal itself along this line, openly or in semisecret ways. All this falls within the penultimate phase; this phase, the overall cycle of democratic and capitalist civilization of the Third Estate, will eventually usher in the last collectivist phase, to which it has inadvertently opened the way. It is therefore logical that the role of a central guiding force of global subversion in this last period will no longer be played by Judaism or Masonry and that the main current may turn against both of these groups, as if they were residues to be liquidated once and for all; after all, this can be seen in countries in which regimes controlled by the Fourth Estate (i.e., Marxist regimes) are beginning to be consolidated, even though Jews and Masons contributed to their advent.

But then again, as far as the general radical Jewish-Masonic conspiracy thesis upheld in some milieus is concerned, the actual situation shows its inconsistency. It would be a real abandonment to fantasy to suppose that the leaders of the great conflicting powers - the United States, the USSR, and Red China - receive orders from an international center of Jews and Masons (almost nonexistent in China), and act accordingly in view of the same goal. Again, it is necessary to refer to a wider horizon of influences and to look elsewhere. [...]

The Three Aspects of Divinity
& the Sole Remaining Possibility of Transcendence
through the Risky Left Hand Path of Destruction

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] I suggested that in the case of more qualified individuals - whether male or female - the doctrines and perspectives described in The Metaphysics of Sex might provide the means to solve various personal problems, and to find a way out of the baseness of ordinary human existence. On the other hand, I pointed out that, given the present condition of humanity, one should generally hold no illusions with regard to the possibilities of realizing the truly transcendent potentialities of sexuality - although sex certainly remains 'the greatest magical power in nature'. Even in those cases today where sex has not been trivialized or corrupted and turned into a consumer product, it is chiefly sought after as a means to experience cheap thrills: as a means to grant 'those who have taken the road to perdition an illusory, obscure, desperate relief from disgust and existential anguish'. What I had in mind here was the role that sex - not unlike drugs - plays for the new 'burnt out', heedless generation of beats and hippies, who are foolishly seeking the genuine meaning their life lacks in exasperated forms of sensuality.

By discussing sadism and its more profound significance in the light of the metaphysics of sex, I again came to touch upon the subject of 'The Left-Hand Path'. The legitimacy of this path derives from the traditional doctrine of the three aspects of divinity: the creative, protective and destroying - destruction manifesting the transcendence of the ultimate principle beyond all limited and conditioned forms. The 'Right-Hand Path' is connected to the first two aspects of the divine; on the level of ethical and religious conduct, this path is characterized by the affirmation and consecration of existence, and by conformity to the laws and positive norms of a given traditional order operating on earth. By contrast, the 'Left-Hand Path' pertains to the third divine principle, that of pure transcendence; this path potentially implies not only a break with all existing order and norms (as in the case of pure asceticism), but also the destruction of such norms and order by means of a disregard for values and ethics, and a destructive release aimed at the attainment of the unconditioned. That of the 'Left-Hand Path' is the perspective I focused on the most in The Metaphysics of Sex. In discussing gender ethics in the book, I referred to what I had already written in Revolt Against the Modern World with regard to the traditional understanding of the institutional union of man and woman (in the context of the 'Right-Hand Path'). Nevertheless, The Metaphysics of Sex chiefly examines sex in itself, as a pure and potentially destructive experience (capable, that is, of bringing about a sudden, striking change): a perspective that rules out the possibility of any subordination of sex to merely human - or even social and biological - interests. Besides, I was later to favor the perspective of the 'Left-Hand Path' in my book Ride the Tiger, on account of both the character of the age we live in, and of the negative conclusions I had reached with regard to the possibilities for any rectifying, reconstructive or creative action (i.e., of any action in line with the 'Right-Hand Path') in a world and society, such as ours,

which is approaching the end of a cycle. In this epoch of widespread decomposition, I argued, the only path one can attempt to follow is that of the Left Hand - with all the risks this entails.

The Three Possibilities still available in the Last Times

(from "Revolt Against The Modern World")

[...] The possibilities still available in the last times concern only a minority and maybe distinguished as follows. Beside the great "currents" of the world there are still individuals who are rooted in terra firma. Generally speaking, they are unknown people who shun the spotlight of modern popularity and culture. They live on spiritual heights; they do not belong to this world. Though they are scattered over the earth and often ignorant of each other's existence, they are united by an invisible bond and form an unbreakable chain in the traditional spirit. This nucleus does not act: it only exercises the function to which the symbolism of the "perennial fire" corresponded. By virtue of these people, Tradition is present despite all; the flame burns invisibly and something still connects the world to the superworld. They are-those who are awake, whom in Greek are called the [...].

There are an increasing number of individuals who experience a confused and yet real need for liberation, though they do not know in the name of what. To orient these people, and shield them from the spiritual dangers of the actual world, to lead them to see the truth and sharpen their will to join the ranks of the first type of people is what can still be done. And yet this too affects only a minority, and we should not delude ourselves that in this way there will be sizeable changes in the overall destinies of the multitudes. In any event, this is the only justification for tangible action that can be carried out by men of Tradition living in the modern world, in a milieu with which they have no connection. In order for the abovementioned guiding action to be successful it is necessary to have "watchers" at hand who will bear witness to the values of Tradition in ever more uncompromising and firm ways, as the antitraditional forces grow in strength. Even though these values today cannot be achieved, it does not mean that they amount to mere "ideas." They are measures. And when even the elemental capability to measure was totally lost, then the last night would surely fall. Let people of our time talk about these things with condescension as if they were anachronistic and antihistorical; we know that this is an alibi for their defeat. Let us leave modern men to their "truths" and let us only be concerned about one thing: to keep standing amid a world of ruins. Even though today an efficacious, general, and realizing action stands almost no chance at all, the ranks that I mentioned before can still set up inner defenses. In an ancient ascetical text it is said that while in the beginning the law from above could be implemented, those who came afterward were only capable of half of what had been previously done; in the last times very few works will be done, but for people living in these times the great temptation will arise again; those who will endure during this time will be greater than the people of old who were very

rich in works. To make the values of truth, reality, and Tradition highly visible to those who do not want "this" but who confusedly seek something "else," means to offer some reference points so that the great temptation may not prevail in everybody in those situations in which matter seems to have become stronger than the spirit.

Finally, we must consider a third possibility. To some the path of acceleration may be the most suitable approach to a solution, considering that given certain conditions, many reactions are the equivalent of those cramps that only prolong agony and by delaying the end also delay the advent of the new principle. Thus, it would be expedient to take on, together with a special inner attitude, the most destructive processes of the modern era in order to use them for liberation; this would be like turning a poison against oneself or like "riding a tiger." (1)

(1) In my book *Cavalcare la tigre* I have attempted to outline the existential orientations that may serve this purpose during an age of dissolution.

When regarding the process of decadence in Western society, I identified unrealism as its most typical feature. The individual at a given historical moment finds himself to be totally ignorant of spirituality as a reality. He even experiences the sense of self in terms of thought and reflection; this amounts to psychologism. Eventually his thought and reflection create a world of mirages, phantasms, and idols that replace spiritual reality; this is the humanistic myth of culture, which is nothing but a cave filled with shadows. Together with the abstract world of thought, there arises the romantic world of the "soul." What emerges are the various creatures of sentimentalism and faith, of individualistic and humanitarian pathos, of sensualism and superfluous heroism, of humility and revolt. And yet we have already seen that this unrealistic world is heading to its downfall and that deeper, elemental forces have almost swept away the myths of romantic and individualist man in a world where "realism" prevails over any idealism or sentimentalism and the "humanistic cult of the soul" is definitely overcome. I have indicated currents that seethe presuppositions for a new universal civilization in the destruction of the "I" and the liberation of man from the "spirit."

Regarding the way that has been mentioned, it is necessary to establish up to what point it is possible to benefit from such destructive upheavals; up to what point, thanks to an inner determination and orientation toward transcendence, may the nonhuman element of the modern "realistic" and activist world, instead of being a path to the subhuman dimension (as is the case of the majority of the most recent forms), foster experiences of a higher life and a higher freedom?

This is all we can say about a certain category of men in view of the fulfillment of the times, a category that by virtue of its own nature must be that of a minority. This dangerous path may be trodden. It is a real test. In order for it to be complete in its resolve it is necessary to meet the following conditions: all the bridges are to be cut, no support found, and no returns possible; also, the only way out must be forward.

It is typical of a heroic vocation to face the greatest wave knowing that two destinies lie ahead: that of those who will die with the dissolution of the modern world, and that of those who will find themselves in the main and regal stream of the new current.

Before the vision of the Iron Age, Hesiod exclaimed: "May I have not been born in it!" But Hesiod, after all, was a Pelasgic spirit unaware of a higher vocation. For other natures there is a different truth; to them applies the teaching that was also known in the East: although the Kali Yuga is an age of great destructions, those who live during it and manage to remain standing may achieve fruits that were not easily achieved by men living in other ages.

The Truly Infinite is Free Power: Simple use of the Possible
& Limit & Form are a Kind of Reflection of the Absolute

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] Making a short digression to the abstract, metaphysical plane, I find false and constricting the conception of an absolute and an infinite that are condemned to indetermination and to fluctuation in the merely possible. Rather, the truly infinite is free power: the power of a self-determination that is not at all its own negation, but its own affirmation. It is not the fall from a sort of substantialized "totality," but the simple use of the possible. Arising from this idea, one can see the absurdity of speaking of existence as a fault or sin, merely by virtue of being a determined existence. Nothing prevents us from adopting the contrary point of view, for example, that of classical Greece, which sees in limit and form the manifestation of a perfection, a completion, and a kind of reflection of the Absolute. [...]

The Young American Nation

(from "Civiltà Americana")

There is a popular notion about the United States that it is a 'young nation' with a 'great future before it'. Apparent American defects are then described as the 'faults of youth' or 'growing pains'. It is not difficult to see that the myth of 'progress' plays a large part in this judgment. According to the idea that everything new is good, America has a privileged role to play among civilized nations. In the First World War the United States intervened in the role of 'the civilized world' par excellence. The 'most evolved' nation had not only a right but a duty to interfere in the destinies of other peoples.

The structure of history is, however, cyclical not evolutionary. It is far from being the case that the most recent civilizations are necessarily 'superior'. They may be, in fact, senile and decadent. There

is a necessary correspondence between the most advanced stages of a historical cycle and the most primitive. America is the final stage of modern Europe. Guénon called the United States 'the far West', in the novel sense that the United States represents the *reductio ad absurdum* of the negative and the most senile aspects of Western civilization. What in Europe exist in diluted form are magnified and concentrated in the United States whereby they are revealed as the symptoms of disintegration and cultural and human regression. The American mentality can only be interpreted as an example of regression, which shows itself in the mental atrophy towards all higher interests and incomprehension of higher sensibility. The American mind has limited horizons, one conscribed to everything which is immediate and simplistic, with the inevitable consequence that everything is made banal, basic and leveled down until it is deprived of all spiritual life. Life itself in American terms is entirely mechanistic. The sense of 'I' in America belongs entirely to the physical level of existence. The typical American neither has spiritual dilemmas nor complications: he is a 'natural' joiner and conformist.

The primitive American mind can only superficially be compared to a young mind. The American mind is a feature of the regressive society to which I have already referred.

Today's Spirituality is Decay & Unrelated to World of Tradition
or Dominating Elites of an Organic & Qualitative Civilization

(from "Ride the Tiger")

[...] According to Spengler, one of the phenomena that consistently accompanies the terminal phase of a civilization is the "second religiosity." On the fringes of structures of barbaric grandeur - rationalism, practical atheism, and materialism - there spring up sporadic forms of spirituality and mysticism, even irruptions from the super-sensible, which do not indicate a re-ascent but are symptoms of decay. Their expressions no longer take their stamp from the religion of the origins, from the severe forms inherited from the dominating elites who stood at the center of an organic and qualitative civilization (this being exactly what I call the world of Tradition). In the phase in question, even the positive religions lose any higher dimension; they become secularized, one-dimensional, and cease to exercise their original functions. The "second religiosity" develops outside them - often even in opposition to them - but also outside the principal and predominant currents of existence, and signifies, in general, a phenomenon of escapism, alienation, and confused compensation that in no way impinges seriously on the reality of a soulless, mechanistic, and purely earthly civilization. [...] One might also use an expression of Aldous Huxley, who speaks of a "self-transcendence downwards" as opposed to a "self-transcendence upwards." [...]

Tradition Discrediting Modern 'Occultist', Anthroposophist and
Theosophist Speculations - if anything - can Provide No More than an
Initial Starting Point

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] On the whole, however, I always preserved my independence, frequently even voicing my lack of regard for modern 'occultism'. Modern occultist currents certainly played a useful, if limited, role in my case, the role they generally play in the contemporary world: that of providing an initial starting point. It is then up to each individual who feels drawn to certain forms of wisdom, as mediated by contemporary 'occultism', to act on the basis of his or her personal qualifications: either to stop at the usually promiscuous and dispersive surface of 'occultism', or to somehow get in touch with the original sources of traditional wisdom, in the awareness that 'occultist', Anthroposophist and Theosophist speculations mostly serve to discredit rather than valorize traditional doctrines.

As for me, I chose the second option. [...]

Tradition of the Mysteries against Christianity

(from "Imperialismo Pagano")

Christianity is at the root of the evil that has corrupted the West. This is the truth, and it does not admit uncertainty.

In its frenetic subversion of every hierarchy, in its exaltation of the weak, the disinherited, those without lineage and without tradition; in its call to "love", to "believe", and to yield; in its rancor toward everything that is force, self-sufficiency, knowledge, and aristocracy; in its intolerant and proselytizing fanaticism, Christianity poisoned the greatness of the Roman Empire. Enemy of itself and of the world, this dark and barbarous wave remains the principal cause of the West's decline.

Christianity - take note- is not to be confused with what passes today for the Christian religion: a dead stump cut off from the initial profound impulses. Having disrupted the unity of Rome, Christianity first infected the race of blonde Germanic barbarians, thanks to the Reformation, and then penetrated so deeply, tenaciously, and invisibly that it infused current European liberalism and democratism and all the other splendid fruits of the French Revolution up through anarchism and Bolshevism. Christianity today informs the very structure of modern society (typified by the Anglo-Saxon model) as well as modern science, law, illusory faith in technology's power. The latter are permeated by the will to equalize, the will to numbers; by the hatred of hierarchy, quality and difference; and by a collective and impersonal vision of

society, a society based upon bonds between mutually inadequate men, worthy of a race of slaves in revolt.

There is still more. Christianity's root sense of "passion" and orgasm was shaped by promiscuity of the Imperial plebes in an atmosphere of messianism and millenarianism. Opposed to the serene superiority of Roman rulers, to the Doric beauty of the Pindaric hero, to the harmonious, chaste intellectuality of philosophers and pagan initiates, Christianity has resurfaced today in the irrational cult of the "élan vital", in the chaotic impetuosity of contemporary activism and Faustianism. The latter are crude entities that overwhelm the individual and drive him toward what he wants least. Already theologized by Calvin as the equation between God's will in action in the world and the absolute predestination of beings, today this cult has become a religion: a religion of "Life", of "becoming", of the "pure act".

I have alluded to a Mediterranean tradition. This is no myth but rather an archaic reality whose existence the profane historical sciences have only recently begun to suspect. The epic and magical legacy of an affirmative and active civilization, a civilization strong in knowledge and strong in science, this tradition first imprinted itself on the elites of Egyptian-Chaldaic civilization, of ancient Greece, of Etruscan civilization, and of other more mysterious civilizations whose echoes can be found in Syria, Mycenae, and the Baleares. Infused with the spirit of paganism, it was then borne by the mystery cults of the Mediterranean basin until, against the Judeo-Christian tide, it became Mithra: Mithra, the "ruler of the sun", "killer of the bull", symbol of those who, reborn in the "strongest force among all forces" are able to go beyond good and evil, lack, longing and passion.

Two destinies, two indomitable cosmic forces thus appeared, clashing over the legacy of Roman splendor.

The tradition of the mysteries, apparently overwhelmed, assumed a more subtle existence. It was passed from flame to flame, from initiate to initiate, in an uninterrupted though secret chain. Today it surfaces here and there (albeit in a confused manner) in figures such as Nietzsche, Weininger, Michelstaedter who feel crushed under the weight of a truth that, although it is too strong for them, will triumph with the advent of a new being who will brandish it, hard and cold, against the enemy in the great revolt and coming battle in which the West's fate will be determined.

Anti-Europe means Anti-Christianity. And anti-Christianity consists in the Mediterranean classical, and pagan tradition that is our own. This must be perfectly clear.

Without a return to such a tradition, no liberation will be possible, no true restoration, no transfer of spirit, power, and empire into the realm of values. But let not our "anti" give rise to misunderstandings. They, not we, are forces of negation. They are the ones who sapped Rome, contaminated Wisdom, and destroyed aristocracy in the name of a reign of sentimentalism and humanitarianism ruled by "enemies of the world". And they did so in order to exalt a superstition according to which God is an

executed man and enslaver of other men whom he condemns to damnation unless "grace" intervenes on their behalf. No more foolish or absurd fable has ever been devised than that which treats paganism as a synonym for materiality and corruption, while Christianity is, instead, associated with purity and spirituality. Yet this superstition still manages to inform so much contemporary thinking!

No. The living and immanent spirit, spirit actualized as initiatory knowledge and power, glory of kings and conquerors, was unknown to the Semitic contamination. But not to the Roman, Hellenic, and ancient Oriental races. And he who rebels against Christian corruption, against all that plagues today's Europe, is alone in knowing the meaning of affirmation. He is not a denier but an affirmer.

So today in Rome we bear witness to the pagan tradition and invoke the restoration of Mediterranean values in a pagan imperialism. The person who speaks and who is joined in this same spiritual reality by others - isolated, impassive, and rigorously aristocratic souls opposed to this world of merchants, shut-ins, and deviants - dissolves into this higher reality, conveyed through him to the one in whom the fascist movement is today resumed.

Will we manage to feel that this is not about words, utopias, or romantic abstractions? Will we manage to believe that the most positive and most powerful realities are waiting to be unearthed by beings capable of anything and everything (realities that will dwarf everything fascism has accomplished to this point)? Can we persuade ourselves that all this is truly possible and a thousand forces over in the darkness waiting for an outlet?

The identification of our tradition with either the Christian or Catholic tradition is the most absurd of errors.

Roman spirit is pagan spirit ('Romanita' e' paganita'), and the imperial restoration of which I have spoken would be meaningless if it is not, above all else, a pagan restoration. Nothing could be more contradictory than to proclaim the resurgence of Rome without remembering that Christianity was one of the principal reasons for Rome's downfall, or to invoke the empire without realizing that the entire Christian vision of life negates the empire's premises.

So will fascism dare to take up the torch of the Mediterranean tradition here where the imperial eagles began their conquest of the world under the Augustan, solar, and regal power? Will fascism dare to take up the torch here in Rome where the ironic vestiges of the only hierarchy Christianity was ever able to devise (through self-deception) remains present?

Better neither to hope nor to despair. Time will tell. Hegel said "the idea does not hurry", and what already is cannot be transmuted by what is not.

The values that we affirm are that circumstances and men present themselves such that they can shape a given period of contingent

historical and temporal things; that such an event is of less interest to us than those whose truths are impeded by this historical contingency.

Tradition's Prince of the Śākya
& his Secret Aristocratic Inner Disciplines for Today's Aryan Man
vs. Foreign Devotional Ascesis

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] On the other hand, I composed a systematic work on original Buddhism: The Doctrine of Awakening - A Study of Buddhist Ascesis (La dottrina del risveglio - Saggio sull'ascesi buddhista). This book, too, was only published at a later date, in 1943, by Laterza.

In a way, by writing the latter book, I repaid my debt to Buddha's doctrine. I already mentioned how one of Buddha's teachings had crucially contributed to my overcoming of the personal crisis I had experienced in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. At a later date, I came to employ Buddhist texts daily, in a practical way, for purposes of self-realization, as a means to develop a detached awareness of 'being'. He who had been the prince of the Śākya had described a series of inner disciplines that I perceived as being most congenial to myself - for I felt that devotional (and particularly Christian) ascesis was foreign to my own nature.

In my study, I sought to emphasize the true nature of Buddhism, a doctrine which had undergone much distortion, both in most of its later forms - when, following its revelation and spread, Buddhism had turned into a religion - and in the perception of Buddhism prevalent in the West. In fact, I explained in the book, the essential nature of Buddhist doctrine was originally metaphysical and initiatory. The view of Buddhism as simply a kind of morality based on compassion, humanitarianism and a flight from life arising from the idea that 'life is pain' is most foreign, profane and superficial. Buddhism was rather born of a will to attain the unconditioned, a will that was radically affirmed by seeking to attain what transcends life and death. It is not so much 'pain' that Buddhism seeks to overcome, as the agitation and contingency implied by all conditioned existence, which has its origin, root and foundation in greed: a thirst which, by its very nature, cannot be extinguished by leading an ordinary life; an intoxication, or 'mania', a form of ignorance and attachment that leads towards the desperate, drunken and greedy identification of the 'I' with one or the other form of the perishable world in the eternal current of becoming (samsāra). The term 'nirvāna' merely describes the negative task of extinction (the extinction of thirst and of metaphysical 'ignorance'). The positive counterpart of nirvāna is enlightenment or awakening (bodhi), from which the word 'Buddha' derives ('Buddha' being a title meaning 'The Awakened One' and not a name, as most people believe). It is for this reason that I chose to entitle my book The Doctrine of Awakening.

According to the historical Buddha, the doctrine of awakening was lost in the course of the centuries, having been obscured in India by ritual and by the presumptuous, fossilized speculation of the brāhmana caste. Buddha reaffirmed and renewed the doctrine, which he did not fail to inform with his own character: that of a member of the warrior rather than the brāhmana caste. The 'aristocratic' nature of Buddhism, which is permeated by a virile and warrior force - the roar of the Lion symbolizing Buddha's message - applied on an immaterial and atemporal level, is the one feature of Buddhism that I most emphasized in my work, in contrast to the aforementioned distorted, passive and humanitarian interpretations of the doctrine.

A further feature of Buddhism (in its authentic and essential formulation) that I emphasized is the fact that Buddhism cannot be termed a religion in the common, theistic sense of the word. And this is not because Buddhism is a mere moral system inferior to religion; but, on the contrary, because Buddhist doctrine transcends religion. Buddhism cannot be termed a religion insofar as every initiatory and esoteric doctrine cannot be termed a religion. An aspiration towards the unconditioned leads the Buddhist ascetic beyond Being and beyond the god of Being; beyond the very bliss of celestial heavens, which the ascetic views as a binding force - for the hierarchies of the traditional, popular deities are seen as part of the finite, contingent world to be transcended. In Buddhist texts it is frequently written that: 'He (i.e., the ascetic) has transcended this world and the world beyond, the human bond and the divine bond: for both bonds he has broken.' The ultimate goal of Buddhism, therefore, the Great Liberation, perfectly coincides with that of the purest metaphysical tradition, and coincides with the super-substantial apex, both anterior and superior to being and non-being, and to any personal or 'creator' god.

While my book made other, similar clarifications, adequately outlining the doctrinal framework of Buddhism (for instance, by explaining the theory of the 'chain of causes' that leads to the finite existence of the non-I, and by clarifying the obscure idea of reincarnation), the focus of my study was the practical side of Buddhism: its asceticism, which I explored on the basis of the evidence from primary texts. By referring here to other esoteric traditions, I sought to define Buddhist practice in a more adequate way than either Orientalists or contemporary representatives of Buddhism had done.

In my introduction to *The Doctrine of Awakening*, I pointed out that my choice to focus on Buddhism was due to the fact that this discipline, more than any other, embodies 'a complete and objective method of ascesis, expressed in lucid and conscious terms which are both unmitigated, tested and well-articulated; a method that suits the spirit of the Aryan man, but also takes account of the conditions which have become prevalent in recent times.' The techniques of Buddhism are conscious techniques, free of any religious or moral mythology - morality being merely regarded as the means to an end in Buddhism, which ignores the fetishism of moral values (i.e., the intrinsic imperativeness of given norms). Buddhist techniques might be described as scientific, for they take account of each step in the path to self-realization, and of the organic links existing between each phase of the ascetic process. The

ultimate aim of Buddhist asceticism is the quenching of thirst: de-conditioning, awakening, the Great Liberation. In my book, I emphasized how at least part of these disciplines for self-realization can be pursued while leading an ordinary life, as a way of strengthening one's inner character, of achieving detachment, and of establishing something invulnerable and indestructible within oneself. The 'aristocratic' ascesis of Buddhism, therefore, can also be of an immanent kind: in the closing pages of my work, I focused on the contemporary value of Buddhist practice for alienated individuals as an antidote to the psychic milieu of a world marked by senseless activity, and by the identification with 'vital', irrational and chaotic forces. As the reader might recall, I had emphasized this very point at the end of the second edition of *The Yoga of Power*, where I described the essential prerequisites to tread the Tantric path. After all, the 'Shiva' principle, which according to the Tantras must come to rule the 'Shakti', in the ultimate merging of the two, coincides with the 'extra-samsaric' principle that Buddhist ascesis seeks to incorporate and reinforce.

My reference in the book to an ascesis 'that takes account of the conditions which have come to prevail in recent times' alluded to the general theory regarding the degeneration which has come to mark world history even from an existential perspective. For man, today, is far from finding himself in a condition where he might rely, for the purposes of spiritual self-realization, on the presence of genuine and effective contacts with the transcendent, or on external forms of traditional support. The Buddha himself is the image of an individual who has paved his own way: a 'warrior ascetic' destined to establish a chain of spiritual masters and of corresponding spiritual influences. The most important feature of original Buddhism, therefore, was its practical streak: an affirmation of the primacy of action that shuns all idle speculation, all wandering of the mind through problems, hypotheses, fantasies and myths; in other words: the primacy of personal, self-realizing experience. It is for this reason that the Buddha doctrinally favored 'negative theology', refusing to theorize or talk about the supreme goal to be achieved. The Buddha merely described such a goal in negative terms, as that which it is not and that which must be overcome. [...]

Tradition vs. & beyond "Traditionalism" or "Traditionalist" Attitudes

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] I have already discussed what the term tradition signifies in the higher sense of the word: it is the form bestowed by forces from above upon the overall possibilities of a given cultural area and specific period, through super-individual and even antihistorical values and through elites that know how to derive an authority and natural prestige from such values. In the present day it often happens that a confused desire to return to "tradition" is purposely channeled to the form of "traditionalism." The content of this "traditionalism" consists of habits, routines, surviving residues and vestiges of what once was,

without a real understanding of the spiritual world and of what in them is not merely factual but has a character of perennial value. Thus, such nontraditional or, should we say, "traditionalist" attitudes offer an easy target to the enemy, whose attack mounted against traditionalism is only the opening barrage preceding an attack against Tradition itself: to this purpose the slogans of "anachronism," "anti-history," "immobilism," and "regression" are employed. [...]

True Person

vs. Liberalism, Individualism and the "Immortal Principle" of Equality

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

The beginning of the disintegration of the traditional sociopolitical structures, or at least whatever was left of them in Europe, occurred through liberalism. Following the stormy and demonic period of the French Revolution, the principles espoused by the Revolution first began to act under the guise of liberalism; thus, liberalism is the origin of the various interconnected forms of global subversion.

It is therefore necessary to expose the errors on which this ideology is based and especially those of the "immortal principles" by which it is inspired. This is necessary not only from a doctrinal point of view, but also from a practical one. Nowadays the intellectual confusion has reached such an extent that liberalism, which according to ancient regimes and the Church was synonymous with antitradition and revolution, is portrayed by some as a "right-wing" movement, bent on protecting human dignity, rights, and freedom against Marxism and totalitarianism. The following considerations are aimed at exposing this misconception.

The essence of liberalism is individualism. The basis of its error is to mistake the notion of the person with that of the individual and to claim for the latter, unconditionally and according to egalitarian premises, some values that should rather be attributed solely to the former, and then only conditionally. Because of this transposition, these values are transformed into errors, or into something absurd and harmful.

Let us begin with the egalitarian premise. It is necessary to state from the outset that the "immortal principle" of equality is sheer nonsense. There is no need to comment on the inequality of human beings from a naturalistic point of view. And yet the champions of egalitarianism make equality a matter of principle, claiming that while human beings are not equal de facto, they are so de jure: they are unequal, and yet they should not be. Inequality is unfair; the merit and the superiority of the liberal idea allegedly consist of not taking it into account, overcoming it, and acknowledging the same dignity in every man. Democracy, too, shares the belief in the "fundamental equality of anything that appears to be human."

I believe these are mere empty words. This is not a "noble ideal" but something that, if taken absolutely, represents a logical absurdity;

wherever this view becomes an established trend, it may usher in only regression and decadence.

Concerning the first point, the notion of "many" (i.e., a multiplicity of individual beings) logically contradicts the notion of "many equals." First of all, ontologically speaking, this is due to the so-called "principle of indiscernibles," which is expressed in these terms: "A being that is absolutely identical to another, under every regard, would be one and the same with it." Thus, in the concept of "many" is implicit the concept of their fundamental difference: "many" beings that are equal, completely equal, would not be many, but one. To uphold the equality of the many is a contradiction in terms, unless we refer to a body of soulless mass-produced objects.

Second, the contradiction lies in the "principle of sufficient reason," which is expressed in these terms: "For every thing there must be some reason why it is one thing and not another." Now, a being that is totally equal to another would lack "sufficient reason": it would be just a meaningless duplicate.

From both perspectives, it is rationally well established that the "many" not only cannot be equal, but they also must not be equal: inequality is true de facto only because it is true de jure and it is real only because it is necessary. That which the egalitarian ideology wished to portray as a state of "justice" is in reality a state of injustice, according to a perspective that is higher and beyond the humanitarian and democratic rhetorics. In the past, Cicero and Aristotle argued along these lines.

Conversely, to posit inequality means to transcend quantity and admit quality. It is here that the two notions of the individual and the person are differentiated. The individual may be conceived only as an atomic unit, or as a mere number in the reign of quantity; in absolute terms, it is a mere fiction and an abstraction. And yet it is possible to lean toward this solution, namely to minimize the differences characterizing the individual being, emphasizing mixed and uniform qualities (what ensues from this, through massification and standardization, is a uniformity of paths, rights, and freedoms) and conceiving this as an ideal and desirable condition. However, this means to degrade and to alter the course of nature.

For all practical purposes, the pure individual belongs to the inorganic rather than to the organic dimension. In reality, the law of progressive differentiation rules supreme. In virtue of this law, the lower degrees of reality are differentiated from the higher ones because in the lower degrees a whole can be broken down into many parts, all of which retain the same quality (as in the case of the parts of a noncrystallized mineral, or those parts of some plants and animals that reproduce themselves by parthenogenesis); in the higher degrees of reality this is no longer possible, as there is a higher organic unity in them that does not allow itself to be split without being compromised and without its parts entirely losing the quality, meaning, and function they had in it. Therefore the atomic, unrestricted (solutus), "free" individual is under the aegis of inorganic matter, and belongs, analogically, to the lowest degrees of reality.

An equality may exist on the plane of a mere social aggregate or of a primordial, almost animal-like promiscuity; moreover, it may be recognized wherever we consider not the individual but the overall dimension; not the person but the species; not the "form" but "matter" (in the Aristotelian sense of these two terms). I will not deny that there are in human beings some aspects under which they are approximately equal, and yet these aspects, in every normal and traditional view, represent not the "plus" but the "minus"; in other words, they correspond to the lowest degree of reality, and to that which is least interesting in every being. Again, these aspects fall into an order that is not yet that of "form," or of personality, in the proper sense. To value these aspects and to emphasize them as those that truly matter is the same as regarding as paramount the bronze found in many statues, rather than seeing each one as the expression of distinct ideas, to which bronze (in our case, the generic human quality) has supplied the working matter.

These references clarify what is truly a person and personal value, as opposed to the mere individual and the mere element belonging to a mass or to a social agglomerate. The person is an individual who is differentiated through his qualities, endowed with his own face, his proper nature, and a series of attributes that make him who he is and distinguish him from all others—in other words, attributes that make him fundamentally unequal. The person is a man in whom the general characteristics (beginning with that very general characteristic of being human, to that of belonging to a given race, nation, gender, and social group) assume a differentiated form of expression by articulating and variously individuating themselves.

Any vital, individual, social, or moral process that goes in this direction and leads to the fulfillment of the person according to his own nature is truly ascending. Conversely, to give emphasis and priority to that which in every being is equal signifies regression. The will to equality is one and the same with the will to what is formless. Every egalitarian ideology is the barometric index of a certain climate of degeneration, or the "trademark" of forces leading to a process of degeneration. Overall, this is how we should think about the "noble ideal" and the "immortal principle" of equality. [...]

Tyranny of the Economy & Pseudo-Antithesis between Capitalism & Marxism

(from "Men Among the Ruins")

[...] All this is proof of the true pathology of our civilization. The economic factor exercises a hypnosis and a tyranny over modern man. And, as often occurs in hypnosis, what the mind focuses on eventually becomes real. Modern man is making possible what every normal and complete civilization has always regarded as an aberration or as a bad joke—namely, that the economy and the social problem in terms of the economy are his destiny.

Thus, in order to posit a new principle, what is needed is not to oppose one economic formula with another, but instead to radically change attitudes, to reject without compromise the materialistic premises from which the economic factor has been perceived as absolute.

What must be questioned is not the value of this or that economic system, but the value of the economy itself. Thus, despite the fact that the antithesis between capitalism and Marxism dominates the background of recent times, it must be regarded as a pseudo-antithesis. In free-market economies, as well as in Marxist societies, the myth of production and its corollaries (e.g., standardization, monopolies, cartels, technocracy) are subject to the "hegemony" of the economy, becoming the primary factor on which the material conditions of existence are based. Both systems regard as "backward" or as "underdeveloped" those civilizations that do not amount to "civilizations based on labor and production"—namely, those civilizations that, luckily for themselves, have not yet been caught up in the feverish industrial exploitation of every natural resource, the social and productive enslavement of all human possibilities, and the exaltation of technical and industrial standards; in other words, those civilizations that still enjoy a certain space and a relative freedom. Thus, the true antithesis is not between capitalism and Marxism, but between a system in which the economy rules supreme (no matter in what form) and a system in which the economy is subordinated to extra-economic factors, within a wider and more complete order, such as to bestow a deep meaning upon human life and foster the development of its highest possibilities. This is the premise for a true restorative reaction, beyond "Left" and "Right," beyond capitalism's abuses and Marxist subversion. The necessary conditions are an inner detoxification, a becoming "normal" again ("normal" in the higher meaning of the term), and a renewed capability to differentiate between base and noble interests. No intervention from the outside can help; any external action at best might accompany this process.

In order to resolve the problem, it is necessary, first of all, to reject the "neutral" interpretation of the economic phenomenon proper to a deviated sociology. The very economic life has a body and soul of its own, and inner moral factors have always determined its meaning and spirit. Such spirit, as Sombart has clearly shown, should be distinguished from the various forms of production, distribution, and organization of economic goods; it may vary depending on individual instances and it bestows a very different scope and meaning on the economic factor. The pure homo oeconomicus is a fiction or the by-product of an evidently degenerated specialization. Thus, in every normal civilization a purely economic man—that is, the one who sees the economy not as an order of means but rather as an order of ends to which he dedicates his main activities—was always rightly regarded as a man of lower social extraction: lower in a spiritual sense, and furthermore in a social or political one. In essence, it is necessary to return to normalcy, to restore the natural dependency of the economic factor on inner, moral factors and to act upon them.

Once this is acknowledged, it will be easy to recognize the inner causes in the actual world (which have the economy as their common denominator)

that preclude any solution that does not translate into a steeper fall to a lower level. I have previously suggested that the uprising of the masses has mainly been caused by the fact that every social difference has been reduced to those that exist between mere economic classes and by the fact that under the aegis of antitraditional liberalism, property and wealth, once free from any bond or higher value, have become the only criteria of social differences. However, beyond the strict limitations that were established within the overall hierarchical system prior to the ascent of the economy, the superiority and the right of a class as a merely economic class may rightly be contested in the name of elementary human values. And it was precisely here that the subversive ideology introduced itself, by making an anomalous and degenerative situation into an absolute one and acting as if nothing else had previously existed or could exist outside economic classes, or besides external and unfair social conditions that are determined by wealth alone. However, all this is false, since such conditions could develop only within a truncated society: only in such a society may the concepts of "capitalist" and "proletarian" be defined. These terms lack any foundation in a normal civilization, because in such a civilization the counterpart constituted by extra-economic values portrays the corresponding human types as something radically different from what today is categorized as "capitalist" or "proletarian." Even in the domain of the economy, a normal civilization provides specific justification for certain differences in condition, dignity, and function.

Moreover, in the contemporary chaos it is also necessary to acknowledge what is caused by an ideological infection. It is not entirely correct to say that Marxism arose and took hold because there was a real social question that needed to be addressed (at best this may have been the case during the early stages of the industrial revolution); the opposite is true—to wit, that for the most part the social question gains precedence in today's world only as a result of the presence of Marxism. The social question artificially arises through the concerted effort of agitators, those who are engaged in "rekindling class consciousness." Lenin did not assign to the Communist Party only the task of supporting "workers' movements" where they arose spontaneously, but rather the task of creating and organizing them everywhere and by every means. Marxism gives rise to the proletarian and class mentality where it previously did not exist, stirring excitement and creating resentment and dissatisfaction in those societies where the individuals still lived in the station allotted to them by life. In those societies an individual contained his need and aspirations within natural limits; he did not yearn to become different from what he was, and thus he was innocent of that *Entfremdung* ("alienation") decried by Marxism. Incidentally, we should recall that Marxism proposes to overcome this alienation through something worse—namely, the "integration (or, we should say, disintegration) of the person into a collective entity (i.e., the 'people,' or 'the party')."

I am not espousing an "obscurantism" for the benefit of the "ruling classes"; as I have stated previously, I dispute the superiority and the rights of a merely economic class living in a materialistic fashion. Nevertheless, we need to side against the idea or myth of so-called social progress, which is another of the many pathological fixations of the economic era in general, and not the legacy of leftist movements

alone. To this effect, the eschatological views of Marxism do not differ very much from the "Western" views of prosperity: both Weltanschauungen [worldviews] essentially coincide, as do their practical applications. In both Marxism and free-market economies we find the same materialistic, antipolitical, and social view detaching the social order and people from any higher order and higher goal, positing what is "useful" as the only purpose (understood in a physical, vegetative, and earthly sense); by turning the "useful" into a criterion of progress, the values proper to every traditional structure are inverted. In fact, we should not forget that the law, meaning, and sufficient reason for these structures have always consisted in references for man to something beyond himself and beyond the economy, wealth, or material poverty, all these things having only a secondary importance. Thus, it can legitimately be claimed that the so-called improvement of social conditions should be regarded not as good but as evil, when its price consists of the enslavement of the single individual to the productive mechanism and to the social conglomerate; or in the degradation of the State to the "State based on work," and the degradation of society to "consumer society"; or in the elimination of every qualitative hierarchy; or in the atrophy of every spiritual sensibility and every "heroic" attitude. Hegel wrote, "Happiness is not to be found in the history of the world [in the sense of material comfort and social prosperity]; even the few happy periods found here and there are like white pages." But even at an individual level, the qualities that matter the most in a man and make him who he is often arise in harsh circumstances and even in conditions of indigence and injustice, since they represent a challenge to him, testing his spirit; what a sad contrast it is when the human animal is granted a maximum of comfort, an equal share in a mindless and "bovine" happiness, an easy and comfortable life filled with gadgets, radio and TV programs, planes, Hollywood, sports arenas, and popular culture at the level of Reader's Digest.

Again, spiritual values and the higher degrees of human perfection have nothing to do with either the presence or the absence of socioeconomic prosperity. The notion that indigence is always a source of abjection and vice—and that "advanced" social conditions represent its opposite—is the fairy tale told by materialistic ideologies, which contradict themselves when they uphold the other myth, according to which the "good guys" are on the side of the people and the oppressed workers and all the "bad guys" are to be found on the side of the wealthy classes, which are corrupt and exploitative. Both of these are fairy tales. In reality, true values bear no necessary relation to better or worse socioeconomic conditions; only when these values are put at the forefront is it possible to approximate an order of effective justice, even on the material plane. Among these values are: being oneself; the style of an active impersonality; love of discipline; and a generally heroic attitude toward life. Against all forms of resentment and social competition, every person should acknowledge and love his station in life, which best corresponds to his own nature, thus acknowledging the limits within which he can develop his potential; and should give an organic sense to his life and achieve its perfection, since an artisan who perfectly fulfills his function is certainly superior to a king who does not live up to his dignity. Only when such considerations have weight will this or that reform carried out on the socioeconomic plane be conceived and

implemented without any negative consequence, according to true justice, without mistaking the essential for the accessory. Unless an ideological detoxification and a rectification of attitudes are carried out, every reform will be only superficial and fail to tackle the deeper roots of the crisis of contemporary society, to the advantage of subversive forces. [...]

Unlike the Jewish Tradition,
Political Freemasonry & Secular Judaism
are Merely Tools Subordinate to Vaster Influences

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] The influence of Judaism on modern culture and society, by means of both international capitalism and by revolutionary, corrosive political agitation, can hardly be denied. In my work, I sought to prove that this influence has chiefly come from the secular side of Judaism, which abandoned the ancient Jewish tradition. Certain aspects of this ancient tradition were distorted and materialized by secular Judaism, allowing for the kind of instinctual outbreaks of a given human type that had previously been held in check. In fact, I held little against the Jewish tradition as such: in my studies of esotericism, I had frequently quoted the Kabbalah, ancient Hebrew texts and Jewish authors (not to mention my praise of Michelstaedter, himself a Jew, and my interest in the work of another Jew, Weininger, whose most important book I endeavored to publish in a new Italian edition). I discussed the development of Judaism as a corrosive force in one chapter of *The Myth of Blood* and in an article I published in the fifth volume of *Research on the Jewish Question* (*Forschungen zur Judenfrage*). Here, too, my chief emphasis lay on the inner race and on actual behavior. Finally, from a historical perspective, I denounced both the one-sidedness and the dangers of fanatical, visionary anti-Semitism - something I also stressed in my introduction to Preziosi's edition of the well-known and much debated *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. What I denounced, in other words, was the danger of believing that Judaism alone is enemy: such a belief I was even inclined to see as one of the tactics employed in what I described as the 'occult war', a tactic which makes the enemy focus on a limited' area in order to divert his attention from other areas, where the attack continues unnoticed. What was necessary, I argued, was rather to be aware of the occult front of global subversion and of the forces of anti-Tradition in their entirety - something I had adequately described in *Revolt Against the Modern World*. The ultimate framework of the Jewish question might be described as a metaphysical struggle protracted throughout the ages. Within such a framework, certain organizations - most recently, political Freemasonry, as well as secular Judaism - have merely played the role of tools subordinate to vaster influences. [...]

Use Tantrism's Ideas to Assume Avant-Garde Positions
& Attempt New & Valid Syntheses

(beyond Guénon's One-Sided & Incomplete View of Hindu Tradition)

(from "The Yoga of Power")

Aside from the ideas concerning India that feed the popular imagination (based on Gandhi, fakirs, and the like), and aside from the prejudiced views of some Catholic thinkers (who have frequently categorized India under the label "pantheism"), even those who have analyzed Hindu tradition on a higher level and in greater depth have somehow missed the point. These scholars, in fact, have usually characterized India as the expression of a spirituality that is essentially ascetic, contemplative, and otherworldly. According to these scholars, India's spiritual ascetics flee the world and seek liberation, which is obtained by being reabsorbed into formless transcendence, or into brahman, as a drop of water is reabsorbed into the ocean. After Buddhism was reduced to little more than a humanitarian moral code and after it came to be associated with the stereotypical concept of an evanescent nirvana, (1) the views of Vedanta (I have already pointed out the Tantric criticisms of this darshana) have become instrumental in shaping the current popular opinion concerning Hindu spirituality. The views of Vedanta have been popularized by more or less genuine contemporary epigones of Hinduism and by various Western spiritualist and intellectual circles. A prime example is René Guénon, an eminent exponent of integral Traditionalism, who has presented Vedanta as the quintessence and most genuine expression of Hindu thought and metaphysics. (2) In relation to this, one may be inclined to believe in the thesis that claimed that Eastern civilization (by generalizing one goes from India to the whole Orient) had developed essentially under the aegis of contemplation and of world renunciation, while Western civilization had developed under the aegis of man's affirmation, action, domination, and power.

(1) Nirvana came to be seen mainly as a refuge from this "sorrowful world." I am not pleased to report that in no work other than my Doctrine of the Awakening it is possible to have an idea of what early Buddhism stood for, prior to its ensuing decadence.

(2) René Guénon, Man and His Becoming According to Vedanta.

There is an element of truth in this view, which nevertheless should be criticized for its one-sidedness and incompleteness. In fact, the reader has probably recognized within the complex history of Hindu ideas and schools of thought (darshanas) the existence of a tradition that clearly contradicts the popular views concerning India's spirituality and the alleged antithesis between East and West. On the one hand, it is true that contemporary orientalist are inclined to ascribe a greater importance to Tantrism than was previously given to it. On the other hand, it has not been a long time since the West became acquainted with Tantrism. Still, it cannot be said that Tantrism has given to India its essential identity; this, however, does not mean that its role and its meaning should be overlooked.

In these final and brief considerations, I am not going to refer to Tantric yoga as such (hatha yoga and kundalini yoga) nor to its

transcendent objectives, which can be achieved only by a few individuals who are exceptionally qualified and predisposed. (3) I will rather refer to those Tantric elements that are systematized in a general world view, and in particular to Shaivism and to the Path of the Left Hand.

(3) What I have just said will probably disappoint those who know only the minimalist, modified, and practical yoga that has been imported into the West, as well as those frivolous people who believe that through this or that exercise it is possible to achieve goodness knows what.

By referring to this worldview, I raise the danger that what I have said elsewhere (4) in an attempt to differentiate an Eastern and a Western myth (after having criticized some inconsistent and superficial views) may lose its validity. In that context I had stated, by simplification, that India was to be credited for the ideal of liberation and the West was to be credited for the ideal of liberty. On the one hand, there is the impulse to escape from the human condition in order to become reintegrated in an absolute from which we separated ourselves only to end up in a world of illusion (maya). On the other hand, there is the impulse to feel free in a world that is no longer denied, but that is rather considered as a field for action and for experiencing of all the possibilities inherent in the human condition.

(4) Julius Evola, *L'arco e la clava* (Milan, 1967), chapter 15.

Now, it is clear that with Tantrism the differentiation between liberation and liberty no longer subsists, since, as a general rule, Tantrism, in its spirit - leaving out of consideration the framework of local traditions - should be considered distinctly Western. It is more conspicuously Western than Christian soteriology, which proclaims an ideal of salvation from a world that is looked upon as a "vale of tears" and contemplates the destiny of a human nature that has been infected with sin and that stands in need of redemption. (5) In Tantrism we find a very interesting phenomenon; those ascetic techniques that were well known in India are no longer employed in order to achieve an otherworldly liberation but in order to achieve liberty within the world. These techniques are supposed to bestow on a superior human type an invulnerability that allows one to be open to every worldly experience, and that grants the power to "transform the poison into medicine." The password of Tantrism is not the incompatibility, but rather the unity, of spiritual discipline (sadhana) and enjoyment of the world (bhoga); this has led Tantrism to take issue with Vedanta's view of the world as "illusion" (maya), since Tantrism has perceived the reality of the world in terms of power, or of shakti.

(5) I quote the meaningful words of a Tantric author: "Both Sankara's jnanayoga and Ramanuja's

bhakti-yoga share a pessimistic perspective. Conversely, in the Tantras one does not find reference to 'valley of tears,' or to 'house of torments,' and to similar designations with which transcendentalist darshanas express their contempt for the world. ... Those who practice Tantrism achieve liberation while enjoying the goods of the world which

the followers of other schools deprive themselves of." (Woodroffe, Tantrattva).

We have also encountered, when examining the ethics of the Path of the Left Hand and the disciplines leading to the destruction of the human limitations (pasha), forms of anomia, or of something "beyond good and evil," which are so extreme that they make the Western supporters of the theory of the superman look like innocuous amateurs. What is significant, in this context, is the emphasis given to a dimension that these supporters of the superman totally ignore: the dimension of transcendence, or better yet, of an "immanent transcendence." We are far beyond the "blond beast" and the individualist anarchists, who are inspired by a materialistic, secular, and Darwinian worldview. We are dealing here with a liberty that, as we have seen, implies previous disciplines not dissimilar to those advocated by traditional asceticism and by a transcendent orientation. This view has almost no equivalent in the universal history of ideas.

As I have said in the Introduction, Tantrism became widespread in India around the fifth century A.D. The doctrinal formulation of its views may be dated, at latest, around 650 A.D. Between then and now have passed quite a few centuries. It is therefore interesting to notice that if we adapt the traditional Hindu doctrine of the four ages of the world (yugas), Tantrism anticipated a situation that corresponds to our modern times. Tantrism has foretold the phase of the last age (Kali Yuga), whose essential traits - those of an epoch of dissolution - can incontrovertibly be recognized in so many events and trends of our day and age. With this in mind, Tantrism has sanctioned the expiration of traditional spiritual forms that in previous epochs presupposed a different existential situation and a different human type. Tantrism also sought out new forms and new paths that might prove efficacious even in the "dark age," and it tried to implement the realization of the same ideal of other epochs, namely, the awakening and the activation of the dimension of transcendence within humankind. There is a limit to this, though. According to the Tantras, the path to be followed is that which in other times was kept secret in view of the dangers associated with it. This path is reserved only for a small minority (for the viras and the divyas): it is implicitly precluded to the masses, because, it is claimed, the majority of people living in the dark age are pashus, animal-like, conformist, limited individuals, who would not comprehend the doctrine, or who would be ruined by it, because of their lack of necessary qualifications.

We may well say that the essence of the way to be followed in the dark age is summed up in the saying "riding the tiger." I am not even dreaming of proposing Tantrism to the Western world, or of importing it here in the West, so that people may practice it in its original aspects. These aspects, as we have seen, are strictly and inseparably interwoven with local Hindu and Tibetan traditions and with the corresponding spiritual climate. (6) Nonetheless, some of Tantrism's fundamental ideas may be considered by those who wish to deal with the problems encountered in our day and age, by assuming avant-garde positions and by attempting new and valid syntheses. (7) [...]

(6) A typical example of the vulgarization of Tantrism for the use of Westerners is a book by O. Garrison, *Tantra: The Yoga of Sex* (New York, 1964). Unfortunately, this book has also been translated into Italian. This book deserves no rating, since it is filled with blunders and inspired by a dull spiritualism. The author, an American, says that he was inspired by a guru "who runs a successful legal office in Bombay." (!!!) Another example of the poor quality of adaptations of Tantrism to Western standards is represented by the "Tantric Order of America," which used to publish a journal in which the readers were reminded that "there is no amount of money large enough to reward a tantric initiation." At least in this "order" there was no pretension of spiritualism, since there were many scandals and lawsuits against its members. These "tantrikas," especially their Great Master, who took the modest name of "Om the Omnipotent," seduced quite a few beautiful American girls; the lawsuits were brought against them, not so much because the girls complained about the "initiations" they underwent, but because their parents were not so thrilled about the whole thing (in those days there was not yet the "beat generation").

(7) These ideas should always be within the context of a general worldview and of ethics, leaving aside anything related to initiation and yoga.

War Destroys Bourgeois Personality
but Equals Asceticism & Initiation for Heroic Type
as Ancient Greeks, Romans, Irano-Aryans, Frederick I,
Edda & Indo-Aryans Confirm

(from "Metaphysics of War")

[...] dealing with the capacity of war and heroic experience to bring about an awakening of deep forces connected to the substratum of the race, we have seen that, in the most general way, two distinct, and indeed opposite, types appear. In the first type the petty bourgeois personality - tamed, conformist, pseudo-intellectual or emptily idealistic - may undergo a disintegration, involving the emergence of elementary forces and instincts, in which the individual regresses to the pre-personal stage of the 'races of nature', which exhaust themselves in a welter of conservative and affirmative instincts. In the second type, by contrast, the most 'elemental' and non-human aspects of the heroic experience become a means of transfiguration, of elevation and integration of personality in - so to speak - a transcendent way of being. This constitutes an evocation of what we have called 'the race of the spirit', that is, of the spiritual element from 'above', which, in superior stocks, acts formatively on the purely biological part, and is at the root of their 'tradition' and of their prophetic greatness - simultaneously, from the point of view of the individual, these are experiences which antiquity, and specifically Aryan antiquity, considered no less rich in supernatural fruits than those of asceticism, holiness and even initiation. [...]

Broadly speaking, we find that, especially among ancient Aryan humanity, wars were thought of as images of a perennial fight between metaphysical forces: on one hand there was the Olympian and luminous principle, uranic and solar truth; on the other hand, there was raw force, the 'titanic', telluric element, 'barbaric' in the classical sense, the demonic-feminine principle of chaos. This view continually recurs in Greek mythology in various symbolic forms; in still more precise and radical terms it appears in the general vision of the world of the Irano-Aryan races, which considered themselves literally as the armies of the God of Light in his struggle against the power of darkness; they persist throughout the Middle Ages, often retaining their classical features in spite of the new religion. Thus, Frederick the First of Swabia; in his fight against the rebellious Commune, recalled the symbol of Hercules and the arm with which this symbolic hero of Dorian-Aryan and Achaean-Aryan stocks fought as all of the 'Olympian' forces against the dark creatures of chaos.

This general conception, intimately experienced, could not help but be reflected in more concrete forms of life and activity, raised to the symbolic and, we could almost say, 'ritual-like' level. For our purposes, it is worth noting particularly the transformation of war into the 'path of God' and 'greater holy war'.

We omit deliberately here any documentation peculiar to Romanity because we will use this when dealing, in the next article, with the 'mysticism of victory'. We will begin instead with the testimonies, which are themselves very well-known, relating to the Nordic-Aryan tradition. Here, Valhalla is the place of an immortality reserved above all for heroes fallen on the battlefield. The Lord of this place, Odin or Wotan, is presented to us in the Ynglingasaga as having shown to the heroes, by his own symbolic self-sacrifice on the cosmic tree Yggdrasil, the path which leads to that divine sojourn, where they live eternally, as if on a dazzling luminous peak beyond the clouds.

According to this tradition no sacrifice or cult is more appreciated by the supreme God than that which is performed by the hero who fights and falls on the battlefield. In addition to this there is a sort of metaphysical counterpart reinforcing this view: the forces of the heroes who, falling, have sacrificed to Odin have gone beyond the limits of human nature, and then increase the phalanx which this god needs to fight the Ragna-rökkr, that is, the 'darkening of the divine', which has threatened the world since ancient times. In the Edda, in fact, it is said that "no matter how great the number of the heroes gathered in Valhalla, they will never be too many for when the Wolf comes. The 'Wolf' here is the symbol of a dark and wild power which, previously, had managed to chain and subdue the stock of the 'divine heroes', or Aesir; the 'age of the Wolf' is more or less the counterpart of the 'age of iron' in the classical tradition, and of the 'dark age' - kali-yuga - in the Indo-Aryan one: it alludes symbolically to an age of the unleashing of purely terrestrial and desecrated forces. [...]

Wei-Wu-Wei

& Lao Tzu's Ultimately Aristocratic Notion of Non-Action

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] Lao Tzu's notion of 'non-action' was certainly contrary to any philosophically immanent identification of subject and act, or of act and fact - an identification which I came decidedly to oppose, both in itself and in its historicist application. The (ultimately aristocratic) principle of non-involvement and impassibility is what stood at the centre of Lao Tzu's doctrine. By imitating a divine model, the 'Perfect One' - the 'true man' or 'transcendental man' of Taoism - never identifies himself with external reality. By never acting directly, by not externalizing his own ego through self-affirmation, and by, instead, actively renouncing to 'be' and to 'act' in a direct and conditioned way, the Perfect One achieves what is truly essential. Thus, he enters the Way and makes himself intangible, inexhaustible, invulnerable and unsusceptible to any external attempt to subdue him or render him impotent. By virtue of such a process, the Perfect One also becomes capable of acting in a subtle, invisible and magical way: this is the meaning of the expression wei-wu-wei ('to act without acting'), which is also defined as the virtue (té) of the Way (Tao).

I was to discuss the principles of Taoism, as described by Lao Tzu, in a more faithful and precise manner about thirty-six years later, in 1959, when I was encouraged by a friend to write a second introduction to the Tao-té-ching. [...]

It is only in my later commentary on the text that I clearly emphasized how Taoism is defined by a kind of 'immanent transcendence': by the direct presence of non-being (in its positive sense of supra-ontological essentiality) within being, of the infinitely remote (the 'Sky') in what is close, and of what is beyond nature within nature. Only then did I clearly point out that Taoism is equally remote from both pantheistic immanence and transcendence, as it is founded on the direct sort of experience which underlies the specific existential structure of primeval humanity. [...]

Worthless Political & Social Sphere Requires Apoliteia
while Bourgeois World's Patriotic & Family Ideals Dissolve
but Collapse of Sex Taboos a Positive Occurrence

(from "The Path of Cinnabar")

[...] In a section of Ride the Tiger entitled 'Social Dissolution', I emphasized once more my work's detachment from any practical aim. I here argued that there is nothing in the political and social sphere to which it is worth deeply committing oneself today. Apoliteia must be the norm for the differentiated man. Nor, for such a man, is the antithesis between 'East' and 'West' of any importance: for 'East' and 'West' are merely different aspects of the same problem (as I had already mentioned

almost thirty years earlier in the pages of Revolt). A choice between the two can only be taken on crudely practical bases, as the Communist East threatens those who do not wish to submit to its rule, even resorting to physical elimination. In this section of Ride the Tiger, when discussing the crisis of patriotic and family ideals (among others), I emphasized what I had already noted in the introduction to the book: that such ideals are essentially aspects of the bourgeois world - mythical, sentimental, rhetorical or romantic extensions of this world destined to undergo increasing dissolution. In particular, in order to provide a further example of the ambiguity that marks the present age, I examined the issue of sex. No doubt, I argued, the collapse or impending collapse of all taboos, authorities and formalities with regard to sex might be regarded as a positive occurrence; the question arises, however, as to just who will exploit this freedom and in what way - whether, in other words, such freedom will engender something other than simple petty corruption, sexual primitivism and a pandemic of erotic obsession. The points I raised here with regard to the prospect of free, intense and essential intercourse between man and woman share much in common with some of the things I wrote in The Metaphysics of Sex. Once more, in these pages of Ride the Tiger, I emphasized the absurdity of ordinary procreation from a superior perspective: I identified the safest path to ensure a form of continuity, not with procreation by blood, but with the transmission of wisdom and of an inner orientation to those sufficiently qualified (i.e., the idea of spiritual fatherhood). Given the nature of modern dissolution, mere blood links no longer provide an adequate support, for each new generation feels increasingly and anarchically removed from the one that came before it. [...]

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