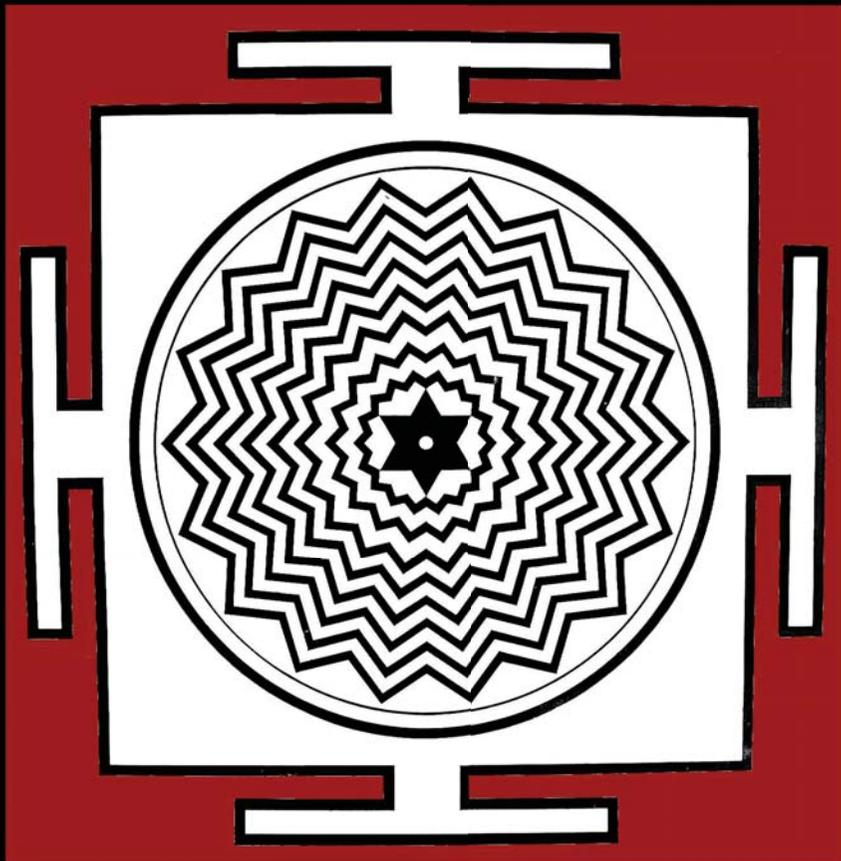


HINDU METAPHYSICS

ARTICLES OF JULIUS EVOLA & RENE GUENON



BERSERKER

BOOKS



MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES

Julius Evola

MAN AND HIS FUTURE ACCORDING TO THE VEDĀNTA

René Guénon

**ON HINDU METAPHYSICS. A NECESSARY
CORRECTION**

Julius Evola

CONCLUDING NOTE

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by Julius Evola.

Lecture given at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Rome on 7

December 1940.

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Notes

No doubt our opponent will continue to say that "our writings do not go beyond the world of words"; this is more than evident, by force of circumstance, and the same can be said of those he himself writes, but at least there is one essential difference: although he may be persuaded otherwise, his words, for those who do not understand their ultimate meaning, convey

only the mental attitude of a layman; and we ask you to believe that, for our part, this is not in fact an insult, but only the technical expression of a pure and simple state of affairs" (1).

With these firm but measured words, René Guénon replied to those who, with a good dose of presumption and a rather profound misunderstanding, put forward "dialectical" theses that were ultimately similar to those that Julius Evola, author of the following essay, has always stubbornly maintained, albeit with different arguments.

The curious perspective assumed by Evola in relation to the traditional doctrines masterfully (and providentially) expounded in Guénon's works would undoubtedly require, given the particular diffusion of Evola's texts in our country, a careful and profound critical analysis in order to achieve the necessary discrimination between the author's strongly individual views and traditional thought in its various expressions and forms. Without being able to tackle this issue decisively here, we nevertheless feel it is appropriate to highlight the keystone, in negative terms, of the entire Evolian system: the fact is that Evola never reached a truly metaphysical and, therefore, exclusively intellectual point of view. (2).

Although terms such as Principle, Metaphysics, Contemplation, etc. appear in Evola's phraseology, there is a clear impression of inappropriate and artificial usage that reveals that these terms are not being given their true meaning (3), while in Evola's works there is a constant, clear and precise reference to a clear and fundamental dualism, symptomatic of a mutilated vision that is dangerously suited to the deviant and distorted conclusions typical of heterodox conceptions. Having failed to overcome the oppositions in a principled synthesis, Evola thus shows a lack of discernment and an intellectual deficiency that leads him to dwell on partial visions based on a logical procedure that gives rise to a successive subdivision into opposing antinomic arguments.

From this emerges, as is obvious, a series of dichotomies and rationally irresolvable oppositions which, in Evola's opinion, would irrefutably demonstrate thegnoseological inconsistency of the most purely intellectual doctrines, such as Vedanta, which are axiomatically anchored in nebulous notions and inevitably destined to lead to vicious circles and pseudo-solutions.

One can quickly discern in these harsh criticisms a very improper use of logic on Evola's part; there are in fact two very different ways of considering it: the first, absolutely traditional, makes it a true science directly linked to metaphysical principles and expressing, in its own particular way, a reflection of the Higher and Immutable Truth; the second, substantially modern, treats it in a philosophical way, striving to bring it together or connect it with some systematic conception. And it is precisely this second way of considering logic that Evola uses, who has no qualms, in his special deductions, about also relying on elements deviating from doctrines that are perfectly valid in the sphere of a particular traditional form such as the Hindu one. We refer here to Tantrism, presented by Evola in a rather eccentric and ambiguous form, capable of generating far-reaching misunderstandings, fuelled above all by fictitious and irreconcilable oppositions such as the one presumably existing between two of the visual angles of the Hindu Tradition: the aforementioned Tantric and the Vedantic, which, far from being incompatible, arise from the same source and reveal the same Reality. This is not the case according to Evola, who unilaterally considers only the Tantric vision to be free of defects, failing to realise that the latter merely addresses and resolves problems in different terms, although, in any case, creating others that are equally thorny, something of which, as we said, Evola unfortunately does not realise, despite his logical approach, due to his systematic (pseudo) cognitive approach, which is almost obsessively conditioned by the idea of power; and that, unfortunately, this deleterious attitude has not ceased to make its effects felt throughout Evola's entire production can be easily deduced from the Promethean attention that inconsistently emerges in his linguistic involution with a heroic accent, almost as if true selfishness were explained in the "differentiated" actions of a, to say the least, improbable "absolute individual".

On the basis of such misunderstandings, it is therefore not difficult to be convinced that Evola's assertions are as clear and radical as they are insufficient and inadequate for the subject matter at hand, taking into account, moreover, certain inaccuracies in matters of detail which, together with a rather exalted tone, contribute to increasing the confusion of those who read them, and to accept the thesis that Evola does not adhere so much to the Truth as to "his" Truth, above all because it is "his" rather than because of the intrinsic validity of the theses he upholds.

Therefore, when Evola refers to the 'great tradition of the magical and hermetic sciences, which nevertheless deal with power, individuation and domination', the legitimate doubt arises that we are not facing the "straight path" but, on the contrary, a path that proceeds in the diametrically opposite direction, inflating the ego to excess and provoking that magical intoxication that runs so much through Evola's prose. We are very far from that spiritual poverty that leads to

the extinction of the ego and the realisation of the Self, in the correct perspective that each being, not having its own sufficient reason in itself, as is the case with human beings, can only find itself in a relationship of total subordination and dependence in relation to the Principle: And what, therefore, is the empowerment of the ego if not the empowerment of an illusion and a thickening of the veil that obscures it?

There is no worse "sin" in our existence, but Evola seems not to have noticed this.

A. Z.

Julius Evola

MAN AND HIS BECOMING ACCORDING TO THE VEDĀNTA

The growing interest shown today by our culture in everything Oriental is an undeniable fact and cannot be explained as a simple wave of exotic fashion, but must be related to something much deeper. However, the meaning of this fact remains a problem that deserves to be studied much more than it has been until now.

At first, the custom was to dismiss the East with a simple shrug of the shoulders from the heights of a smugness based essentially on the achievements of our civilisation in the fields of materialism and abstract discourse. But, far from this frivolous presumption, someone began to suspect that such domains might not be the ultimate authority after all, and considering the East with a renewed vision, began to understand its spiritual reality; and realising at the same time the critical points towards which the whole of boastful European civilisation ultimately gravitates when taken to its logical conclusion, in addition to recognising the East, they began to wonder whether, perhaps, it could offer something that would integrate European civilisation itself in order to steer it, beyond the crisis, towards a higher positivity.

There were even those who fell into the opposite extreme, that is, the idea that the East is like a lifeline or manna from heaven, that everything we have done, from the Greeks to the present day, is a negative value, a aberration, a degeneration from which it is important above all to save ourselves by recognising it as such and returning to the Eastern and traditional conception of life as prodigal sons.

It is curious to note that many of these people accompany this misunderstanding of the West with a similar one regarding the East itself. That is to say, they see only the most external and deteriorated, if not falsified, side of the East; the side that allows them above all to belittle everything that is scientific seriousness, discipline, willpower, and conscience, in order to fall into the arms of unbridled rambling and dissolve into feelings, dreams, and empty words. Now, just as we must condemn

materialistic complacency with regard to the East, we believe that the same—if not more—should be done with such an attitude, which, for that reason alone, reflects the disintegration of some elements of our civilisation.

We affirm that if the East represents a spiritual reality, so does the West; that therefore they are distinct and both positive terms, susceptible, if anything, to synthesis, but not to a flat reduction of one to the other. This synthesis does not mean that only the West or the East must prevail, since we believe that such a synthesis, if it is to be fruitful, must take its character precisely from the spirit of Western culture, which is power, an impulse to celebrate and act with the spirit without denying the "world"—the system of determinations and individuations—but rather loving it, affirming it, mastering it, and thus realising it. This is a simple statement of a thesis; for its demonstration, we refer to our writings as a whole, which can be said to have it as their centre of gravity, and specifically to the *Essay on Magical Idealism* (Rome, 1925) and the first section of *Man as Power*, soon to be published, already published in issues 2, 3 and 4 of the magazine *Ultra*. Here we only wish to consider the work of a French author, René Guénon, and see, through a critical analysis of his theses, what one of the greatest Indian systems, Vedanta, can represent for us.

Guénon has published a series of books that can be divided into two groups. One comprises *Le Théosophisme, Introduction générale aux doctrines hindoues and Orient et Occident*; the second, the very recent study *L'homme et son devenir selon le Vedânta* (Ed. Bossard, Paris, 1925, 271 pp.), which preludes several others. The first group can be called negative, the second positive, in the sense that the purpose of the former works is: a) To clear the field of all the distortions, misunderstandings and parodies to which Eastern wisdom has been subjected by certain Western currents; b) To thoroughly criticise Western civilisation and show the crisis and ruin that are corroding it as long as it does not adopt a totally different order of values.

In the second series, Guénon sets out to systematically expound traditional Eastern wisdom, which he identifies absolutely and precisely with such an order of values.

With regard to the first point, we cannot fail to endorse Guénon's purifying and unmasking work. Commitments, misunderstandings and digressions such as those of a certain English 'spiritualism' and Steinerian anthroposophy, together with all the minor neo-mystical tones, in the style of Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi and the like, can never be treated with sufficient severity, and are truly the worst obstacles to a real understanding and integration of East and West. However, we have certain reservations about the means chosen by Guénon for this purpose, means that are more *ad hominem* than demonstrative (we are referring to *Théosophisme*), since instead of taking up the doctrines and pointing out their intrinsic absurdity, he limits himself to revealing the intrigues of individuals and associations, whose eventual lack of transparency regarding what really matters is nevertheless of little significance. Beyond this, we agree with Guénon on the requirement for metaphysical knowledge and, therefore, on the level

of initiatory traditions. This is a point that cannot be emphasised enough. Among Westerners, there is a custom of calling "spiritual" that which is merely an outline, an accessory to a physical state of existence. What matters most, unfortunately, is only the real, concrete relationship with things and beings, a relationship that for humans is something extrinsic and contingent, proper to physical perception and the space-time categories that govern it.

As for everything that is discursive knowledge, the heart, mind, morals, devotion, etc., all of this refers to that same physical state, and with all its "superiors" and "inferiors," "high" and "low," "divine" and "human," "good" and "evil," etc., it does not take a single step beyond that, it does not transform in any way that which metaphysically, in the order of absolute concreteness, man is (better: the Self is, as man). The spiritual must not be an empty word; it is therefore necessary for man to have the strength to understand it, to face up to everything that he is, feels and thinks, to put it aside and move forward in a radical transformation of the relationship according to which one is either with things or with oneself. Such is the metaphysical realisation that has been the constant interest of every esoteric tradition, whose roots are intertwined with those of history itself. Guénon reaffirms these demands, and for that we are grateful. However, he focuses primarily on the negative aspects, that is, more on his ideas about what the metaphysical is not than on his ideas about what the metaphysical is. Certainly, we find ourselves here on rather uncertain ground, since the language coined by material and discursive life offers few possibilities for adequately expressing what is proper to such metaphysics. We therefore believe we can give a rough indication by saying that Guénon's attitude towards the metaphysical suffers from a mentality that we could call rationalist, which we explain as follows: the premise of rationalism (rationalism as a philosophical system, that is, and not in its vulgar sense, which in no way can be linked to Guénon) is 'ideal objectivity', that is, the belief in laws existing in and of themselves, in principles that are what they are, without any possibility of convertibility, fatally and universally, and in the world as something in which everything that is contingency, tension, darkness, arbitrariness, indeterminability, has no place, for everything is already accomplished and a higher order brings all the elements together. In this cosmos, the principle is not will and power, but knowledge and contemplation; not domination, but identity. The individual is like an illusory and contradictory shadow if he disappears into the whole. In this deep root, things and laws—whether sensible or not—are themselves and not others; it is made of pure contingency that becomes abstraction or, rather, is extinguished in something purely ideal: the interior is therefore realised according to its 'Apollonian' or intellectual mode, in which the principle of the self, rather than being reaffirmed in a 'being of power', is abolished. Certainly, these are philosophical expressions that should only be taken as suggestions; suggestions imbued with a particular way of relating to things, in an order that is beyond anything philosophical and mental.

That said, Guénon's error lies in believing that such an attitude should represent the ultimate authority, that 'metaphysical' and 'intellectual' (this term is used by Guénon not in its modern sense but, in a way, in the scholastic and Neoplatonic sense) are

interchangeable terms, which is debatable. Guénon knows—and we know with him—that his conception is linked to a whole tradition of initiatory wisdom; but what he shows himself to be unaware of, or pretends to be unaware of, is that such a tradition is not the only one, that beyond all worldly experience and "profane" knowledge—as opposed to the tradition of knowledge, contemplation, and union—there is the great tradition of the magical and hermetic sciences, which is nevertheless one of power, individuation, and domination. Therefore, rather than attributing to himself a monopoly on initiatory wisdom, as he seems to have done, it would have been advisable for Guénon to have reflected a little more, since beyond the profane and the naive there are those who might ask certain questions and invite him to a revision of ideas that might not be too simple. This is an important point, given that Guénon's particular attitude towards the spiritual cannot fail to reveal a complete ignorance of everything that the West has achieved in relation to the spiritual itself – even if only in terms of demands and tendencies – and, therefore, of the aforementioned reference to the East almost as a lifeline for someone who has nothing and asks for everything. In fact, the Western spirit is specifically characterised by free initiative, by the affirmation the value of individuality, a tragic conception of life, and a will to power and action. These elements, while they may be the reflection on the human, external plane of the higher magical value, nevertheless clash with those who desire the universal, impersonal, and immobile world of "metaphysical" intellectualism. Let us emphasise the following: in his references to the East itself, Guénon, consciously or not, is necessarily one-sided. In fact, he limits himself to the Vedic tradition, as developed up to the Upanishads and the Vedanta, neglecting several other schools which, although they cannot be easily reduced to it, are no less 'metaphysical'. We will mention only the Tantra system and the magical and alchemical currents of Mahayana and Taoism, in which the emphasis is placed precisely on the aspect of "power," which, rather than contradicting it, could offer the West material for a higher reaffirmation. Guénon, in fact, does not ignore such schools, but considers them "heterodox," which, for him, is an explicit verdict of condemnation; for us, however—allow Guénon to say so—these are mere words: it remains to be seen whether a doctrine should be called true and elevated because it is traditional, or whether it should be called traditional because it is true and elevated. Here too, Guénon presupposes facts and evidence, which nevertheless remain perfectly inconclusive—a dogmatic and authoritarian tendency that is reflected throughout his writings, which are otherwise quite appreciable for their clarity and erudition. We can therefore see to what extent Vedanta—which for Guénon would be almost the "metaphysical" system par excellence—can represent something for a Westerner who is not degenerate, that is, who has not lost in terms of critical consciousness and spirit of affirmation what the civilisation to which he belongs has achieved, who does not abandon his positions in order to retreat, but who nevertheless wants to carry them forward. But first, a warning is in order. We have pointed out the transcendent nature of metaphysical realisation and the difficulty of giving it meaning in terms of the usual categories. But this point – which we explicitly concede – must not become a refuge for unrestrained, dogmatic, arbitrary and subjective ramblings. This is precisely what some dilettante 'occultists' do: they do not remain silent on purely

ineffable, but rather speak; however, when asked to determine the meaning of their expressions and to realise the difficulties they raise, they backtrack, evaporating once again into a reference to pure inner intuition, which thus remains a raw fact that does not account for itself, imposing itself somewhat like the taste of someone who likes cheese over that of someone else who prefers strawberries. Consequently, either one remains confined to the initiatory sphere, whose self-verifying and communicative systems cannot, except in a few exceptional cases, enter the horizon of a 'layman', or else one speaks. But if one speaks, one must speak correctly, that is, one must account for what one says, respect the logical requirements that are as harmless here as grammatical ones, and show that the object of metaphysical realisation, even if by accident (in its "proper form", in the pure interiority of the Self) provides real satisfaction to all those demands and problems that in the purely human and discursive sphere are destined to remain purely as such. It is too easy, in fact, to solve problems by not presenting them, thus imitating the ostrich that evades danger by hiding its head under its wing. On the contrary, it is necessary to stand firm, face the enemy head-on and defeat him using his own weapons. We say this to prevent our criticism—if not our work in general—from being accused of having a purely philosophical scope. First of all, this is not accurate, since what comes first for us is a certain "realisation" and only afterwards, as a coating, a certain logically intelligible system. But even if this were the case, every expression as such is put to the test of fire of the logos; and if it starts from the supra-rational, so much the better, for it will certainly pass this test, since what is superior implies and contains in an eminent way what is inferior. And we hope that Guénon is aware that his book on Vedanta is nothing more than a philosophical exposition. He certainly speaks of something that is not precisely philosophical, but nevertheless he speaks (and it is not his fault, since there is no other possibility, unless one resorts to symbols) philosophically, that is, he strives to present something intelligible and justified. If, therefore, clinging to this aspect of the question, we demonstrate the relativity of such intelligibility and justification, he, for his part, cannot back down and get out of the way by referring to a higher traditional metaphysical validity, to which, moreover, and on the same ground, we will be able to reaffirm our adherence; our philosophical criticisms are nothing more than obedient servants. Consequently, what does Vedântâ say about the world, about man and his becoming?

Firstly, there is the optimistic assumption that God exists, that is, that the contingent and phenomenal set of things is not primary, but only the accidental aspect of a whole that is already perfect and is comprised in a higher principle. That this is a mere assumption, and that Guénon pays little attention to the Hindu theory of knowledge, is something everyone can see for themselves, knowing that for Hindus, not everything is true, but only that which is currently experienced. In our case, there is no certainty of God outside the experience of the Self that has Him as its content. Now, since such experience is not immediate and general, but rather requires a certain process to attain it, there are no demonstrative arguments capable of affirming that God already exists (and therefore that the process is simply re-

cognitive) before appearing as a result of this process that has made something divine that was not divine. Let us move on. From this premise—God or Brahman—the world would be the manifestation. But the concept of manifestation according to Vedanta is extremely ambiguous. In fact, it is said that Brahman in manifestation remains that which is immutable, immobile. Not only that, but manifestation itself (and therefore everything that is particularity, individuality and becoming) is, with respect to It, something 'strictly null'. It is a modification that in no way alters It. In Brahman, in eternal and actual presence, all possibilities exist; manifestation is only an accidental mode that some of them take on. How such proportions can become intelligible is difficult to demonstrate. Note: here the Catholic escape route of *ex nihilo* is not valid, where *nihil* is transformed into a distinct and, in its own way, positive principle, from which creatures would be materialised in order to exist and, at the same time (insofar as they are made of "nothing", of "deprivation"), not exist. Brahman, however, has nothing outside itself: least of all 'nothingness'. Things are its modifications: how can one say, then, that they do not exist? In connection with this: if Brahman is the absolute synthesis of everything, what place is there for a contingent way of considering it? How is it possible for such a mode to arise, such an obscuring of Brahman? How can we fail to notice that the phrase only makes sense by presupposing the existence of a principle distinct from Brahman, capable precisely of including it in a relative and accidental way, which goes against the main premise? Guénon says (pp. 30-31): "metaphysically, manifestation can only be considered in its dependence on the supreme principle and as a simple support for rising to transcendent knowledge". We ask ourselves: who is it that rises to such knowledge? Is it Brahman itself, and then it is necessary to understand, with Eckhart, Scotus Erigena, Hegel, Schelling and so many others, that the world is the very process of self-knowledge of the Absolute—but then it has a value and a reality, and before being a phantom in the face of the pre-existing eternal synthesis, it is the very act by which this synthesis gives itself to itself—or is it "other" in relation to Brahman, which means making Brahman something relative, "one among two," contrary to the hypothesis considered. He adds: 'immutable in its own nature, Brahman develops only the indefinite possibilities it carries within itself, through the passage from potency to act... and this without its essential permanence being affected, precisely because this passage is only relative and this development is only development insofar as it is considered from the side of manifestation, outside of which there can be no question of any succession, but only of perfect simultaneity' (p. 36). The difficulty is the same: everything would be fine as long as there were a way to make people understand how a point of view other than that of the Absolute and coexisting with it could exist. But if this is not possible, succession, unfolding and the rest cannot be called accidental and illusory, but absolutely real. The only refuge would be creationism as *projectio per iatum dei* of Catholic theologians, that is, the divine possibility of separating from itself different centres of consciousness, which can therefore see from the outside what It internally includes in an eternal way. But even disregarding the logical inconsistency of such a point of view, the fact remains that it is entirely unknown to Hindu wisdom.

Guénon multiplies points of view to explain the antinomies and does not realise that this is a pseudo-solution, or rather a vicious circle, unless one starts from an original dualism, that is, precisely from the opposite of what one

wants to arrive at. Transposed to those of the different points of view, the oppositions not only remain, but are exacerbated.

Guénon is right when he says (p. 44) that one cannot separate manifestation from its principle without nullifying it—hence the profound meaning of the Vedanta and Mahayana doctrines that things are at once real (with reference to their principle) and illusory (if taken in themselves). We do not reproach him for such a separation, but rather for that of the principle with respect to manifestation. From saying that, although the world cannot be distinguished from Brahman, Brahman can nevertheless be distinguished from the world (as its free cause), to saying that 'the entire manifestation is rigorously null with respect to its infinity', there is a considerable leap, which consists in the surreptitious introduction of a very dubious conception of infinity itself. That is: infinity understood as indeterminacy, as that which for each particular can only mean the death of itself. For us, true infinity is not such, although this is its abstract hypostasis, almost the very character of ignorant and impotent being. True infinity is potestas, that is, the energy to be unconditionally what one desires. The Absolute cannot have, like a stone or a plant, a nature of its own (and such would be infinity itself if it were understood as something fatal, immutable, and therefore passive with respect to itself). It is that which wants to be; and what it wants to be is, without a doubt, the Absolute, the Infinite. When it manifests itself, it is, consequently, the finite, the individual, etc. Thus, it is no longer the death and contradiction of the Infinite (and therefore a non-being), a nothingness that obscures fullness (*omnis determinatio negatio est*), but on the contrary, Its act, Its glory, that through which It testifies and affirms in Itself Its powerful freedom.

This point of view reappears in an Eastern school (which Guénon naturally calls "heterodox"): that of the *çakti-tantras*, who direct a criticism at Vedânta whose scope is indisputable. Only by replacing the nebulous and intellectual notions of spirit (*âtma*) and Infinity (Brahman) with the active and concrete notion of potency (*çakti*), they say, can the various difficulties inherent in the concept of manifestation be resolved from a non-dualistic point of view. The Absolute is the power of manifestation, the world is its act: therefore, it is real, with a supreme reality. If, on the other hand, the Absolute is understood as an infinity existing *ab aeterno*, what place is left for manifestation? Does Guénon not realise the absurdity of the concept that this is the "development" of some "possibilities" present in the supreme principle? In fact, either the term 'development' is given meaning, or it is not. In the first case, we would have something that is, at the same time and in the same relationship, potential and act, which is a contradiction in terms. Such is the "possibility" of which he speaks, since this, insofar as it refers to eventual manifestation, should be in potency, but insofar as it is, on the other hand, a possibility of the supreme principle, it is no longer a possibility but actuality, something already "developed", for there is nothing in Brahman that is not actual (4). It can be noted how Guénon, in his enthusiasm (we might almost say fanaticism) for the East, sees the speck in his neighbour's eye, but does not find it in his own: in fact, he directs this criticism precisely at Leibnitz's conception (which, naturally, for him is mere "profane philosophy") and does not realise that it is rooted in the very foundations of Vedanta.

The contradiction, therefore, only ceases if we consider Brahman not as eternal intellectual light, but as pure potentiality which, in the manifested, has not its negation, but its affirmation. And the need for such a conception frequently filters through in Guénon himself—where he refers to a "divine creative will," a "supreme causal principle." Thus, he approaches coherence—but at the same time, he distances himself from Vedanta as it truly is. In fact, Vedanta explicitly states that the Absolute is neither cause nor activity, that cause and activity do not fall upon it, but upon the unconscious 'mâyâ', from which it follows that when any kind of function is attributed to it ('I cause, I act, I create'), one falls victim to illusion and ignorance. Causality, creation and everything that is becoming and determination do not fall, in the Absolute, which is therefore pure, indeterminate existence, deprived of any attribute (nirguna-Brahman), but in the Absolute obscured by mâyâ (saguna-Brahman), mâyâ being an inexplicable and indefinable principle, a "fact" that must be considered. And between saguna-Brahman and nirguna-Brahman there is an inexhaustible abyss (5): one is, the other is not. This is a concept to which Guénon, on the other hand, strictly adheres, thus reaffirming the original abstract conception of the Absolute and the universal.

The originality and, at the same time, the original flaw of Vedanta lies precisely in the separation of the principle of synthesis from that which is already synthesised, a separation that makes the two terms contradictory to each other. While in consistent non-dualism the universal is the act that encompasses the particular as the power of which it is the act and through which it is realised, in Vedanta the universal does not encompass but excludes the particular, since it cannot encompass the latter except by negating it in an indeterminate identity, in the mere ether of consciousness (cit-âkâṣa), night—to put it in Hegelian terms—in which all cows are black.

It can already be foreseen that, as we approach this vision, all meaning of man and his future dissolves. The individual, as such, belongs to manifestation and is therefore nothing, a trifle; this is the only rigorous consequence of the premise. It is useless to deny the legitimacy of assuming the individual for oneself and therefore to say that the distinction between the Self and Brahman is an illusion of the Self (p. 210), because this is precisely where the problem lies: this illusion is real, and it would be necessary to explain how it arises and how the demonstrated impossibility of duplicating points of view is possible. It is also useless to split the unity of consciousness into an "If" (personality, metaphysical Self) and an "I" (individuality, empirical self), since we encounter the same contradictions mentioned above, arising from the presupposition of absolute heterogeneity between the universal and the particular, between the metaphysical and the empirical. Between this "If" and this "I" there can be no real union (as in a doctrine of potency, where the "If" would be the potency of which the I is the act, or, from another point of view, the opposite), but rather an extrinsic, incomprehensible composition (confirmed, moreover, by the doctrine of the "subtle bodies" as expounded by Guénon), analogous to that of "essence" and "existence" chosen by Scholasticism; and further confirmation of this is given to us by Guénon himself when he says that the passage from the manifested state to that of Brahman (corresponding to the two principles of man) implies a radical leap (p. 200).

The inconsistency of such an opinion (which, among other things, with regard to "salvation" or "liberation" should consistently lead to the Christian mystery of "grace") of Vedanta has been skilfully demonstrated by the Tantras. They make the following argument to the Vedantins: "You say that the only thing that is truly real is the immobile Brahman without attributes, and that the rest—the whole of conditioned beings—is illusion and falsehood. Now answer: who are you, who affirm this, Brahman or a conditioned being? For if you are a conditioned being (and you cannot honestly say otherwise), you are illusion and falsehood and, consequently, all that you say and your own affirmation will be all the more illusory and false, since only Brahman is, and the rest is illusion."

Moreover, the very concept of "conditioned being," with which Guénon defines man and other "manifestations" similar to him, once again leads to the dilemma already indicated. In fact, either one admits a distinct principle, capable of experiencing certain conditions, as opposed to a conditioning power, but that is radically contrary to the whole spirit of Vedanta, or one denies the distinction, and then the conditioned and the conditioning become one and the same thing: Brahman, which in the various beings is determined in one way or another. Therefore, there is nothing relative and dependent; on the contrary, everything is absolute, everything is freedom. And here, once again, there is no room for the solution of points of view. It makes no sense to speak of a point of view of the creature that lives as condition and dependence what for Brahman is not such: the point of view can only be one, that of Brahman. And it is Brahman who rejoices and grieves in the various beings and in the yogis prepares to give Himself His own "liberation". Such is the point of view of the tantras (and, with them, of all Western immanentism), which, however, cannot be that of the Vedanta, precisely because for the Vedanta the Absolute as an immanent cause is illusion and between it and the relative and "manifested" there is discontinuity, a radical leap. Therefore, the world is nothing, man is nothing, the becoming of man is that of nothingness that resolves itself into nothingness. What is in fact the meaning of such a development according to Vedanta? A reabsorption of the state of concrete existence into the state of subtle existence and then from that state into the unmanifest, where individual conditions (laws, determinations) are finally cancelled out completely. It is not, therefore, as Guénon himself says (p. 175), an 'evolution' of the individual, since the goal is 'the reabsorption of the individual into the unmanifest state', which, from the individual's point of view, should rather be called 'involution'. We go further, however, conceiving manifestation as the act of the Absolute (always remembering that it is impossible to duplicate points of view). We would say that such a becoming is truly a diminishing of the Absolute itself in its act, its repentance; regression, degeneration, and not progression.

Otherwise, it is doubtful that Guénon and Vedanta's ideas on this point are clear. In fact, regarding "reabsorption," there is also talk of an identification of the Self with Brahman, in which, however, it is not lost in any way (p. 233), and of a "resolution" that is transformative rather than annihilating, as it contributes to an expansion beyond all limits and realises the fullness of possibilities (pp. 196-97); this ambiguity reflects the conflict of an internal, spiritual experience, valid in itself, which has not found an adequate logical expression

suitable logical body, as it is distorted by a limited and ecstatic conception, such as that of the abstract universalism of Vedanta. In any case, the main difficulty remains: whatever the direction, does the becoming of man have a value, a cosmic value? In short, why must I become, transform myself? Once again, there is no escape but to resort to points of view. With regard to the infinite, considered as existing actualiter et tota simul ab aeterno, as strictly identical to itself in any state or form, everything that is the becoming of "conditioned beings" cannot have any real meaning; it cannot realise Brahman in more, just as its non-becoming could not realise it in less. Brahman is, and can only be, indifferent: whether it be the state of a brute (paça), that of a hero (vîra) or that of a god (deva), for Him they must be perfectly the same thing, and therefore progress from one of these states to another, from His point of view, cannot have any meaning or justification. On the contrary, strictly speaking, one cannot speak of progress and regression, but only of passage; but not even that, since becoming itself is an illusion referred to a point of view other than that of Brahman.

Everyone can see the practical consequences that follow from this. We are presented with two options: either passive and stunned contemplation of the incomprehensible succession of states, or a utilitarian morality. Utilitarian because the driving force behind the eventual development and transformation of man could not be connected to a cosmic value, in the sense that the world, God himself, demands something that does not exist except through the 'I', and that could only be justified in terms of personal utility, of the convenience that certain particular states of existence can offer the individual. But this is not enough. From the point of view of a coherent Vedantism, such moral defeatism ensues that it cannot even justify a utilitarian ethic. This is because the passage through a hierarchy of states to the unmanifest Brahman, which a particular being can achieve through the long, harsh, austere process of self-improvement characteristic of Yoga, is nothing more than a kind of acceleration of something that will happen naturally to all beings; it is 'present liberation' rather than 'deferred liberation', where everything boils down to a question of... patience. In fact, the Vedanta point of view is that the world, coming from unmanifested states, returns to them at the end of a certain period, and this happens repeatedly. At the end of such a period, all beings, bon gré mal gré, will therefore be liberated, "restored". Hence a new negation: not only is there no real and suprapersonal justification for such a development, but freedom itself is, according to this, denied: beings are ultimately fatally destined for "perfection". (we believe it is permissible to give this attribute, this "relativity" to the unmanifested with respect to the manifested, since we are not so non-dualistic as to not distinguish between the two); this view contrasts with many others from the same Hindu wisdom—especially Buddhism—in which, on the contrary, there is a very vivid sense of the tragedy of existence, the conviction that if man does not become his own saviour, no one will ever be able to save him, that only his will can rescue him from the destiny of generation and corruption (samsâra) in which he would otherwise remain for eternity.

We believe that no further explanation is needed to convey the meaning of what Vedanta wants. The truth is that this is not what we want at all. And if a "layman" were to tell us that, if such is "metaphysics"—the nihilism of reality, values, and individuality—he would not know what to do with it, as it would neither suffice nor serve him, we would truly not know how to refute him. Certainly, we have neglected some of the positive elements contained in Vedanta (although this does not mean that the negative elements already found cease to be such), either because these elements do not constitute the most specific aspect of Vedanta, but are common to other esoteric traditions, especially those we have called magical, or because we must insist on the negative aspects of the East against those who, like Guénon, do not want to see anything positive in the West. Please note the following: the author of this text has the utmost respect for the East and has forged much deeper ties with it than may appear at first glance. However, he cannot and does not want to proceed dogmatically: both the East and the West must be subjected to a critique that, in both cases, separates the positive from the negative. Only after such a separation – in truth, with a spirit free of prejudice and more or less feminine polemical obsessions – can one think of such a synthesis, which may be a matter of life and death for one or the other culture.

In relation to this, two points seem fundamental to us. Rational consciousness, the purely logical and discursive level—the pinnacle of Western civilisation—has been surpassed. But what truly lies beyond the concept is not "feeling," nor morality, devotion, contemplation, or "intellectual" identification. What lies beyond concept is, without a doubt, power. Beyond the philosopher and the scientist lies not the saint, the artist, or the contemplative, but the magician: the ruler, the Lord. Secondly, extroverted consciousness, lost in the material world and making it the ultimate authority, is transcended. But this overcoming must not consist of access, detachment, escape from reality, dreamy faith in the heavens, and intellectual immersion in the supreme identity: it must be, on the contrary, the immanent resolution of the world in value, a spirit that makes reality the very expression of the perfection of its actuality. The reality of the world is recognised, in truth, as the very place where a god is drawn from a man and a 'sun' from the 'earth'.

These two requirements find their best expression in two maxims which, incidentally, we do not extract—as we could do—from 'profane intellectual philosophy', but from an Eastern metaphysical system, that of the Tantras:

"Without *çakti* (=power) liberation is mere mockery".

"O lady of the Kula! In Kuladharmā (the tantric path of power), enjoyment becomes perfect realisation (yoga), evil becomes good, and the world itself becomes the place of liberation."

René Guénon
ON HINDU METAPHYSICS.

A NECESSARY CORRECTION

In the article that appeared in these same pages (pp. 21-24 of 1925) about our book on Vedanta (*L'homme et son devenir selon le Vedanta*, Bossard, Paris, 1925), J. Evola has made a number of rather peculiar errors; we would not have pointed this out if it concerned only us, but, and this is much more serious, they concern the interpretation of the doctrine itself that we have expounded, and therefore it is not possible to let them pass without providing a correction.

Previously, in an article published in *Ultra* magazine (September 1925), Evola had incidentally taken up the defence of contemporary Western science, which he nevertheless recognises as insufficient in certain respects, while at the same time labelling us 'rationalists'. This mistake, verified in connection with a book (*Orient et Occident*), in which we had denounced rationalism as one of the main modern errors, is truly surprising. We now see that the reproach of "rationalism" is directed at Vedanta itself; it is true that this word is perhaps distorted from its true meaning, and that in any case the definition given of it, in terms visibly borrowed from German philosophy, is far from clear. However, the matter is quite simple: rationalism is a theory that places reason above all else, that seeks to identify it either with the whole of intelligence or at least with the higher part of intelligence, and that therefore denies or ignores everything that transcends reason. This is a type of conception specific to philosophy, and therefore specifically modern; Descartes is the first authentic representative of rationalism. We do not see how it could be anything other than this, especially since Evola is careful to specify that he intends to speak of "rationalism as a philosophical system"; however, Vedanta has nothing in common with any "philosophical system", and we have often pointed out that Western labels cannot in any way be applied to Eastern metaphysical doctrines.

In truth, Evola is much closer than we are to accepting the claims of rationalism, because he refuses to see a difference between reason and what we have called pure intellectuality; he thus demonstrates that he is completely ignorant of what the latter is, even though he quite imprudently asserts the contrary. If he dislikes the expression 'pure intellectuality', let him propose another to replace it; but by what right does he claim that, in the way we use it, it means something other than what we have intended to designate by it? We continue to maintain that metaphysical knowledge is essentially "supra-rational", for either it is such or it is not, and the only logical result of rationalism is the denial of metaphysics. Here, on the other hand, is another and no less deplorable error concerning the nature of this metaphysical knowledge, for, in accordance with Hindu doctrine, we speak of pure knowledge and "contemplation". Evola imagines that this is a purely 'passive' attitude, whereas it is exactly the opposite. One of the fundamental differences between the metaphysical path and the mystical path is that the former is essentially active, while the latter is

essentially passive; and this difference is analogous, in the psychological order, to the difference between will and desire. Note that we say analogous and not identical, first because we are dealing with knowledge and not action (we must not confuse "action" and "activity"), and second because what we are talking about is absolutely outside the domain of psychology, but it is nonetheless true that the will can be considered the initial motor of metaphysical realisation, and desire that of mystical realisation. This, moreover, is all we can concede to Evola's "voluntarism," whose attitude in this regard is certainly not metaphysical or, however one may think, initiatory. The influence exerted on him by German philosophers such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is quite striking, much more so than that of Tantra, behind which he hides, but which he does not seem to understand any better than Vedanta and which he sees more or less as Schopenhauer saw Buddhism, that is, through Western conceptions. The will, like everything human, is only a means; only knowledge is an end in itself; of course, here we are talking about knowledge par excellence, in the true and complete sense of the word, 'supra-individual' knowledge, then 'non-human', according to the Hindu expression, which implies identification with what is known. On this point, Vedanta and Tantra, for those who understand them well, are in perfect agreement; certainly, there are differences between them, but these concern only the means of realisation; why does Evola strive to find an incompatibility that does not exist between these different points of view? He would do well to refer to what we have said about the darshanas and their relationships in our Introduction générale à l'étude des doctrines hindoues. Each person can follow the path that suits them best, the one most adapted to their nature, because they all lead to the same end, and once the domain of individual contingencies has been overcome, the differences disappear.

We know at least, as Evola does, that there are similar initiatory traditions, which are precisely these various paths we have alluded to; but they differ only in their external forms, and their essence is identically the same, because Truth is one. Naturally, we are talking about true "orthodox" traditions, the only ones that interest us; this notion of orthodoxy has not been understood by our opponent, even though we have taken the precaution of specifying on similar occasions how it should be understood, and of explaining why, in this field, orthodoxy and truth are one and the same thing. We were stunned to see him claim that, for us, Tantra, Mahayana... and Taoism are "heterodox"! And yet we have stated as clearly as possible that the latter represents, in the Far East, pure and integral metaphysics! And, in *L'homme et son devenir selon le Védānta*, we have also quoted a fairly large number of Taoist texts to show their perfect agreement with Hindu doctrine; did Evola not notice this? It is true that Taoism is neither 'magical' nor alchemical, contrary to what he supposes; we wonder where he could have got such an illusory idea from. As for Mahayana, it is a transformation of Buddhism through the reincorporation of certain elements borrowed from orthodox doctrines; this is what we have written against Buddhism proper, which is eminently heterodox and anti-metaphysical. Finally, as for Tantra, a distinction must be made: there are a multitude of tantric schools, some of which are in fact heterodox, at

at least partially, while others are strictly orthodox. Until now, we have never had the opportunity to explain ourselves on this question of Tantra, but Evola, to say it in passing, only very imperfectly grasps the meaning of "Shakti". He has undoubtedly failed to notice that we quite often affirm the superiority of the Shaivite point of view over the Vishnuite point of view; this could have opened up new horizons for him.

Naturally, we will not dwell here on detailed criticisms, which all stem from the same misunderstanding; moreover, we are not convinced of the usefulness of certain discussions based on procedures taken from secular philosophy, which truly have no place outside of it. It has long been known that there are things that are not discussed; one must limit oneself to expounding the doctrine as it is, for those who are capable of understanding it, and that is what we intend to do to the best of our ability. Those who truly seek knowledge should never be denied the clarifications they request, if it is possible to provide them and if it is not something absolutely inexpressible; but if someone approaches with an attitude of criticism and discussion, "the doors of knowledge must be closed to them"; moreover, what would be the point of explaining something to someone who does not want to understand? We would like to invite Evola to meditate on these few principles of conduct, which are common to all truly initiatory schools in the East and West. We will limit ourselves to highlighting some examples of manifest misunderstanding: Evola speaks of the identification of the "I" with Brahman, whereas it is the "Self" and not the "I", and if this fundamental distinction is not grasped from the outset, nothing that follows can be grasped either. He believes that Vedanta considers the world to be "nothingness", following the erroneous interpretation of Westerners, who think they are translating the theory of "illusion" in this way, whereas this reality is relative and participatory, as opposed to the reality that belongs only to the Supreme Principle. He translates "subtle state" as "subtle body", whereas we have already pointed out that this could in no way refer to "bodies", contrary to the illusory conceptions of occultists and theosophists, and, moreover, in the whole of formal or individual manifestation, the "subtle state" is precisely opposed to the "corporeal state". He also confuses "salvation" and "liberation," even though we have explained that these are two essentially different things and do not in any way refer to the same state of being (pp. 187 and 218 of our work); and there is something else: he writes that for Vedanta, "at the end of a certain period, all beings, by degree or by force, will be liberated," whereas we have quoted (p. 191) a text that says the opposite in a sufficiently explicit manner: "In the dissolution (pralaya) of the manifested worlds, the being is submerged in the bosom of the Supreme Brahma; but even then, it can be united with Brahma in the same way as in deep sleep (that is, in the absence of the full and effective realisation of the Supreme Identity)". And, to avoid misunderstandings, we will add an explanation of the comparison made here with deep sleep, which indicates that in such a case there is a return to another cycle of manifestation, from which it follows that the state of being in question is not in fact "liberation". It must be said that Evola, despite his intention to discuss our book, has read it only very distractedly!

To speak frankly, we would say that what Evola lacks above all is a clear awareness of the distinction between the initiatory point of view and the profane point of view; if he had this awareness, he would not constantly mix them up as he does, and no philosophy would have any influence on him. We know full well that he may respond, as he has already made clear, that he takes philosophical language only as a simple means of expression; he is probably sincerely convinced that this is the case, but nevertheless, for our part, we do not quite believe him. Moreover, the simple fact of choosing, among all possible means of expression, the least appropriate, the most inadequate, the least capable of expressing the things in question, because these things belong to a very different order than that for which it is specially made, this simple fact, we say, demonstrates a most deplorable lack of discernment. The most extraordinary thing is that Evola asserts that our book on Vedanta "is nothing more than a philosophical exposition," adding that "he hopes we are aware of this" (we wonder what it matters to him); on the contrary, we formally deny this, because nothing could be more opposed to our intentions, which after all we should know better than anyone, than to speak "philosophically" about matters that have no relation to philosophy; and we repeat once again: no expression - verbal or otherwise - has for us anything more than an exclusively symbolic value.

We have always sought to place ourselves on purely metaphysical and initiatory ground, and no one can make us leave it, not even criticisms made on a different ground, which, for that very reason, necessarily strike false; Evola has no doubt that the issues do not in fact present themselves in the same way for him and for us, and that certain philosophical difficulties he maintains make no metaphysical sense, since the very terms in which they are expressed no longer correspond to anything when one wishes to transpose them to a higher order. We will only add one final observation: it is not for Evola to say that "we would have done better to reflect a little more" on certain things, because he did not work and reflect, as we did, on these issues for more than fifteen years before deciding to publish his first book. He is very young, and this is undoubtedly what excuses him; he still has much to learn, but he has time ahead of him and may perhaps learn it... provided, of course, that he changes his attitude and does not imagine that he already knows everything.

Julius Evola CONCLUDING NOTE

We would like to point out the following to Guénon:

1) Before using a word, we are accustomed to defining it. Now, we have defined as rationalist any attitude that "believes in laws that exist by themselves, in principles that are what they are, incontrovertibly; that understands the world as something in which everything that is contingency, tension, obscurity, arbitrariness,

indeterminability, has no place". Tell us, Guénon, if you think otherwise or if, thinking so, you remain within the realm of Vedânta; otherwise, your protest remains hollow. And that metaphysical realisation is essentially supra-rational (in the totally empirical sense of reason used by Guénon) does not seem to us to be something that can be more resolutely affirmed by someone who, like us, has written in order to reach only "those who have the strength to take in everything that is, feels and thinks; to grasp it and move forward".

2) If Guénon understands "intellectual realisation" (with which he exchanges metaphysics) as "something essentially active", reflecting, in a certain sense, the mode of the will, we certainly withdraw the reservation made in this regard (advising him, however, to use the term "pure actuality") in order to reaffirm it, nevertheless, when he speaks to us of a will that has no purpose in itself, but in knowledge. And with regard to "knowledge" also meaning "identification with the known object", for our part, beyond this, we affirm a higher value: mastery over the known object. And if it pleases Guénon to believe that our "voluntarism" has nothing initiatory or metaphysical about it (almost as if the power we speak of were the muscular will of men!), let him believe it; we can do nothing since, as he himself says, there is no way to make someone understand who does not want to understand; and since he threatens to "close the doors of knowledge," we close the doors to something we value far more than his knowledge or any other.

3) It is not the case, in these lines, to discuss a rectification about the various Eastern schools and their "orthodoxy"; for example, we have referred Guénon's judgement of heterodoxy not to Mahayana and Taoism themselves, but to magical and alchemical currents in these schools which, if Guénon (as it seems) does not know, we can make him know whenever he wants. We would simply like to point out that Guénon has not answered our fundamental question: whether a doctrine is accepted as true simply because it is traditional, or whether we allow the doctrine to judge the value of the traditionality of immanent truth. The fact that Guénon remains firm in a pure authoritarianism that accredits itself in order to save the unity of initiatory traditions creates a vicious circle: he defines a priori as non-initiatory, profane, philosophical, etc., all those directions that do not coincide with his taste or conception. As for our alleged misunderstanding of Hindu wisdom, and especially Tantric wisdom, we are sufficiently confident of our understanding thanks to people who have had direct and intimate relations with it, because the insinuations that Guénon advances, very frivolously and without the slightest proof, leave us perfectly unmoved.

4) As for the relationship or mixture between philosophy and esotericism, we would ask Guénon (and, along with him, our readers) to reread what we have written on this subject in the essay in question. But here too, there is none so deaf as those who will not hear. We have said, for example, that the 'transcendent character' of metaphysical realisation must not become a refuge for unbridled, dogmatic and arbitrary subjective ramblings; we have spoken of "some good spirits who are dilettantes in occultism" (take note, those to whom this applies!), who "do not remain silent in the purely ineffable, but speak; with

However, when asked to clearly define the meaning of their expressions and account for the difficulties they raise, they back down, evaporating once again into reference to pure inner intuition, which thus remains a raw fact that does not account for itself, imposing itself a little like the taste of someone who likes cheese versus that of someone who prefers strawberries"; We have therefore presented the dilemma: "either one remains locked in the initiatory environment or one speaks. But if one speaks, one must speak correctly, that is, respect logical requirements, show that the object of metaphysical realisation, even if accidentally, gives real satisfaction to all those requirements and problems which, in the purely human and discursive sphere, are destined to remain purely as such." Now, Guénon not only speaks, but also writes, and addresses an entire audience, an entire culture that he criticises. Consequently, he cannot back down, he cannot change the subject, he cannot escape the conditions of that sphere. This is entirely abstract from what we may represent in a sphere that is not precisely reduced to this, and for which we do not feel the need to ask Guénon for any recognition whatsoever. To the fundamental difficulties objectively highlighted by us in Vedanta and in Guénon's exegesis of it, to the pseudo-solution of the antinomies with the points of view, to the absurdity of pure transcendent actuality, of the theory of "lesser reality" and "conditioned being", to the nihilism of all value, of all meaning in manifestation and becoming, Guénon has not answered a single word but, on the contrary, has believed himself to have concluded with pseudo-rectifications that are external and almost grammatical, which do not concern the crux of the argument at all, and then to take as "manifest misunderstandings of elements of the doctrine what is simply a critical deepening that certainly cannot respect the naive and provisional form in which they are given" (referring to the distinction between the "I" and the "self", to illusion as "lesser reality", to the subsistence of unidentified beings in pralaya, etc.).

We can, moreover, take note of the statement he makes after we have explicitly told him that for us "philosophical" does not mean something "that is presented in an intelligible and justified way". It is therefore an unintelligible and unjustified work by the explicit declaration of its author. This leaves us quite perplexed in that, on the one hand, the author declares that "after all, he knows his own intentions better than anyone else", and, on the other hand, we certainly feel (perhaps because, if we are to believe Guénon, we have not read the volume carefully) that we can make such an assessment of what Guénon writes, for whom we have considerably more esteem than he perhaps supposes and believes necessary to reciprocate.

We agree on the limited usefulness of certain controversies on specific issues, especially when, rather than eliminating misunderstandings, they serve to add to the possible misunderstandings of one party at least as many as the other. We, of course, still have much to learn, just as we have much to teach others. From this we can deduce that, although we believe that the argument of those who reproach us for our age (without knowing anything specific, however) is not valid, we can respond that they should envy us for having time to learn that the grey-haired age of others, who at least have the same need, does not allow. And, as far as attitude is concerned, it is perhaps appropriate

to change those who feel the need to speak *ex cathedra*, from the platform of an intolerant and dogmatic authoritarianism, certainly more typical of a Protestant pastor than of the serious scholar of initiatory matters that, with the necessary reservations, we continue to recognise in Guénon.

NOTES:

1. "Initiation and Spiritual Realisation", Turin, *Rivista di Studi Tradizionali*, 1967.
2. It is obvious that such a point of view, if we may express it thus, is not based, as is the case with systems of thought and philosophy, on any faculty of a formal order, but on the intuitive evidence of absolute Reality, which Guénon has called the "sense of eternity" although, if we want to be rigorous, the latter does not correspond exactly to the intuition of the Absolute Principle, deprived of "aspects" and transcendent to any determination.
3. Even recognising Evola's doctrinal and terminological purification with respect to his youthful positions, a certain congenital and latent allergy to pure Metaphysics has never ceased to exert a sombre influence that could be described as a closure towards certain spiritual insights.
4. Note: the criticism made aims to eliminate the difficulty of these contradictory aspects present in the same thing by referring them to two different points of view.
5. Attempts at reconciliation, tending, for example, to conceive of the immobility of the Absolute as that of the Aristotelian "unmoved mover," although found in other Eastern schools, could not, however, be correctly applied in Vedanta.

LIMITS OF INITIATIC REGULARITY. JULIUS EVOLA

This text, of great importance and the source of controversy between Julius Evola and René Guénon, was initially published in "Introduction to Magic," a collection of instalments published by the UR Group (Volume III, pp. 160-175 of the Italian edition), whose three volumes were published in Rome in 1971 by the publisher Giovanni Canonico (and later by Edizioni Mediterranea in Italian, Éditions Arché in French, and recently by Ediciones Herakles in Spanish). Signed with the pseudonym EA, this text is undoubtedly by Julius Evola, as evidenced by his inimitable style, which is not easy to transpose into another language. The present translation corresponds to the Italian edition of 1971. The reason we are publishing this text is so that those interested in traditional themes may have sufficient tools for analysis and evaluation of the subject. The question of "initiatory regularity" is undoubtedly the most controversial point in the entire Guénonian doctrinal corpus

and the source of much of the conflict it has suffered. Let each person judge the two positions with serenity, moderation and objectivity.

THE LIMITS OF INITIATIC REGULARITY.

Among the rare writers in the West who, not through erudition but through effective knowledge based on initiation, have contributed to guidance and clarification in the field of esoteric sciences and traditional spirituality, René Guénon occupies a prominent place. In general, we recommend the study of Guénon's works to those of our readers who are not familiar with him, insofar as they are unique in their genre and value, and can serve as a complement to much of what we have presented, at least in terms of the essentials. On the other hand, we must express reservations regarding certain particular aspects, because Guénon's orientation often suffers from a line of thought that differs from that which forms the basis of our formulations and, moreover, because René Guénon's approach is essentially theoretical, whereas ours, on the contrary, is fundamentally practical. It will therefore be useful to briefly consider where things stand in this area, so that those who follow us can determine how to make appropriate use of what Guénon has expounded.

As for doctrinal differences, we will simply allude to them without dwelling on them. We do not share Guénon's views on the relationship between real and priestly initiation, on his scheme concerning the Lesser and Greater Mysteries, and finally, on the restriction of the term 'Magic', to which he attaches an inferior and pejorative meaning. These three points are, moreover, to some extent linked to each other. But what we want to address here is precisely the general problem of initiation.

GUÉNONIAN SCHEME OF INITIATORY REGULARITY

Guénon's point of view is, in summary, as follows. Initiation consists in overcoming the human condition and realising the higher states of being: something impossible by the mere means of the individual. This could have been possible in the distant past and for a type of man very different from the present one; but today, on the contrary, an external intervention would be necessary, namely the transmission of a "spiritual influence" to the aspirant to initiation.

This transmission is effected ritually through a regular initiatory organisation. Such is the basic condition: if it is not satisfied, Guénon considers that there is no effective initiation, but only a vain parody of it (the 'pseudo-initiation'). The 'regularity' of an organisation consists in its being linked, either directly or through intermediaries from other centres, to a supreme and unique centre. It also consists in referring to an unbroken chain of transmission that continues over time through real representatives, going back to the "primordial tradition". In order for the transmission of spiritual influences, conditioning initiatory development, to be real, it is sufficient that the required rites be performed exactly by the person who is regularly designated for that function:

Whether or not the initiate understands the required rites, whether or not he believes in their efficacy, is of little importance to the act itself. In such cases, the chain is not broken and an initiatory organisation does not cease to be 'regular' or capable of conferring initiation, even when it has only 'virtual initiates'. As is well known, the Church takes a similar view with regard to priestly ordination and the efficacy of regularly performed rites.

As for the candidate for initiation, in order to obtain the transmission of "ritual influences," a qualification is required. This qualification concerns either the physical plane, with the absence of certain bodily defects, or a certain mental ("speculative") preparation, or the presence of a precise aspiration, or, as we prefer to call it, a vocation. It can be said in general terms that a state of disharmony and imbalance disqualifies one from obtaining initiation. With the transmission of "spiritual influences," one becomes a "virtual initiate." An inner change takes place, which—like the fact of belonging to the organisation to which one adheres—will be indelible and will remain forever.

However, effective initiation requires active, 'operative' work of actualisation, which must be done by oneself and which no teacher can undertake in place of the aspirant (given that there are different degrees of initiation, this must be plausibly understood for each degree). The representatives of an initiatory organisation cannot direct, control and support this development and prevent possible deviations. The connection with higher states of being, established through the transmission of spiritual influences, does not always need to be conscious in order to be real. In particular, René Guénon makes a clear distinction between mysticism and initiation, since the mystic is not 'active' in his experiences: he usually does not even have the means to interpret them properly (especially since he is an isolated individual and the basic condition for initiation is the connection with a 'centre' and a 'chain', which is not satisfied at all). Secondly, René Guénon denies any possibility of connection – what he calls "ideal" – with a tradition, that is, any connection that is not made according to the ritual path indicated above and through contact with living, existing, present and authorised representatives of this tradition. A "spontaneous" initiation, in short, is equally excluded, as it would be equivalent to a birth without the help of someone who facilitated the possibility or to the development of a plant without first having a seed, which, in turn, comes from other plants born from one another.

Such is, in summary, the Guénonian scheme of "initiatory regularity".

Let us now see what can be thought about this.

CRITIQUE OF GUENON'S SCHEME

There would be little to object to in the scheme itself, except that the situation existing for most of those to whom Guénon's writings are addressed is nothing more than an abstract scheme. We can agree with this scheme, but then, if we come down to the question of how to proceed in practice in order to receive initiation, we will not find much enlightenment in Guénon's work: quite the contrary. In fact, Guénon claims that he aspires to nothing more than to clarify the concept of initiation; as for dealing with the initiatory problem itself, that is, knowing who to turn to for concrete instructions, this is something that does not concern him

concerns him in any way and cannot, under any circumstances, fall within his remit. Thus, the individual who hears Guenon constantly talking about "initiatory organisations", as if they existed on every street corner, finds himself at a real dead end, if the scheme of "initiatory regularity" is considered truly absolute and exclusive. We naturally think of Western man. In the East – from Islamic countries to Japan – there may still be certain centres that sufficiently preserve the characteristics indicated by Guenon. But this cannot be taken into account, even if someone decided to travel to these places to receive an authentic regular initiation. In fact, one would need to be fortunate enough to come into contact with centres of, so to speak, absolutely supratraditional purity, for otherwise one would be dealing with initiations whose jurisdiction (as Guenon himself acknowledges) is the environment of a given positive religion, which is not our own. Here, it would not be a question of "converting" or not; there is a set of physical and subtle, racial and atavistic factors, specific forms of worship and divinity, even the factor represented by mentality and language itself, that come into consideration. It would be a matter of transplanting oneself into a completely different physical and spiritual environment: something that is not accessible to most people and cannot be achieved by a simple trip.

If, on the contrary, one is oriented towards the tradition that ended up prevailing in the West, nothing could be achieved, since Christianity is a tradition mutilated of its upper, esoteric and initiatory part. Within traditional Christianity—that is, Catholicism—there is no longer an initiatory hierarchy: here, prospects are limited to mystical developments through individual initiative and on a charismatic basis. Sporadically, some mystics know how to go further and, on a purely individual basis, manage to rise to the metaphysical plane. We can and must disregard some rare references from the early centuries of our era, or those that have been believed to exist in the Greek Orthodox Church, and which certain Guénonians have set out to find.

If, after recognising all this, one wants to look further, what Guenon says is not particularly comforting. Indeed, he recognises that in our day, in the Western world, there are no initiatory organisations at all. Those that existed have now fallen into a state of complete degeneration, becoming "vestiges misunderstood even by those who lead them". Moreover, what he adds by way of clarification only increases our perplexity and highlights the dangers of unconditionally accepting the abstract concept of "initiatory regularity". Here we can only express our precise disagreement on two points. The first is that, even through degraded organisations, it would be possible to obtain something resembling true initiation. For us, the continuity of "spiritual influences" is, in fact, illusory when there are no worthy and conscious representatives of a given chain and when transmission has become almost mechanical.

It is a fact that there is a possibility, in this case, that truly spiritual influences "withdraw", which is why what remains and is transmitted is nothing more than something degraded, a simple "psychism", even open to dark forces, in such a way that adherence to the organisation

corresponding, for those who truly aspire to the heights, often becomes a disadvantage and a danger rather than a help. René Guénon does not seem to think the same: he believes that if external ritual continuity has been maintained, it is always possible to obtain what he calls "virtual initiation".

Our disagreement is more serious when Guénon says that the results of his research, conducted in a bygone era, led him to the "formal and unquestionable conclusion" that, apart from the survival of a group of Christian Hermeticists from the Middle Ages, among all the organisations with initiatory pretensions that exist today in the West, there are only two that can claim, albeit in a very diminished form, an authentic traditional origin and a real initiatory transmission: the Fellowship and Freemasonry. Everything else would be nothing more than charlatanism and emptiness, when it would not serve to conceal something worse. This is how Guénon expresses it. But here we will introduce particular considerations, arguing that there are sufficient indications regarding people who, even in the West, are or have been in possession of effective initiatory knowledge, without having affiliated themselves with either Companionship or Freemasonry.

Leaving this fact aside, we will say, with regard to the Fellowship, that it is a residual initiatory organisation, of corporate origin and very limited scope, whose name is almost completely unknown outside France. We do not have sufficient data to comment on this, and we do not believe it is worthwhile. However, as far as Freemasonry is concerned, things are different. René Guénon may have contemplated some surviving nucleus of ancient 'operative' Freemasonry, deprived of any connection with what Freemasonry is today. As for the latter, it has – at least as far as four-fifths of it is concerned – absolutely nothing initiatory about it, being a fanciful system of degrees built on the basis of inorganic syncretism, to the point that it more accurately represents what Guénon calls "pseudo-initiation".

Beyond this artificial edifice, what can be found in modern Freemasonry, endowed with a 'non-human' character, is at best highly suspicious; various circumstances make it legitimate to assume that this is properly an organisation whose truly spiritual element has been 'withdrawn' and in which 'psychism' has often served as an instrument of dark forces. If we maintain the principle of judging by the fruits, recognising the precision of Freemasonry's "direction of effectiveness" in the modern world, its constant revolutionary action, its ideology, its struggle against all positive forms of authority from above, and so on, one cannot help but harbour doubts about the nature of the occult background of the organisation in question, when it is not reduced to a pure and simple imitation of initiation and initiatory hierarchy.

René Guénon is not at all willing to accept such an interpretation. But that is not the decisive point on the issue. Even if he does not attempt to "lead or steal members from any organisation", the responsibility he indirectly takes with such considerations is entirely his own, and we cannot share it, even in the slightest (1). Thus, faced with such an assessment, the practical problem, within the framework of "pure initiatic regularity",

quite bad for Western man. It is worth seeing what other legitimate and well-founded avenues can be considered to shed some light on the problem.

INITIATION AND EXCEPTIONAL PATHS

The merit that must be recognised in Guénon's conception is the emphasis he places on the difficulty of initiatic realisation under current conditions and the fact that he sets a limit on certain approaches concerning "individual initiation" and "self-initiation", presented by some – Rudolf Steiner among them – as the only path that Western man should follow. It is important not to fall from one extreme to another.

It is absolutely true that, due to the process of involution to which humanity is subject, some possibilities for direct realisation, present in the origins, although not totally lost, have at least become rare. But one must not fall into positions equivalent to the Christian conception, according to which man, irremediably damaged by 'original sin', can do nothing for himself in the strictly supernatural realm; here the inseparable intervention of the one who can ritually transmit the "spiritual influences," the basis of everything, according to Guénon, appears as equivalent to "grace" and the "sacraments."

Another important consideration should be made. Guénon himself, in another book, has pointed out that one aspect of specific involution is a solidification, whether it be that which is caused today in the present reality under the rigid forms of a soulless materiality, or – we would add – that which determines an inner closure of the human individual. It must be assumed that under such conditions, the power and, consequently, the help of 'subtle influences' in the domain of rites, not only initiatory but also religious, is more than reduced and even null in the cases given. It would be necessary, in fact, to ask ourselves finally what the nature of these "spiritual influences" is and whether those who, as "virtual initiates", possess them, are thus protected from all kinds of doctrinal errors and deviations. In truth, we know of many cases of people – and not only Westerners – whose situation is truly in accordance with "initiatory regularity" in the Guénonian sense of the term (and, first and foremost, all Freemasons), but who show such incomprehension and confusion about everything that is truly esoteric and spiritual that they appear far below people who have not received this gift but who are endowed with a fair intuition and a sufficiently open mind. Here too, one cannot avoid judging according to the criterion "I will judge them by their fruits," and we should not harbour any illusions about the spiritual "influences" in question, given the current state of affairs.

That said, as a general and decisive consideration, it is worth bearing in mind the following: the man who has been born in the present age is a man who has accepted what theosophists would call 'collective karma': he is a man who has associated himself with a 'race' which 'has wanted to be born by itself', freeing itself from the ties that served only to sustain and guide it, and which has allowed itself to be led astray; by following this path, it has only met with its own ruin, as is known to all those who understand the face of modern civilisation. But the fact remains the same: today, in the West, we find ourselves in an environment where spiritual forces have withdrawn and within which the

individual cannot count on them very much, unless, thanks to a happy combination of circumstances, he knows, to a certain extent, how to open up a path for himself. In this, nothing changes.

Finding ourselves in a situation that is in itself an anomaly, practically also in the realm of initiation, it is advisable to consider less the regular paths than those that are exceptional in nature. This is admitted to a certain extent by Guenon himself. Spiritual centres, he says, although extremely difficult to define, can intervene beyond the forms of regular transmission, either in favour of particularly qualified individuals who find themselves isolated in an environment where obscurity has reached such a point that almost nothing traditional remains and initiation cannot be obtained, or with a view to a general or exceptional goal, such as renewing an initiatory chain that has been accidentally interrupted. There are therefore non-normal possibilities for direct 'contacts'. But René Guenon adds that it is essential to remember that even if an apparently isolated individual achieves real initiation, this initiation will only be spontaneous in appearance, because in fact it will always indicate a link, by whatever means, with an effectively existing chain: a link 'on the vertical', that is, as an inner participation in the supra-individual principles and states of which any particular organisation of men is but a sensible manifestation and, in a certain sense, merely a contingent externalisation (2). Therefore, in the cases in question, one can always ask the question: is it truly the intervention of a centre that has determined the initiation, or, on the contrary, is it the active initiative of the individual to want to advance to a certain point that has provoked this intervention?

In this regard, we can speak of a qualification that does not entirely fall within those indicated by Guenon, an active qualification, created through a special discipline, by a special individual preparation that makes one not only eligible, but in certain cases also able to impose the choice and initiation. The symbol of Jacob wrestling with the angel, to the point of forcing him to bless him, like so many others, to that of Parsifal (in Wolfram von Eschembach) who opens the way to the Grail "with weapons in hand", something "never seen before", correspond to such a possibility. It is regrettable that in René Guénon's books, there is nothing about what an active discipline of preparation might be, which, in certain cases, is capable of leading, even without interruption, to enlightenment (3): in the same way, René Guénon indicates nothing regarding specific disciplines related to the work of actualisation, which transforms the "virtual initiate" into a true initiate and, ultimately, into an Adept. As we have already said, René Guénon's domain is that of simple doctrine, while what interests us is the field of practice.

But in this area, too, René Guénon has occasionally written something that can cause confusion. He refers to an Islamic teaching, according to which anyone who comes before a "door" without reaching it by the normal and legitimate route sees this door open slightly before him and is then obliged to continue on his way, but not as a simple layman – which would be impossible once he has entered – but as a sahar (sorcerer or magician in a lower sense). Certain reservations must be made

reservations about this approach; first of all, if the person who has managed to approach this "door" through an abnormal route has righteous and pure intentions, this intention will certainly be recognised by those who have the right, so that the door will open according to the principle: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you". But if the door should not open, this would only indicate—in this particular case—that the aspirant to initiation, faced with the test, must open the door himself, resorting to violence, according to the principle that the threshold of Heaven can be violated. for, in general, what Eliphaz Levi says is true, namely that initiatory knowledge is not given, but taken: which, moreover, constitutes the essence of this active quality that, within certain limits, René Guénon himself recognises

(4). Whether one likes it or not, a certain "Promethean" trait will always naturally belong to the highest category of the initiate.

René Guénon is right not to take "astral initiation" seriously and to denounce what certain "occultist" circles think about it in their ramblings. Here too, there are many points of view that are nothing more than a distortion. Apart from the fact that, in any case, true initiation takes place in a condition that is not that of ordinary waking consciousness, it is possible to actively rise to states where the contacts essential for supra-individual development are favoured. In Islamic esotericism, for example, there is talk of the possibility of reaching *shath*, a special inner state which, among other things, eventually gives the ability to unite with the *Khîr*, an enigmatic being in whom resides the principle of direct initiation, that is, without the mediation of a *tariqa* (organisation) or a *silsila* (chain)(6). Although conceived as exceptional, this possibility is admitted. Here, the essential thing is *nyyah*, that is, right intention, which should not be understood in an abstract and subjective sense, but as a magical direction of efficacy.

Let us also consider another point. As we have seen, René Guénon excludes the "ideal" link with a tradition, because "one can only unite with that which has a current existence", that is, with a chain of which there are still living representatives today according to a regular filiation: without which initiation would be impossible and non-existent. Here, too, there is a curious confusion between the essential element and the contingent and organising element. What, in short, does 'current existence' mean? All esotericists know that when a metaphysical principle ceases to have a perceptible manifestation in a given environment or in a specific period, it does not thereby become less "current," but continues to exist on another plane (something that Guénon himself recognises more or less implicitly). If by "ideal" link we mean a simple mental aspiration, we can share Guénon's opinion; otherwise, things are considered, with regard to the possibilities of effective and direct evocation, on the basis of the magical principle of analogical and syntonetic correspondences. In short, René Guénon admits—with precision—that 'spiritual influences' have their own laws. Does this not amount, in essence, to admitting in principle the possibility of a determining action upon them? What can be conceived in a collective situation, a physical chain can be created and arranged to serve as a body which, on the basis of a "synergy" and, precisely, a "sympathetic" correspondence, attracts a spiritual influence in terms of the "descent" from a plane where the conditions of time and space do not have an

absolute value. The thing may or may not be achieved, but it should not be excluded, nor confused with the simple and inconsistent "ideal bond".

In short, René Guénon denies that an initiation can take place on the basis of what has already happened in previous existences. Since we, like Guénon, do not accept the theory of reincarnation, if he is referring to it, we agree with him. But this does not mean that we should exclude what might be called a special "transcendental inheritance" in certain individuals, capable of conferring on them a particular "dignity" in terms of the possibility of directly pursuing and achieving initiatory awakening. This has been explicitly recognised by Buddhism. Guénon's image of a plant or a living being that cannot be born when there is no seed (which would be the 'beginning', determined from outside by ritual initiation) is only valid within certain limits. Making it absolute would ultimately contradict the fundamental metaphysical vision of non-duality and, above all, uniformly refer all beings to a lowest common denominator. For they may carry within themselves the "seed" of awakening.

CURRENT CONDITIONS FOR INITIATION

We have already indicated the essential elements that must be asserted in the face of the unilateral scheme of initiatory "regularity". In a way, we would risk disqualifying ourselves if we did not recognise the value that this scheme deserves. But there is no need to exaggerate and lose sight of the special, even abnormal, conditions in which even those with the best intentions and qualifications find themselves in the West. Who would not join if they found initiatory organisations, as René Guénon conceives them, even with aspects that almost make one think of a bureaucratic system of formal "legality"? Who would not seek them out, simply asking to be judged and "put to the test"? But this is not the case, and anyone who reads Guénon finds themselves somewhat in the situation of someone who hears that it would be wonderful to possess a fascinating young woman, but who, when asking where she is, would receive nothing but silence or even "that's not our problem" in response. As for Guénon's direct indications about what remains in the West of regular initiatory organisations, we have already expressed the necessary reservations.

There remains only the question that, to tell the truth, we should have raised from the outset, namely that the very idea of ritual initiation, as expounded by René Guénon, seems to us to be somewhat weakened. In fact, a transmission of poorly individualised "spiritual influences", a transmission that might not even be perceived, unifying a simple "virtual initiative" which, in essence, as we have said, is exposed to all errors and deviations, at best, like the last of the "profane", a transmission of this kind is, in short, very little. From what we know and from what can be deduced from precise traditions – including those of the ancient mysteries – real initiation is, on the contrary, comparable to a kind of surgical operation, the counterpart of which is an experience lived in a particularly intense way and leaving – as one text says – "the eternal mark of a fracture".

Finding someone capable of providing initiation in these terms is not easy, nor does it depend solely on qualifications (for the reasons already mentioned, it is advisable today, in the West, to place various restrictions on the principle that 'when the disciple is ready, the Master is also ready'). In this case, it is essentially a matter of elements that are, so to speak, "outstanding" (in the military sense), which may or may not be found in life. One cannot harbour the illusion of finding a "school" proper, equipped with everything necessary to achieve regular development, with a sufficient system of "safeguards" and controls. The "schools" in the West that presume to be such, just as they presume to be "initiates" who put their qualifications on business cards or in the yellow pages, are vulgar mystifications, and one of Guenon's merits is to have exercised a just destructive criticism.

As for those who, having assumed the karma of the civilisation into which they have chosen to be born, and being truly committed to their vocation, wish to advance on their own, striving to achieve direct contact on the "vertical" —that is, metaphysical contacts—rather than "horizontal" links with organisations that have appeared in history and would provide them with assistance—they are embarking on a dangerous path, a reality that we wish to emphasise explicitly: for everything happens as if they were venturing into a wild country without a "reference map" or a business card. But, ultimately, if in the profane world it is natural for a person of good birth to risk their life when the end is worthwhile, there is no reason to think otherwise about those who, given the current circumstances, have no other option but to conquer initiation and abolish human bonds. "Allah akbar!" can be said with the Arabs, that is, God is great, while Plato had already declared: "All great things are dangerous."

NOTES

- (1) It is equally debatable whether Freemasonry is a "purely Western form of initiation"; one would have to ignore the entire Hebrew element in its rituals and legends.
- (2) Moreover, with regard to the Rosicrucians, Guénon speaks of the community of those who have attained a certain state, superior to that of ordinary humanity, and have obtained the same degree of initiation. Strictly speaking, one should not speak of "societies," or even "organisations." On another occasion, Guenon recalled that initiatory hierarchies are nothing more than degrees of being. All this can be understood in a spiritual and metaphysical sense and not in a personalised or organised sense.
- (3) Such is typically the case with early Buddhist asceticism. Buddhism also has a technical term to designate precisely those "who have awakened themselves".
- (4) On this basis, the principle of "incommunicability" must be understood. True metaphysical knowledge is always an "act," and that which possesses the quality of an "act" cannot come from elsewhere; according to the Greek expression, it can only be attained.

(5) One may recall the very important role that initiation received during sleep plays among savage peoples. On this aspect, see, for example, Mircea Eliade, "Shamanism and the Techniques of Ecstasy". (6) On this point, a text by Abdul Hadi (published in August 1946 in *Etudes Traditionelles*) speaks of two chains, only one of which is historical, and initiation is given by a living, authorised master (sheik), possessor of the key to the mystery: it is the *et-talimurrijal*, relying on men, distinct from the *et-talimur-rabbani*, for whom it is not a living master as a man, but an "absent" master, unknown, or even "dead" for many centuries. This second path refers to the notion of Khidr (pronounced Ridr, NdT) through which initiation can be received directly. This possibility has a very particular importance in Ismailism. In the Rusa Cruz, the mysterious figure of "Elias Artista" was, in a sense, equivalent to Khidr.

"ARYA DOCTRINE OF STRUGGLE AND VICTORY"

by Julius Evola.

**Lecture given at the Kaiser Willhelm Institute in Rome on 7
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The "Decadence of the West," according to the conception of a renowned critic of Western civilisation, is clearly recognisable in two main characteristics: first, the pathological development of all that is Activism; second, contempt for the values of inner Knowledge and Contemplation.

This critic does not understand Knowledge to mean rationalism, intellectualism or other empty word games; he does not understand Contemplation to mean a withdrawal from the world, a renunciation or a misunderstood monastic retreat. On the contrary, inner Knowledge and Contemplation represent the normal and most appropriate forms of human participation in supernatural, supra-human and supra-rational Reality. Despite this clarification, there is a premise at the basis of the conception indicated that is unacceptable to us. For it is tacitly and in fact admitted that all action in the material realm is limiting and that the highest spiritual realm is accessible only by means other than action.

In this idea, we clearly recognise the influence of a conception of life that is basically foreign to the spirit of the Aryan race; but which, nevertheless, is so deeply rooted in Western Christian thought that it is also found in Dante's imperial conception. The opposition between Action and Contemplation was, on the contrary, unknown to the ancient Aryans.

Action and Contemplation were not opposed to each other as two terms of a contradiction. They were simply different words for the same spiritual realisation. In other words, the ancient Aryans believed that man

could transcend individual conditioning not only through Contemplation but also through Action.

If we move away from this initial idea, then the progressive decline of Western civilisation must be interpreted differently. The tradition of action is typical of the Aryan-Western races. But this tradition is gradually deviating. This is the case in the West today, where only secularised and materialised action, deprived of any form of transcendent contact, has come to be known and honoured, a profaned action that was bound to degenerate into feverishness or mania, resulting in action for action's sake: that is, in an activity that is linked only to time-bound effects. In the modern world, such degenerate action is not met with ascetic and authentically contemplative values, but only with a hazy culture and a pale and conventional faith. Such is our view of the situation.

If the "return to the origins" is the basic concept of every current movement of renewal, then it must be an indispensable task, a conscious return, to understand the primordial Aryan conception of Action. This Aryan conception must have a transformative effect and evoke dormant vital forces in the New Man of Good Race.

Today and here, we want to venture a brief "excursus" precisely into the universe of primordial Aryan thought, with the aim of bringing to light once again some fundamental elements of our common tradition, paying special attention to the Aryan meanings of war, struggle, and victory.

Naturally, for the ancient Aryan warrior, war, as such, responded to an eternal struggle between metaphysical forces. On one side is the Olympian principle of light, solar and Uranian reality; on the other, the brutal violence of the "Titanic-Telluric" element, barbaric in the classical sense, "feminine-demonic". This theme of metaphysical struggle would appear in a thousand forms in all traditions of Aryan origin. Thus, every struggle on the material level was taken with a greater or lesser degree of awareness as an episode of this antithesis. Since Aryanism was considered to be the militia of the Olympian principle, it is therefore necessary today to return to this path of the ancient Aryans; and, equally, to grant legitimacy or supreme consecration to the right to power and to the imperial conception itself, where, deep down, its anti-secular character seems quite evident.

In the imagination of this traditional world, all reality was transformed into symbol... This also applies to war from a subjective and internal point of view. Thus, war and the path to the divine could be fused into a single entity.

The significant testimonies offered to us by the various Nordic-Germanic traditions are well known to all. In any case, we must say that these traditions, as they have come down to us, are fragmented and mixed; very often they already represent the materialisation of the highest primordial Aryan traditions, which have fallen to the level of popular superstitions. This does not prevent us from establishing a few points.

First of all, as we all know, 'Valhalla' is the capital of heavenly immortality, reserved mainly for heroes who have fallen on the battlefield. The lord of these places, ODIN-WOTAN, is represented in the Ynglinga saga as the one who, through his symbolic sacrifice to the cosmic tree Ygdrasil, has shown the way to warriors, a path that leads to a divine residence where immortal life always flourishes. According to this tradition, no sacrifice or worship is more pleasing to the supreme god, no other effort yields richer supernatural fruits than that offered by those who have died fighting on the battlefield. But there is much more; behind the dark representation of the Wildes Herr (1) also hides the following fundamental meaning: through the warriors who, falling, offer a sacrifice to ODIN, those troops are formed that the god will need for the final decisive battle of the "Ragna-rökk"; that is, against that fatal "darkening of the divine" that has been looming menacingly over the world since ancient times.

Thus far, therefore, the genuine Aryan motive for the fierce metaphysical struggle is clearly exposed to the light. In the 'Edda', it would also be said: 'However great the number of heroes gathered in 'Valhalla' may be, it will never be great enough when the wolf breaks in (2)'. The wolf here is the image of those dark and savage forces that the world of the 'Aesir' has managed to subdue.

The Aryan-Iranian conception of MITHRA, "the sleepless warrior," is in fact analogous. He who, at the head of the "Fravashi" and his faithful, wages battle against the enemies of the Aryan god of light. We will speak immediately afterwards of the

"Fravashi" and examine its close correlation with the "Valkyries" of Norse tradition. We will also attempt to classify the meaning of "Holy War" through other concordant testimonies. It should come as no surprise if, in this context, we refer primarily to Islamic tradition. Islamic tradition takes the place of Aryan-Iranian tradition here. The idea of "holy war"

-at least as far as the elements examined here are concerned- reached the Arab tribes through the Iranian world of thought: it therefore has, at the same time, the meaning of a late rebirth of a primordial Aryan heritage and, from this point of view, can undoubtedly be used.

It is accepted that two "holy wars" are distinguished in this tradition, namely the "great" and the "small" Holy War. This distinction is based on the words of the Prophet who, on returning from a military raid, said: "We have returned from the small war to the great holy war". In this context, the great holy war belongs to the spiritual realm. The small holy war, on the other hand, is the psychic, material struggle, the war waged in the outside world. The great holy war is man's struggle with his own enemies, those he carries within himself. More precisely, it is the struggle of the supernatural element of man himself against everything that is instinctive, linked to passion, chaotic, subject to the forces of nature. Such is the idea that appears in the Bhagavad-Gita, that ancient great treatise of Aryan warrior wisdom: "Knowing that which is above thought, assert yourself in your inner strength and strike, warrior of long arms, that fearsome enemy which is desire" (3). A necessary condition for the inner work of liberation is that this enemy must be destroyed once and for all.

In the context of the heroic tradition, that small holy war—that is, a war as an external struggle—serves only as a means by which that great holy war is realised.

For this reason, in the texts, 'holy war' and 'path to God' are often synonymous. Thus we read in the Qur'an: "They fight in the Way of God"—that is, in Holy War—"those who sacrifice this earthly life for the life to come; for whoever fights and dies on the path of God, or whoever achieves victory, we will give a great reward" (4). And further on: 'Those who fall on the path of God's Way, He will never let their works be lost; He will guide them and give much peace to their hearts; and He will bring them into Paradise, which He will reveal to them' (5). This refers to physical death in war, to the "mors triumphalis" (victorious death); and it is in perfect correspondence with all classical traditions. The same doctrine can, however, also be interpreted in a symbolic sense... Those who experience a "great holy war" in the "little war" create within themselves a force that prepares them to overcome the crisis of death. But even without having died physically, they can, through the asceticism of Action and Struggle, experience death; they may have conquered inwardly and achieved a "more than life". Esoterically speaking, 'Paradise', 'Kingdom of Heaven' and similar expressions are nothing more than symbols and figurations forged by the people, representing transcendent states of enlightenment, already on a higher plane than life or death. These considerations must also apply as a premise for rediscovering the same meanings under the external aspect of Christianity, which the Nordic-Western heroic tradition was compelled to adopt during the Crusades in order to manifest itself externally. Much more than people today are generally inclined to believe, in the medieval crusades for the 'liberation of the Temple' and the 'conquest of the Holy Land', there are clear points of contact with the Nordic-Aryan tradition, where reference is made to the mythical "Asgard", the distant land of the Aesir and the Heroes, where death is in no hurry and where the inhabitants enjoy immortal life and supernatural peace. Holy war appears as a totally spiritual war to the point that it can be compared, by preachers, literally, to a "purification, like the fire of purgatory before death". "What greater glory than to leave the battlefield covered in laurels. What greater glory than to win, on the battlefield, an immortal crown," Bernard of Clairvaux (6) tells the Templars. "Absolute Glory," that which theologians attribute to God, at the highest point of heaven (with their "in Excelsis Deo"), is also entrusted to the crusader as his own. Against this backdrop stood "Holy Jerusalem", in its dual aspect: as an earthly city and as a heavenly city, and the Crusade as a great elevation that truly leads to immortality.

The actions of the crusaders, high and low, initially caused surprise, confusion, and even crises of faith, but ultimately had the sole effect of purifying the idea of the 'Holy War' of all traces of materialism. Without hesitation, the unfortunate end of a Crusade is compared to Virtue being pursued by Misfortune; and in which courage can only be judged and rewarded in relation to a non-earthly path. Thus, far beyond

victory or defeat—the judgement of value on the spiritual and genuine aspect of the Action. Thus, the "Holy War" is valuable in itself, regardless of its visible material outcome, as a means of achieving, through the active sacrifice of the human element, a supra-human realisation.

And precisely that same teaching, elevated to the level of metaphysical expression, will reappear in a well-known Indo-Aryan text, the Bhagavad-Gita. The compassion and humanitarian feelings that prevent the warrior ARJUNA from fighting against the enemy are judged by God to be "murky, unworthy of an Aryan (...), leading neither to heaven nor to honour" (7). The commandment tells him thus: "If you die, you will go to heaven; if you are victorious, you will rule the earth. Rise, son of Kuntī, ready to fight" (8). The inner disposition that can transmute the small holy war into the great holy war, already indicated, is clearly described here as follows: "...Bringing all action to me, the spirit folded in on itself, free from hope and self-interest, fights without scruples" (9). In such clear expressions, the purity of action is affirmed: it must be desired for its own sake, beyond all passion and all human impulse: "Consider that suffering, wealth or misery, victory or defeat are at stake. Prepare yourself, therefore, for combat; and in this way you will avoid sin" (10).

As a supplementary metaphysical foundation, the god clarifies the difference between that which is absolute spirituality—and, as such, will be indestructible—and that which has only the corporeal and human as its element, in an illusory existence. On the one hand, the metaphysical unreality of that which can be lost as mortal body and life that pass away, or is revealed in those for whom loss can be a determining factor. On the other hand, Arjūna is led, in that experience of a force of divine manifestation, to a power of irresistible transcendence. Thus, in the face of the greatness of this force, all conditioned forms of existence appeared as a negation. Where negation is actively denied, that is, where, in the assault, all conditioned forms of existence are inverted or destroyed, this force takes on a terrifying manifestation.

Only on this basis, exactly, can adequate energy be captured to produce the heroic transformation of the individual. To the extent that the warrior acts in the purity and character of the absolute, indicated here, he breaks the chains of the human, evokes the divine as a metaphysical force, attracts this active force to himself, and finds in it his illusion and his liberation. The crucial word comes from another text, also belonging to the same tradition, which says: "Life is like a bow; the soul is like an arrow; the absolute spirit is like the target to be hit. Unite with this great spirit, as the arrow shot hits the target" (11). If we can see here the highest form of spiritual realisation through struggle and heroism, then it is truly significant that this teaching is presented in the Bhagavad-Gita as a continuation of a primordial Aryan-solar heritage. In fact, it was given by the "Sun" to the first lawgiver of the Aryans, MANU, and was subsequently preserved by a great dynasty of consecrated kings. Over the centuries, this teaching was lost, yet it was revealed again by the divinity, not to a devout priest, but to a representative of the warrior nobility: Arjūna. What we have discussed so far also allows us to understand the deeper meanings that

underlying a set of classical and Nordic traditions. Thus, as a point of reference, it should be noted here that in these ancient traditions, certain precise symbolic images appeared with remarkable frequency: first, the image of the soul as a demon, double, or genius; then the image of Dionysian presences and the goddess of death; and the image of a goddess of victory, who often appeared in the form of a goddess of battle.

For a precise understanding of all these relationships, it will be very useful to classify the meaning of the soul, which is understood here as a demon, genius or double. Ancient man symbolises in the demon or double a force lying in the depths, which is, so to speak, 'the life of life', insofar as it generally directs all events, both bodily and spiritual, to which normal consciousness has no access; but which nevertheless undoubtedly condition the contingent existence and destiny of the individual.

There is a very close link between these entities and the mystical forces of Race and Blood. Thus, for example, the Devil appears in many guises, similar to the Lares Gods, the mystical entities of a lineage or a generation, of which MACROBE, for example, tells us: "They are gods who keep us alive. They feed our bodies and guide our souls." Thus, it can be said that between the demon and normal consciousness there is a relationship of the same type as between the individuating principle and the individuated principle. The former, according to the teachings of the ancients, is a supra-individual force and therefore superior to birth and death. The second, that is, the individuated principle, is consciousness conditioned by the body and the outside world, normally destined for dissolution or the very ephemeral survival characteristic of the world of shadows. In the Norse tradition, the image of the "Valkyries" has more or less the same meaning as the demon. The image of a "Valkyrie" is confused, in many texts, with that of a

"Fylgja" (12); that is, with a spiritual entity active in man and to whose power his destiny is subject. Like "Kynfylgja", a "Valkyrie" is - just as the Roman household gods are - the mystical power of blood. And the same is true of the

"Fravashi" of the Aryan-Iranian tradition. The "Fravashi", explains a well-known orientalist, "is the intimate force of every human being, sustaining them from the moment they are born and throughout their lives". Like the Roman household gods, the

Fravashi are simultaneously in contact with the primordial forces of a race and are, like the Valkyries, predominant goddesses of war, who bring fortune and victory. Such is the first relationship that we must reveal and discover.

What could this mysterious force, which represents the deep soul of the race and the transcendental within man, have in common with the goddesses of war? To fully understand this point, we must remember that the ancient Indo-Germans had a conception of their own immortality that was, so to speak, aristocratic and differentiated. Not everyone would escape dissolution, this Lemurian survival of which "Hades" and "Niflheim" were ancient symbolic images... Immortality was a privilege of the very few; and, according to the Aryan conception, a heroic privilege above all. The fact of surviving—not as a shadow, but as a demigod—

is reserved only for those whom spiritual actions have elevated from one nature to another. Here, unfortunately, I cannot provide the evidence to justify what I am stating: technically, these spiritual actions achieve

transforming the individual self, that of normal human consciousness, into a profound, supra-individual force, the individuating force, which is beyond birth and death and to which, as mentioned above, the concept of 'demon' corresponds. However, the demon is far beyond all the finite forms in which it manifests itself, not only because it represents the primordial force of an entire race, but also in terms of intensity. The sudden transition from ordinary consciousness to this force, symbolised by the demon, therefore gave rise to a destructive crisis, similar to a flash of lightning resulting from an excessively high potential tension in and for the human circuit. We therefore assume that, under exceptional conditions, the demon can also appear in the individual and make him experience a kind of destructive transcendence; and thus, in this case, a kind of active experience of death would occur, and the second relationship would therefore appear very clearly, that is, because the image of the double or demon in the myths of antiquity could be confused with the divinity of death. In the old Norse tradition, the warrior sees his own Valkyrie at the very moment of death or mortal danger. Let us go further. In religious asceticism, mortification, renunciation of the self, and tension in the abandonment of God are the preferred means through which one seeks to provoke the aforementioned crisis and overcome it positively. Expressions such as 'mystical death' or 'dark night of the soul', etc., which indicate this condition, are well known to all. In contrast, in the context of a heroic tradition, the path to the same end is represented by active tension, by the Dionysian liberation of the element of Action. We observe, for example, at the lowest level of the corresponding phenomenology, dance used as a sacred technique to evoke and arouse, through the ecstasy of the soul, forces underlying in the depths. In the life of the individual liberated by the Dionysian rhythm, another life is inserted, almost like the flowering of its basal root. The Erinyes, Furies, "Wild Horde," and various other analogous spiritual entities represent this force in symbolic terms. All of them therefore correspond to a manifestation of the demon in its terrifying and active transcendence. At a higher level are the sacred warrior and sporting games, and even higher still is war itself. Thus we return once again to the primordial Aryan conception and warrior asceticism.

At the height of the danger of heroic combat, the possibility of this supernatural experience is recognised. Thus, the Latin expression *ludere* – to play or perform a role, to fight – seems to contain the idea of resolution (13). This is one of the many allusions to the property understood in combat, of breaking free from individual limitations; of bringing out free forces hidden in the depths. Hence the basis for the third assimilation: demons, household gods, like the individuating ego, are identical not only to the Furies, Erinyes and other unleashed Dionysian natures, which in turn have many characteristics in common with the death wish; they also have the same significance, due to their relationship with the virgins who lead heroes into battle, the 'Valkyries' and the 'Fravashi'. Thus, the "Fravashi" are described in the sacred texts, for example, as "the terrifying, the almighty", "those who listen and give victory to those who invoke them"; or, to put it more clearly, to those who invoke them within themselves. From there to the last similarity, there is little

way. The same warrior entities ultimately assume the role of Goddesses of Victory; a metamorphosis that precisely characterises the happy fulfilment of the inner experiences in question. This is how the Demon or the Double has the meaning of a profound and supra-individual power, in a latent state in relation to normal ordinary consciousness. This is how they, the Furies and Erinyes, reflect a special manifestation of unleashing and demonic irruption - and the Goddesses of Death, "Valkyries", "Fravashi", etc., are related to the same situations; to the extent that they are possible through heroic combat—in the same way, the Goddess of Victory is the expression of the triumph of the self over this power. It indicates the victorious tension with respect to a condition situated beyond danger, inserted in ecstasy and in forms of sub-personal destruction, a danger always lurking behind the frenetic moment of great Dionysian action, and also of heroic action. The impulse towards a truly supra-personal spiritual state, which makes us free, immortal, and inwardly indestructible, is illustrated by the phrase "Convert two into one" (the two elements of human essence), which is thus synthesised in this representation of mythical consciousness.

Let us now turn to the dominant meaning of these primordial heroic traditions, that is, to this mystical conception of victory. Here, the fundamental premise is that an effective correspondence between the physical and the metaphysical, between the visible and the invisible, was known wherever the acts of the spirit manifested supra-individual traits and were expressed through real operations and events. On this basis, spiritual fulfilment is sensed as the secret soul of certain authentically warrior-like actions, whose highest expression lies in effective victory. Then all the material aspects of military victory become an expression of a spiritual action that has brought about victory, at the point where the external and the internal meet. Victory would appear as a tangible sign of a consecration to a mystical rebirth undertaken in the same domain. The Furies and Death, which the warrior had faced materially on the battlefield, also oppose him internally, more on the spiritual plane, in the form of a threatening irruption of the primordial forces of his being. To the extent that he triumphs over them, victory is his.

This context also explains why each victory takes on special sacred significance in the world linked to tradition. And so the army chief, acclaimed on the battlefields, offered the experience and presence of this mystical force that transformed him. The profound meaning of the emerging super-earthly character of glory and the heroic "divinity" of the victor thus becomes more understandable; hence the fact that the ancient Roman tradition of triumph had more sacred than military features. The recurring symbolism in the primordial Aryan traditions of Victories, "Valkyries" and other similar entities that guide the warrior's soul to "heaven"...; as well as the myth of the victorious hero such as the Dorian HERACLES who obtains from NIKE, "the Goddess of Victory", the crown that makes him a participant in Olympian immortality. This symbol now appears in a very different light, and it is now clear that this ignorant way of seeing things, which would distinguish nothing more than simple 'poetry', rhetoric and fable in all this, is totally false and superficial.

Current mystical theology teaches that spiritual sanctification is achieved in Glory, and all Christian iconography surrounds the heads of saints and martyrs with a halo of glory. Everything indicates that this is a very weakened legacy of our highest heroic traditions. The Aryan-Iranian tradition already knew, in fact, of celestial fire understood as glory -

'Hvareno'—which descends upon kings and true leaders, making them immortal and allowing them to bear witness to victory... The ancient royal crown of rays symbolised, precisely, glory as solar and celestial fire. Light, solar splendour, glory, victory, divine royalty: these are the images that were found at the heart of the Aryan world, in the closest relationship; not as abstractions or inventions of man, but with the clear meaning of absolutely real forces and domains. And in this context, the Mystical Doctrine of Struggle and Victory represents for us a luminous apex of our common conception of action in the traditional sense.

This traditional conception speaks to us today in a way that is still understandable to us—provided, of course, that we deviate from its external manifestations, which are conditioned by time. Then, as in the present, we want to overcome this weary, anaemic spirituality based on simple abstract speculations or dull pious sentiments, while at the same time overcoming the materialistic degeneration of action. Can we find better points of reference for this task than the aforementioned ideals of the primordial Aryan? But there is much more. Material and spiritual tensions have been compressed to such an extent in the West in recent years that they can no longer be resolved except through combat. With the current war, an era is coming to an end, and forces are now emerging that cannot be mastered and transformed into the dynamics of a new civilisation solely by abstract ideas, universalist premises or irrationally familiar myths. Now, a much deeper and more essential action is required, so that far beyond the ruins of a subverted and doomed world, a new era may begin for Europe.

However, from this perspective, much will depend on how the individual can shape the experience of combat; that is, whether they will be able to rise to the challenge of embracing heroism and sacrifice as their own catharsis, as a means of liberation from inner awakening. Not only for the definitive and victorious outcome of the events of this turbulent period, but also to give shape and meaning to the order that will emerge from victory. This task of our inner combatants, invisible and devoid of grand gestures and words, will be decisive. It is in the battle itself that it is necessary to awaken and temper this force which, beyond the storm of blood and deprivation, will favour, with new splendour and almighty peace, the new creation. For this reason, we should learn today on the battlefield about pure action, action not only in the sense of manly asceticism but also of great purification and the path to higher forms of life, valid in and of themselves; that which nevertheless has, in a certain way, the meaning of a return to the primordial tradition of the Aryan-Western world. From ancient times, the words still echo down to us: "Life is like a bow, the soul is like an arrow, and the absolute spirit is like a target to be hit." For he who, even today, lives the

battle in the sense of this identification will remain standing where others will fall; he will have an invincible strength. This new man will overcome all drama and darkness, all chaos, and will represent the arrival of new times, the beginning of a new development... This heroism of the best, according to the primordial Aryan tradition, can truly take on an evocative function; that is, the function of re-establishing the contact, dormant for many centuries, between the world and the super-world. Then the combat will not become a horrible great slaughter, it will not have the meaning of a desperate destiny, conditioned solely by the desire to gain power, but will be the proof of the right and mission of a great people. Then peace will not mean suffocation in everyday bourgeois darkness, nor distancing oneself from the spiritual tension of battle, but will have, on the contrary, the meaning of its fulfilment.

It is also, and rightly so, that we want to make our own, once again, the profession of faith of the ancients, as expressed so well in the following words: "The blood of heroes is more sacred than the ink of scholars and the prayers of devotees." This is precisely the basis of the traditional conception, according to which, in the "holy war", the mystical primordial forces of the race operate much more strongly than individuals. These forces of the origins create world empires and give man "Victorious Peace".

- (1) "Wildes Herr": Wild group, stormy horde
- (2) Gylfaginning
- (3) Bhagavad-Gitâ III,43 (Trans. by Emile Senart, Paris 1967)
- (4) Quran VI, 76
- (5) Quran XLVII
- (6) "De laude novae militiae"
- (7) Bhagavad-Gitâ II, 2
- (8) II, 37
- (9) III, 30
- (10) II, 38
- (11) Mârkandeya-purâna, XLII, 7, 8
- (12) "Companion," literarily
- (13) Bruckmann; Indogerm. Forschungen. XVIII, 433 Q.C.K.

Julius EVOLA enjoyed great intellectual prestige during the pre-war period and in the European Axis environment, although he was particularly and specifically famous in Italian fascism. His writings, reflections and activities obviously do not deserve any approval from the ideologues of the military victors of the war. Through various vicissitudes, he finally managed to survive and continue to express himself. Intellectually, without being at all pleasing to the Allies, he was almost acceptable. He avoided serious problems by carefully refraining from "laying it on thick" with the purely National Socialist line on racial genetics. Instead, he specialised in delving into spiritual, traditional and metaphysical approaches. He turned to them as a personal tendency and intellectual preference in years when other Axis intellectuals were more naturalistic. But what made him an intellectual without any real aggressive realism during the years before the European defeat was truly providential for him in the years that followed. Thus,

, for example, approaches races as something totally "spiritual" (and therefore unrelated to genetics); thus, values and anti-values are distributed among people and do not depend on races. This reminds us of the Catholic doctrine that all souls are equal, regardless of race, sex, culture, etc. EVOLA's Catholic thinking proved providential for his survival (allowing him to survive after 1945), and many consider him a happy teacher (at least in terms of survival). The reproduced text is very interesting. Dating from 1940, it is "strong" among his followers. After reading it, one will understand much better what is meant by fighting.

GUIDELINES BY JULIUS EVOLA

1. THE ILLUSION OF PROGRESS

It is useless to harbour illusions of false optimism: we are at the end of a cycle. For centuries now, first imperceptibly, then with the movement of a mass collapsing down a slope, there have been multiple processes that have destroyed any normal and legitimate order of men in the West, falsifying even the highest conception of life, action, knowledge and combat. This fall, its speed and its dizzying appearance, has been called "progress". Hymns and praises have been dedicated to this "progress," and the illusion was harboured that this civilisation—a civilisation of matter and machines—was the civilisation par excellence, for which all previous world history had been preordained: the final consequences of this process were such that they provoked an awakening in some.

It is known where, and under what symbols, attempts were made to organise the forces of a possible resistance. On the one hand, a nation that since its unification had known nothing but the mediocre climate of liberalism, democracy and constitutional monarchy – Italy – had the audacity to take up the symbol of Rome as the basis for a new political conception and a new ideal of virility and dignity. On the other hand, in another nation, which in the Middle Ages had adopted the Roman principle of Imperium—Germany—similar forces awoke to reaffirm the principle of authority and the primacy of all those values that have their roots in blood, race and the deepest instincts of a lineage. And while in other European nations some groups moved in the same direction, a third force aligned itself in the same field of combat on the Asian continent: the nation of the samurai, in which the adoption of the external forms of modern civilisation had not damaged loyalty to a warrior tradition, centred on the symbol of the solar empire of divine right.

In these currents, the distinction between the essential and the incidental was not always clear, nor did the ideas have adequate conviction and qualification in people, nor were some influences of those very forces that had to be fought overcome. The process of ideological purification could have taken place at a later stage, once certain immediate and urgent political problems had been resolved. But even so, it was clear that

a concentration of forces was taking shape in open defiance of so-called "modern" civilisation, both for the democracies that were the heirs of the French Revolution and for the embodiment of the extreme limit of Western man's degradation: the collectivist civilisation of the Fourth Estate, the proletarian civilisation of the anonymous and faceless mass man. Events precipitated, tensions escalated until the armed clash of the opposing forces arrived. What prevailed was the brute force of a coalition that did not back down in the face of a hybrid alliance of interests and hypocritical ideological mobilisation to crush a world that was rising up and trying to assert its rights. We leave aside the question of whether or not our men were up to the task, whether mistakes were made in terms of timing, preparation, whether they assessed... none of this matters. Similarly, we are not interested in history taking revenge on the victors, nor in some kind of immanent justice whereby the democratic powers, having allied themselves with the forces of red subversion to take the war to the senseless extreme of unconditional surrender and total destruction, see their former allies turn against them, a danger far more fearsome than the one they sought to avert. [The author refers to the outcome of the Second World War and the process of the Cold War. Translator's note].

The only thing that matters is that today we find ourselves in the midst of a world in ruins. And the question that must be asked is this: are there still men standing amid these ruins? And what must or can they still do?

2.- POLITICS AND METAPOLITICS

This issue goes beyond yesterday's boundaries; it is clear that the victors and the vanquished have since been on the same level and that the only result of the Second World War has been to reduce Europe to the status of an object of extra-European powers and interests. It must also be recognised that the devastation around us is essentially moral in nature. We find ourselves in an atmosphere of generalised moral anaesthesia, of profound rootlessness, despite all the slogans in use in a democratic consumer society: the weakening of character and of all true dignity, ideological stagnation, the predominance of base interests, day-to-day life – these are the characteristics that generally define post-war man. To recognise this also means recognising that the main problem, the source of all others, is internal in nature: to rebel, to be reborn internally, to shape oneself, to create order and righteousness within oneself. Those who today still harbour illusions about the possibilities of a purely political struggle and about the power of this or that formula or system, without starting from a new human quality, have learned nothing from the lessons of the recent past. This is a principle that today, more than ever, should appear with absolute clarity: if a state had a political or social system that, in theory, was as perfect as possible, but in which the human substance was deficient, then sooner or later that state would descend to the level of the lowest societies, while, on the contrary, a people, a race capable of producing true men, men of sound intuition and sure instinct, would reach a high level of civilisation and stand firm in the face of the most arduous and calamitous trials, even if their political system were deficient or

imperfect. We must therefore take a clear stand against false "political realism", which thinks only in terms of programmes, problems, party organisation, and social and economic recipes. All this is contingent and not at all essential. What can still be saved depends, on the contrary, on the existence or otherwise of men who live not to preach formulas, but to be examples; not to meet the demagoguery and materialism of the masses, but to awaken different forms of sensitivity and interest. It is a question of rebuilding a new man from what, despite everything, still survives among the ruins, of animating him with a certain spirit and an adequate vision of life, of fortifying him through ironclad adherence to certain principles. This is the real problem.

3. The 'legionary spirit'

On a spiritual level, there is indeed something that can serve as a guide for the forces of resistance and uprising: the legionary spirit. It is the attitude of those who knew how to choose the hardest path, of those who knew how to fight even though they were aware that the battle was materially lost, of those who knew how to revive and validate the words of the old motto: Fidelity is stronger than fire, through which the traditional idea is affirmed that the sense of honour and shame, and not the meagre measures drawn from petty moralising, creates a substantial and existential difference between beings, almost as between one race and another. On the other hand, in all this, the realisation of those for whom the end appears as a means and the recognition of the illusory nature of the many myths leaves intact what they knew how to conquer for themselves, on the frontiers of life and death, beyond the world of contingency. These forms of spirit can constitute the foundations of a new unity. The essential thing is to assume them, apply them and extend them from wartime to peacetime, from this peace that is nothing more than a truce and a poorly contained disorder, until a discrimination and a new battlefield in formation are determined. This must be done in much more essential terms than those given in a "party", which can only be a contingent instrument in anticipation of certain political struggles; even in terms more essential than those represented by a simple "movement", if by "movement" we mean only a phenomenon of masses and aggregation, a quantitative rather than a qualitative phenomenon, based more on emotional factors than on severe and frank adherence to an idea. What we are dealing with is rather a silent revolution, one with deep roots; this revolution must result from the creation, within the individual, of the premises of an order that will then also have to assert itself externally; then, at the right moment, it will suddenly supplant the forms and forces of a world of decadence and subversion. The "style" that must prevail is that of those who remain faithful to themselves and to an idea, in deep contemplation; this style is born of a rejection of all compromise, in a total commitment that must manifest itself not only in political struggle but also in every expression of existence: in factories, laboratories, universities, streets, in the personal domain of affections and feelings. We must reach the point where the type of person we are talking about, who must be the cellular substance of our troops in formation, is recognisable, impossible to confuse, differentiated, and of whom it can be said: "here is someone who acts like a man of the movement".

This slogan, characteristic of the forces that dreamed of giving Europe a new order, but which was often distorted and hindered in its implementation by multiple factors, must be taken up again today. Today, fundamentally, conditions are better, because there are no misunderstandings and one need only look around, from the street to parliament, to see that vocations are being put to the test and to clearly understand the extent of what we 'should not' be. Faced with a rotten world whose principle is: 'do what you see others doing', or 'first the belly, then the skin (as Curzio Malaparte so often said), and then morality', or 'these are not times when one can afford the luxury of having a character', or, finally, 'I have a family to feed', we oppose this firm and clear rule of conduct: "We cannot act otherwise, this is our way, this is our way of being." Everything positive that can be achieved today or tomorrow will never be achieved through the skill of agitators and politicians, but through the natural prestige and recognition of the men of the previous generation, or, better still, of the new generations, men who will be capable of all this and who will provide a guarantee in favour of their idea.

4.- For a new aristocracy

It is, therefore, a new substance that must be affirmed, replacing the other, rotten and deviant one, created in a climate of betrayal and defeat, through a slow advance beyond the schemes, ranks and social positions of the past. It is a new figure that we must keep in mind in order to measure our own strength and vocation. It is important and fundamental to recognise that this figure has nothing to do with classes as social and economic categories, nor with the antagonisms that relate to them. This figure may manifest itself in the form of the rich or the poor, the worker or the aristocrat, the entrepreneur or the researcher, the technician, the theologian, the farmer, or the politician in the strict sense. But this new substance will undergo an internal differentiation, perfect when there is no doubt about the vocations to be followed and the functions of obedience and command, when the most pristine symbol of absolute authority reigns at the centre of the new hierarchical structures.

This defines a direction that is as anti-bourgeois as it is anti-proletarian, a direction totally free from democratic contamination and 'social' lies and, consequently, directed towards a clear, virile, articulate world, made by men and by leaders of men. We despise the bourgeois myth of 'security', of a petty, standardised, conformist, domesticated and 'moralised' life. We despise the bland bond characteristic of all collectivist and mechanistic systems and of all ideologies that give confused "social" values primacy over heroic and spiritual values, by means of which the type of true man, of the absolute person, must be defined in all domains. Something essential will be achieved when love for a style of active impersonality is reawakened, in which what counts is the work and not the individual, through which we are able to consider as important not ourselves, but the function, the responsibility, the task that is accepted, the goal that is pursued. Where this spirit is affirmed, many economic and social problems will be simplified,

which would remain unsolved if they were addressed from the outside, without first eliminating the ideological infection that, from the outset, undermines any return to normality and even the very perception of what normality means.

5.- The links in the chain of decline

Not only as a doctrinal orientation, but also with regard to the world of action, it is important that the men aligned with the new front accurately recognise the chain of causes and effects and the essential continuity of the current that has given rise to the various political forms that are today debated in the chaos of the parties. Liberalism, democracy, socialism, radicalism, and finally communism or Bolshevism have historically appeared only as degrees of the same evil, as stages that successively prepared the process of a fall. The beginning of this fall can be traced to the point at which Western man broke his ties with tradition, disregarded all higher symbols of authority and sovereignty, claimed for himself as an individual a vain and illusory freedom, and became an atom instead of an integral part of the organic and hierarchical unity of a whole. The atom, ultimately, had to collide with the mass of the remaining atoms, the other individuals, and sink into the realm of quantity, of mere numbers, of materialised mass, having no other god than the sovereign economy. And this process does not stop halfway. Without the French Revolution, liberalism and the bourgeois revolution, there would have been no constitutionalism and democracy; without democracy, neither socialism nor demagogic nationalism would have emerged; without the groundwork laid by socialism, neither radicalism nor, ultimately, communism would have come about. The fact that these forms appear today to be either supportive or antagonistic should not prevent the attentive observer from recognising that these forms remain united, interlinked, mutually conditioned, and merely express different degrees of the same current, of the same subversion of the normal and legitimate social order. Thus, the great illusion of our time is to believe that democracy and liberalism are the antithesis of communism and have the power to counteract the tide of the lowest forces, of what is commonly referred to as the 'progressive' movement. This is an illusion: it is as if someone were to say that twilight is the antithesis of night, that the incipient degree of an evil is the antithesis of its acute and endemic form, that a diluted poison is the antithesis of that same poison in its pure and concentrated state. The men of government in this 'liberated' Italy have learned nothing from recent history, whose lessons have been repeated everywhere ad nauseam, and they continue their touching game with outdated and vain political conceptions in a parliamentary carnival, like a danse macabre on a dormant volcano. For us, on the other hand, the courage of radicalism must be characteristic, the "no" said to political decadence in all its forms, whether from the left or from a supposed right. And above all, we must be aware that there can be no compromise with subversion, that making concessions today means condemning ourselves and being completely overwhelmed tomorrow. Intransigence of the idea, therefore, and swiftness in advancing with pure forces when the time is right. This naturally implies also ridding ourselves of the ideological distortion that is unfortunately widespread among a large part of our youth, and on the basis of which alibis are approved for destruction that has already taken place, maintaining the illusion that such destruction is, after all, necessary and will serve the

"Progress"; it is believed that we must fight for anything "new", hidden in an indeterminate future, and not for the truths we already possess, because these truths, although applied in various ways, have always and everywhere served as the basis for all types of upright social and political organisation. Reject these whims and laugh at those who accuse you of being "anti-historical" and "reactionary". History does not exist as a mysterious entity written with a capital letter. It is men, as long as they are really men, who make and unmake history; so-called 'historicism' is more or less the same as what is called 'progressivism' in left-wing circles, and today it only encourages passivity in the face of the current that is growing and always pushing downwards. And as for 'reactionism', ask yourselves:

Do you want us, while you act, destroying and desecrating, not to react, but to stand by and watch, and even encourage you by saying: bravo, keep going? We are not reactionaries, because the word is not strong enough and, above all, because we start from the positive, we represent the positive, real and original values that do not need any 'sun of the future' [reference to the slogan of the Italian Socialist Party. Ed.].

In the face of this radicalism, the antithesis between 'East' and 'West', between the red 'East' and the democratic 'West', seems irrelevant, and even a possible armed conflict between these two blocs seems tragically irrelevant to us. In the immediate future, the choice of the lesser evil certainly remains clear, because military victory for the 'East' would mean the immediate physical destruction of the last exponents of resistance. But, on an ideological level, Russia and North America must be seen as the two claws of the same pincer that is closing in on Europe. These strange and hostile forces act in two different but converging ways. The forms of standardisation, conformism, "democratic" levelling, productive frenzy, more or less tyrannical and explicit "brain trust", and practical materialism at the heart of Americanism can only serve to pave the way for the next phase, which is represented, in the same direction, by the purely communist ideal of the man-mass. The distinctive character of 'Americanism' is that its attack on quality and personality is not carried out through the brutal coercion of a Marxist dictatorship and state thinking, but almost spontaneously, through the channels of a civilisation that knows no higher values than wealth, performance and unlimited production, which is what Europe chose out of exasperation and reduction to absurdity, and in which the same motives have taken shape or are taking shape. But primitivism, mechanisation and brutality are present in both. In a sense, 'Americanism' is more dangerous than Bolshevism, being a kind of Trojan horse. When the attack on the residual values of European tradition is carried out in the direct and naked form characteristic of Bolshevik ideology and Stalinism, reactions are still aroused, certain lines of resistance which, although outdated, can be maintained. The same is not true when the same evil acts in a more subtle way and the transformations take place imperceptibly in the realm of customs and the general outlook on life, as is the case with Americanism. Suffering this influence under the banner of democratic freedom, Europe is predisposed to its final abdication, so much so that it may even happen that there will be no need for a military catastrophe, but rather through

"progressive" reaches, after a final social crisis, more or less the same point. Once again, nothing can be stopped halfway. Americanism, whether it likes it or not, works in favour of its apparent enemy, collectivism.

6.- Against the primacy of economics

Our radicalism of reconstruction demands that we compromise not only with any of the varieties of Marxist or socialist ideology, but also with what can generally be called the hallucination or demonism of economics. This is the idea that in individual and collective life, the economic factor is the most important, real and decisive; that the concentration of values and interests on the economic and productive level is not the unprecedented aberration of modern Western man, but something normal, not a brutal and eventual necessity, but something that is desired and exalted. Both capitalism and Marxism are trapped in this closed and dark circle. We must break this circle. As long as we talk only about economic classes, labour, wages, production, as long as we think that true human progress, the true elevation of the individual, is only conditioned by a particular system of distribution of wealth and goods and is related to poverty and welfare, to the state of prosperity or to utopian socialism, we will always remain on the level of what must be fought against. We affirm that everything that is economics and economic interest as mere satisfaction of animal needs has had, has, and will always have a subordinate function in a normal humanity; that beyond this sphere, a higher order of values must be differentiated, political, spiritual, and heroic, an order which, as we have already said, does not recognise or even admit 'proletarians' or 'capitalists' and that only in terms of this order should those things for which it is worth living and dying be defined; an order which must establish a true hierarchy, differentiate new dignities and, at the summit, enthrone the superior function of command, of Imperium. Thus, in this regard, many weeds that have also grown in our ranks must be uprooted. What else does this discourse on the 'State of Labour', 'national socialism', 'humanism of labour' and the like mean? What do these more or less explicit calls for a regression of politics within the economy mean, thus picking up on one of those problematic tendencies towards an 'integral corporatism' which is, at heart, leaderless and which, fortunately, has already found its path blocked in fascism? What is this idea of considering the formula of "socialisation" as a kind of universal panacea and elevating the "social idea" to the symbol of a new civilisation that, who knows how, should be beyond both the "East" and the "West"? These obscure points are present – it must be acknowledged – in not a few minds, including some on our own side. They think they are remaining faithful to a "revolutionary" slogan, when in reality they are only obeying suggestions stronger than themselves, which saturate a degraded political environment. And among these suggestions is the "social question" itself. When will people become aware of the truth, that Marxism did not arise because there was an objective social question, but rather that the social question arises—in countless cases—only because Marxism exists, that is, artificially, and yet in almost always insoluble terms, through the work of agitators (the famous "exciters of class consciousness") about whom Lenin

has expressed himself very clearly, refuting the spontaneous nature of proletarian revolutionary movements?

Based on this premise, action should be taken in the aforementioned sense of ideological deproletarianisation and the disinfection of the still healthy parts of the population from the socialist political virus. Only then can both reforms be studied and carried out safely, in accordance with true justice. Likewise, the corporate idea must be evaluated to see if it can be one of the bases of the reconstruction process: we understand corporatism not so much as a general system of static and almost bureaucratic equilibrium that maintains the harmful idea of opposing class formations, but as a desire to find, within the company itself, that unity, that solidarity of differentiated forces that capitalist malfesance (with the most recent and parasitic type of speculator and financial capitalist) on the one hand, and Marxist agitation on the other, have damaged and broken. It is necessary to restore to the company a form of almost military unity, in which the spirit of responsibility, energy and competence of those in charge is accompanied by the solidarity and loyalty of the labour forces associated around them in the common enterprise or mission. If we consider its legitimate and positive aspect, this is the meaning of 'socialisation'. But this designation, as we can see, is rather inappropriate, for it is more a question of an organic reconstruction of the economy and the enterprise, and we should beware of using this formula for mere propaganda purposes, flattering the spirit of sedition among the masses transformed into proletarian 'social justice'. The only real objective is the organic reconstruction of enterprise, and to achieve this objective it is not necessary to resort to formulas designed to stimulate, in the context of dirty electoral and propaganda manoeuvres, the spirit of sedition among the masses disguised as 'social justice'. In general, we should recover the same style of active impersonality, dignity and solidarity in production that was characteristic of the old guilds and associations of artisans and professionals. Trade unionism, with its 'struggle' and its authentic blackmail, of which we are offered too many examples today, must be outlawed. But, let us repeat, this must be achieved from within. The important thing is that, against all forms of resentment and social rivalry, each person should recognise and love their own role, the one that truly conforms to their own nature, thus recognising the limits within which they can develop their potential and achieve their own perfection; because a craftsman who performs his role perfectly is undoubtedly superior to a king who strays and does not live up to his dignity.

In particular, we can accept a system of technical competences and corporate representations to replace party parliamentarianism; but it must be borne in mind that technical hierarchies, as a whole, can mean nothing more than a degree in the integral hierarchy: they refer to the order of means, which must be subordinate to the order of ends, to which therefore corresponds the properly political and spiritual part of the State. To speak, then, of a 'state of labour' or 'production' is to make the part the whole and, by analogy, to reduce a human organism to its purely physical and vital functions. Such a choice, obscure and obtuse, cannot be our banner, any more than the social idea can be. The

The true antithesis, both to the 'East' and to the 'West', is not the 'social ideal'. Rather, it is the integral hierarchical idea. In this regard, no uncertainty is tolerable.

7.- The organic idea

If the idea of a virile and organic political unity was already an essential part of the world that was defeated – and we know that, among us, the Roman symbol was evoked once again – we must also recognise the cases in which this requirement was diverted and aborted in the wrong direction of 'totalitarianism'. This, again, is a point that must be seen clearly, so that the difference between the fronts is precise and no ammunition is supplied to those who want to confuse matters. Hierarchy is not hierarchism (an evil that, unfortunately, is trying to spread in our days), and the organic conception has nothing to do with a sclerosis of state idolatry or with levelling centralisation. As for individuals, true overcoming of both individualism and collectivism occurs only when men encounter men in the natural diversity of their being and dignity, with great importance being attached to the ancient principle that "the supreme nobility of leaders is not that of being masters of servants, but lords who also love the freedom of those who obey them". And as for the unity that must, as a general rule, prevent any form of dissociation and absolutisation of the particular, it must be essentially spiritual, it must be and have a central guiding influence, an impulse that, depending on the domain, takes on the most different forms of expression. This is the true essence of the 'organic' conception, as opposed to the rigid and intrinsic relationships characteristic of 'totalitarianism'. Within this framework, the demand for freedom and dignity of the human person, which liberalism can only conceive in individualistic, egalitarian and private terms, can be fully realised. It is in this spirit that the structures of a new political and social order, with solid and clear articulations, must be studied.

But these structures need a centre, a supreme point of reference. A new symbol of sovereignty and authority is needed. The slogan in this regard must be precise, since we cannot allow ideological distortions. It must be clearly stated that this is not primarily a question of the so-called institutional problem, but rather, above all, of what is necessary to achieve a specific 'atmosphere' that will enable the fluidity that should animate every relationship of loyalty, dedication, service and selfless action, so as to truly overcome the grey, mechanistic and twisted political and social world of today. This path will end in a dead end today if we are not able to assume a kind of asceticism of the pure idea. For many minds, a clear perception of the right direction is hampered both by some unfortunate precedents in our national traditions and by the tragic contingencies of the recent past. We are willing to admit the inconsistency of the monarchical solution, if we think of those who today only know how to defend the remnants of an idea, an empty and emasculated symbol, such as that of the constitutional and parliamentary monarchy. But, in the same way, we must declare our rejection of the republican idea. To be anti-democratic on the one hand, and on the other to defend 'ferociously' (such is unfortunately the terminology of some exponents of false intransigence)

the republican idea is an absurdity that is obvious to anyone: the republic (in its modern representation, since ancient republics were aristocracies – as in Rome – or oligarchies, often tyrannical in nature) essentially belongs to the world that emerged after Jacobinism and the anti-traditional and anti-hierarchical subversion of the 19th century. Let it then be left to that world, which is not ours. As for Italy, it is useless to play on ambiguity in the name of a supposed fidelity to the fascism of Salò, because if for this reason one were to follow the false republican path, one would be precisely unfaithful to something higher, one would throw away the central core of the ideology of the Ventennio, that is, its doctrine of the State as authority, power, imperium.

This is the doctrine that must be followed, without consenting to descend in level or play into the hands of any group. The specificity of the symbol, for now, can remain undetermined. Let us simply say: Leader, Head of State. Apart from this, the main and essential duty is to silently prepare the appropriate spiritual environment so that the symbol of intangible authority is perceived and resumes its full meaning: such a symbol could not correspond to the stature of any revocable "president" of the republic, nor to a tribune or popular leader, wielding a simple, formless individual power, deprived of superior charisma, a power based in fact on the precarious fascination he exercises over the irrational forces of the masses. This phenomenon, called by some "Bonapartism", has been rightly interpreted, not as the opposite of demagogic or "popular" democracy, but as its logical conclusion: "Bonapartism" is one of the grim manifestations of Spengler's "decline of the West". This is another touchstone and a test for our people: sensitivity to all this. Carlyle had already spoken of "the world of servants who want to be ruled by a pseudo-hero" rather than by a lord.

8.- The Homeland of the Idea

In a similar vein, another point must be clarified. This concerns the position that should be taken on nationalism and the generic idea of homeland. This is particularly relevant given that many, in an attempt to salvage what can still be salvaged, would like to revive a romantic, sentimental and at the same time naturalistic conception of the nation, an idea that is foreign to the highest European political tradition and difficult to reconcile with the very conception of the state that has been discussed. Apart from the fact that the idea of homeland is invoked among us, in a rhetorical and hypocritical manner, by the most opposed factions, and even by the representatives of red subversion, specifically speaking, this conception is not in keeping with the times, since, on the one hand, we are witnessing the formation of large supranational blocs, while, on the other hand, it is becoming increasingly necessary to find a European point of reference capable of uniting forces, beyond the inevitable particularism inherent in the naturalistic conception of the nation and, even more so, of 'nationalism'. But more essential is the question of principle. The political plane, as such, is that of higher units with respect to units defined in naturalistic terms, as is the case with those corresponding to the generic notions of nation, homeland and people. At this higher level, what unites and divides is the idea, an idea embodied by a particular elite that tends to take shape in the state. For this reason, fascist doctrine – faithful in this respect to the best European political tradition –

gives primacy to the Idea and the State over the nation and the people, and considers that the nation and the people only acquire meaning and form and participate in a higher degree of existence within the State. Precisely in periods of crisis such as the present one, it is necessary to remain firm in this doctrine. Our true homeland must be recognised in the Idea. What counts today is not the fact of belonging to the same land or speaking the same language, but the fact of sharing the same idea. Such is the basis, the starting point. To the collectivist unity of the nation *des enfants de la patrie*—in the form that has increasingly prevailed since the Jacobin revolution—we oppose something resembling an Order, men faithful to principles, witnesses to a higher authority and legitimacy derived precisely from the Idea. Although today it would be desirable, for practical purposes, to move towards a new national solidarity, in order to achieve it, no compromise should be made; the condition without which any result would be illusory is that a front defined by the Idea, as a political idea and vision of existence, should be isolated and take shape. Today there is no other way: it is necessary that, from among the ruins, the process of origins be renewed, that which, based on the elites and on a symbol of sovereignty and authority, united the peoples within the great traditional states, like so many forms emerging from the formless. This realism of the idea should not be understood as remaining on a plane that is, in essence, *infra-political*: the plane of naturalism and sentimentality, not to mention patriotic rhetoric.

And if we also wanted to base our idea on national traditions, we would have to be careful, because there is a whole 'national history' of Masonic and anti-traditional inspiration that specialises in attributing the Italian national character to the most problematic aspects of Italian history, starting with the rebellion of the communes supported by Guelphism. Thus, a tendentious "Italianness" comes to the fore, in which we, who have chosen the Roman symbol, cannot and do not want to recognise ourselves. We gladly leave that "Italianness" to those who, with the "liberation" and the partisan movement, have celebrated the "second Risorgimento". Idea, Order, elite, State, men of Order. These are the terms in which the fundamental line must be maintained, as long as possible.

9.- **Worldview and modern myths**

It is now necessary to discuss the problem of culture. Indeed, culture should not be overvalued. What we call "worldview" is not based on books; it is an inner form that can be found more authentically in a person without a particular culture than in an "intellectual" or a writer. One can attribute to the "free culture" available to everyone the unfortunate fact that individuals are defenceless against influences of all kinds, even when they are incapable of actively confronting them, of discriminating and judging according to fair criteria.

But this is not the place to dwell on this point. Suffice it to say that, as things stand, there are specific trends against which today's young people must defend themselves internally. We have already spoken of a style of righteousness and an inner attitude. Such a style implies right knowledge, and young people in particular must realise the intoxication wrought on an entire generation by the varieties of a distorted and false view of existence, varieties that have affected the

internal forces precisely at the point where their integrity would be most necessary. In one way or another, these toxins continue to act today in culture, science, sociology, and literature, as so many other sources of infection that must be denounced and neutralised. Apart from historical materialism and economism, which have already been discussed, other major sources of infection include Darwinism, psychoanalysis, existentialism and neo-realism.

Against Darwinism, the fundamental dignity of the human person must be vindicated, recognising their true place, which is not that of a particular and more or less evolved animal species among many others differentiated by 'natural selection' and which would remain linked to animalistic and primitive origins, but rather a status that virtually elevates them above the biological plane. Although Darwinism is not talked about much today, its substance endures. The Darwinian biological myth, in one or another of its variants, retains its precise value as dogma, defended by the anathemas of 'science' within the materialism of Marxist and American civilisation. Modern man has become accustomed to this degraded conception, recognises himself in it calmly and finds it natural.

Against psychoanalysis, the ideal of an ego that does not abdicate, that wants to remain conscious, autonomous and sovereign in the face of the nocturnal and subterranean part of its soul and in the face of the demon of sexuality, must prevail. that does not feel either 'repressed' or psychologically split, but rather achieves a balance of all its human faculties, ordered towards the realisation of a higher meaning of life and action. An obvious convergence can be pointed out: the discredit cast on the conscious principle of the person, the emphasis given by psychoanalysis and other similar schools to the subconscious, the irrational, the 'collective unconscious', etc., correspond, in the individual, exactly to what they represent in the modern social and historical world: the movement arising from below, subversion, the revolutionary replacement of the superior by the inferior, and contempt for all principles of authority. The same tendency operates on two different levels, and the effects cannot but integrate with each other.

As for existentialism, even though we may see it as a confused philosophy that until recently was confined to small groups of specialists, we must recognise in it the state of mind of a crisis that has been elevated to a system and adulated, the truth of a broken and contradictory human type, who suffers from anguish, tragedy and absurdity, a freedom before which he does not feel elevated, but rather condemned, with no way out and no responsibility, in the midst of a world deprived of value and meaning. All this, while the best of Nietzsche had already indicated a way to give meaning to existence, to give oneself a law and an intangible value in the face of radical nihilism, to encounter a positive existentialism and, according to his expression, of "noble nature". Such must be the directions to follow, which must not be intellectualised, but lived, integrated in their immediate meaning into one's inner life and one's own behaviour. It is not possible to rebel while remaining, in one way or another, under the influence of these false and deviant ways of thinking. But once detoxified, one can acquire clarity, righteousness and strength.

10.- Realism and anti-bourgeoisism

In the area between culture and custom, there is an attitude that needs to be clarified. Launched by communism, the slogan of anti-bourgeoisism has been taken up in the field of culture by certain "avant-garde" intellectual circles. There is a misunderstanding here. Given that the bourgeoisie occupies an intermediate position, there is a double possibility of overcoming the bourgeoisie, of saying "no" to the bourgeois type, to bourgeois civilisation, to the bourgeois spirit and values. One of these possibilities corresponds to the direction that leads even lower, towards a collectivised and materialised subhumanity, with its Marxist "realism": social and proletarian values against "bourgeois" and "imperialist" decadence. The other possibility is the direction of those who fight the bourgeoisie in order to effectively rise above it. The men of the new front will certainly be anti-bourgeois, but because of their superior, heroic and aristocratic conception of existence; they will be anti-bourgeois because they will despise the comfortable life; anti-bourgeois because they will follow not those who promise material advantages, but those who demand everything of themselves; anti-bourgeois, in short, because they will not be concerned with security, but will love the essential union between life and risk, at all levels, embracing the inexorability of the naked idea and precise action. Another aspect by which the new man, the cellular substance of the awakening movement, will be anti-bourgeois and will differ from the preceding generation will be his rejection of all forms of rhetoric and false idealism, his contempt for all the big words written with capital letters, for everything that is only gesture, effect, scenery. Renunciation and authenticity, on the contrary, new realism in the accurate assessment of the problems that will arise, so that what is important will not be appearance, but being, not verbiage, but silent and precise realisation, in tune with kindred forces and in adherence to the mandate coming from above.

Those who cannot react against leftist forces except in the name of idols, lifestyle, and the mediocre conformist modality of the bourgeois world have already lost the battle in advance. This is not the case for the man who stands tall, who has passed through the purifying fire of external and internal destruction. Politically, this man is not the instrument of a bourgeois pseudo-reaction. As a rule, he refers to forces and ideals that predate and transcend the bourgeois world and the economic era, and, relying on them, he draws lines of defence and consolidates the positions from which he will suddenly launch the action of reconstruction at the opportune moment. In this regard, we would also like to return to an unfulfilled slogan: because it is known that during the fascist period there was an anti-bourgeois tendency that would have liked to assert itself in a similar way. Unfortunately, here too, human substance was not up to the task. And it even managed to create a rhetoric of anti-rhetoric.

11.- Overcoming the secular state

Finally, let us briefly consider the issue of the relationship between the forces that have retained their integrity, that have not abdicated, and the dominant religion. For us, the secular state, in any of its forms, belongs to the past. In particular, we oppose one of its guises, which in certain circles is presented as the 'ethical state', the product of a weak, spurious, empty and confused

"idealist" philosophy, once allied with fascism, but whose nature is such that it can facilitate comparable support, in the context of a simple "dialectical" game, to the anti-fascism of a Croce. This philosophy is nothing more than a product of the secular and humanist bourgeoisie, to which is added the presumption of the "free thinking" of a "high school teacher" in the throes of celebrating the infinity of the "Absolute Spirit" and the "Pure Act": there is nothing real, clear, or hard in this philosophy.

But while we oppose such ideologies and the secular state, we also do not accept a clerical or clericalist state. The religious factor is necessary as the foundation for a true heroic conception of life, essential to our struggle. It is necessary to feel within ourselves the evidence that beyond this earthly life there is a higher life; only those who feel this way possess an unbreakable strength, and only they will be capable of absolute impulse - when this is lacking, the challenge to death and contempt for one's own life is possible only in sporadic moments of exaltation or in the face of the unleashing of irrational forces; there is no discipline that can be justified in the individual without a higher and autonomous meaning. But this spirituality, which must be alive among us, has no need for obligatory dogmatic formulations or a specific religious confession; the lifestyle that must be developed is in no way that of Catholic moralism, which goes no further than a 'virtuous' domestication of the human animal.

Politically speaking, this spirituality cannot help but feel distrustful of everything that can be deduced from certain aspects of the Christian conception of humanitarianism, jusnaturalismo, equality, the ideal of love and forgiveness, instead of the ideal of honour and justice. Certainly, if Catholicism were capable of distancing itself from the contingent and political plane, if it were capable of embracing an ascetic elevation and if it were capable, on this basis, as a continuation of the spirit of the best of the medieval Crusaders, to convert faith into the soul of an armed bloc of forces, of a new Templar Order, compact and inexorable against the currents of chaos, abandonment, subversion and practical materialism of the modern world, and even if, as a minimum condition, Catholicism remained faithful to the position of the Syllabus, then there would not be a moment's doubt as to the option to follow. But as things stand, given the mediocre and, at heart, bourgeois and petty level to which practically everything that is confessional religion has descended today, given the modernist submission and increasing openness to the left of the post-conciliar Church of the "aggiornamento", a mere reference to the spirit will suffice for our men, and it will serve precisely as evidence of a transcendent reality, which must be invoked not for mystical evasion or as a humanitarian alibi, but to infuse new strength into our strength, to sense that our struggle is not purely political, to attract an invisible consecration upon a new world of men and leaders of men.

These are some essential guidelines for the struggle that is to be fought, written above all with special attention to young people, so that they may take up the torch and the slogan of those who have not yet given up, learning from the mistakes of the past, knowing how to discriminate and foresee everything that has been experienced and is still being experienced today in terms of contingent situations. The essential thing is not to descend to the level of your adversaries, not to limit yourself to following simple slogans, not to insist on

excessive focus on the past which, although worthy of remembrance, does not have the current and impersonal value of a powerful idea; in short, not giving in to the suggestions of false political realism, a problem shared by all "parties". Certainly, it is necessary for our forces to also take part in the political and polemical struggle, in order to create as much space as possible in the current situation and contain the advance of the leftist forces. But beyond this, it is important and essential that an elite be formed which, with fierce intensity, will define, with absolute intellectual rigour and intransigence, the idea around which it is necessary to unite, and will affirm this idea above all in the form of the new man, the man of resistance, the man standing among the ruins. If we are able to overcome this period of crisis and of faltering and illusory order, only this type of man will have a future. But even if the destiny that the modern world has created for itself, and which overwhelms everything, cannot be contained, thanks to such premises, our inner positions will remain intact: in any circumstance, what must be done will be done, and we will thus belong to that homeland that no enemy will ever be able to occupy or destroy.

NOTES ON THE 'DIVINITY' OF THE MOUNTAIN JULIUS EVOLA

In an editorial published in the C.A.I. magazine, S.E. Manaresi has effectively highlighted a point that we cannot overemphasise today: the need to overcome the limiting duality represented, on the one hand, by the scholar, drained and separated – in his 'culture' made up of words and books – from the deepest forces of the body and life; and, on the other hand, by the purely athletic man, developed in a purely physical and athletic discipline, healthy but deprived of any higher point of reference. Beyond the one-sidedness of these two types, today we are seeking to achieve something more complete: a type in which the spirit is transformed into strength and life, and physical discipline, for its part, becomes the channel, symbol and, we might almost say, 'rite' for spiritual discipline. S.E. Manaresi has also had the opportunity to say on many occasions that, among the various sports, mountaineering is surely the one that offers the broadest and most immediate possibilities for gender integration. In reality, the grandeur, silence and power of the great mountains naturally incline the spirit towards that which is not exclusively human, bringing the best of us to the point where the physical ascent, with all that it presupposes in terms of courage, overcoming and lucidity, and an inner elevation become integral and inseparable parts of one and the same thing. Now, it may be interesting to highlight that these ideas, which today are beginning to be emphasised by representative figures for the proper guidance of the best of the new generations, simultaneously reach a background of ancient tradition... something that can be called 'traditional' in the broadest sense of the term. If the ancients knew mountaineering only by way of exception and in an entirely rudimentary form, they nevertheless possessed, in the most vivid way, the sacred and symbolic meaning of the mountain, and the idea, in that case symbolic, of climbing the mountain and residing on the mountain as something characteristic of the "mountaineer".

the most vivid sense of the sacred and symbolic meaning of the mountain, and the idea, in this case symbolic, of climbing the mountain and residing on the mountain as something characteristic of "heroes", of "initiates", of beings - in short - who were considered to have overcome the limits of the common and grey life of the "plains".

In these pages, therefore, it will not be out of place to make a brief reference to the traditional concept of the divinity of the mountain, taken outside of symbols, in its internal sense: because this will allow us to define and specify something of the internal and spiritual aspect of those vicissitudes, of which the description or technical mountaineering account represents only the external aspect and, we might almost say, the *caput mortuum*.

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The concept of the divinity of mountains comes, uniformly in the East and West, from Far Eastern traditions to those of the Aztecs of pre-Columbian America, from Egyptian to Nordic-Germanic Aryan, from Hellenic to Iranian and Hindu: in the form of myths and legends about the mountain of 'the gods' or the mountain of 'the heroes', about the summit of those who 'are carried away by ecstasy', or about the places where mysterious forces of 'glory' and 'immortality' are found. The general basis for the symbolism of the mountain is simple: with the earth assimilated to all that is human (as, for example, in the ancient etymologies that derive 'man' from 'humus'), the culminations of the earth towards the sky, transfigured into eternal snows—the mountains—must spontaneously present themselves as the most suitable material for expressing through allegories the transcendent states of consciousness, inner overcoming, or the appearances of supra-normal modes of being, often represented figuratively as 'gods' and deities. Hence we have not only mountains as "symbolic seats" - let us note - of the "gods", but we also have traditions, such as those of the ancient Aryans of Iran and Media who, according to Xenophon, did not know temples for their divinity, but precisely on the summits; on the mountain peaks they celebrated worship and sacrifice to Fire and the God of Light: seeing in them a place more dignified, grandiose and analogically closer to the divine than any construction or temple made by men.

For Hindus, the divine mountain is, as is well known, the Himalayas, a name that in Sanskrit means "The seat of the snows"; within it, Meru is, specifically, the sacred mountain. Here we must take two points into account. First of all, Mount Meru is conceived as the place where Shiva, imagined as the 'great ascetic', carried out his meditations, after which he struck down Kama, the Hindu Eros, when he tried to open the spirit to passion. On this supreme summit of the world, still untouched by human feet, we see how, in the Hindu tradition, the very idea of absolute asceticism coincides with the virile purification of a nature already inaccessible to all that is passion and desire, and therefore "stable" in a transcendent sense. Thus, in the very ancient Vedic formulas for the consecration of kings, we see the image of the "mountain" appearing precisely because of the solidity of the power and imperium that the king will assume. On the other hand, in the Mahabharata we see Arjuna ascending the Himalayas to achieve his spiritual exaltation, it being said that "only on the high mountain could he have attained

divine vision"; in the same way that Emperor Yudhisthira heads for the Himalayas to consummate his apotheosis and ascend to the "chariot" of the "king of the gods".

Secondly, it should be noted that the Sanskrit expression *paradesha* means elevated region, supreme region and thus, in a specific material sense, mountain height. But *Paradesha* can be etymologically assimilated to the Chaldean *pardés*, from which the term "paradise" derives, which passes, in theological forms, into successive Hebrew-Christian beliefs. In the original Aryan idea of "paradise," we find, therefore, an intimate association with the concept of "heights," of summits: an association that, as is well known, is clearly found again in the Doric-Achaean conception of "Olympus." In this latter regard, something should be said about the Hellenic traditions concerning those "rapt away on the mountain." It is known that the Hellenes—like, moreover, almost all the ancient Aryans—had an evidently aristocratic conception of the afterlife. As a destiny for the few—for those who had in no way risen above ordinary life—Hades had been conceived, that is, a residual and larval existence after death, deprived of true consciousness, in the underground world of shadows. Immortality, apart from that of the Olympians, was a privilege of the 'heroes', that is, an exceptional achievement of a few superior beings. Now, in the most ancient Hellenic traditions, we find that the immortality of the 'heroes' is specifically deduced from the symbol of their ascent to the mountains and their 'disappearance' in the mountains. Thus, the mystery of the 'heights' returns because, on the other hand, in that same 'disappearance' we must see a material symbol of spiritual transfiguration.

To disappear, or 'become invisible', or 'be caught up in the heights', is not something to be taken literally, but essentially means to be transferred, virtually, from the visible world of particular bodies and common human experience to the supersensible world in which 'death does not exist'.

And this tradition is not unique to Greece. In Buddhism, there is the "Mount of the Vate", where men who have attained spiritual awakening "disappear", called by *Majjihimonikajo* "more than men, undefeated and untouched beings, unattainable to desires, redeemed". Far Eastern Taoist traditions, originating from Mount Kuen-Lun, where legendary "royal" beings are said to have found the "drink of immortality": is somewhat similar to what we find in Eastern Islamic traditions regarding the "rapture" on the mountain of beings who united the initiation of purity and were carried away to the peaks upon their death. The ancient Egyptians spoke of a mountain (*Set Amentet*) crossed by a path, along which beings destined for 'solar' immortality reached the 'land of triumph' where, according to a hieroglyphic inscription, 'the chiefs who preside over the throne of the great god proclaim eternal life and power for them'. Crossing the Atlantic, in pre-Columbian Mexico, we find, with remarkable consistency, the same symbols: essentially, on the great mountain of *Culhuacan*, or "curved mountain," because its summit slopes downward, expressing the fact that height was conceived as a "divine" point that nevertheless retained connections with the lower regions. On a similar mountain, according to these ancient

American traditions, certain Aztec emperors would have disappeared without a trace. Now, as is well known, this same theme is found in the legends of our Western Roman-Germanic Middle Ages: certain mountains, such as the Kuffhauser or the Odenberg, are the places where certain kings who would attain symbolic significance, such as Charlemagne, King Arthur, Frederick I and II, would have been "carried away" and thus "never died" and awaited their hour to manifest themselves visibly. Also in the cycle of the Grail legend is the "mountain" in Montsalvat, which, according to Guénon, can be given the meaning of "Mountain of Health" or "Salvation"; the battle cry of medieval chivalry was Mont-joie, and in a legend which naturally has no historical basis, but which is nonetheless rich in spiritual significance, the fact of having passed through the "mountain" would have constituted the action preceding Arthur's sacred and Roman "imperial" coronation. Here we cannot dwell on the specific internal aspect of these latter symbolic myths, especially those referring to the "lost" kings who will reappear, a subject which, moreover, we have dealt with exhaustively elsewhere; but we will note, in general, how the theme of the mountain conceived as the seat of immortality returns, and how the ancient Hellenic tradition relating to "heroes" also returns.

We will say a little more about two points: the mountain as the seat of haoma and 'glory', and the mountain as Valhalla.

The Iranian term haoma, equivalent to the Sanskrit soma, refers to the aforementioned 'drink of immortality'. In those ancient Aryan doctrines, there is an association of diverse concepts, partly real and partly symbolic, partly material and partly susceptible to being translated in terms of effective spiritual experience. Hindu traditions speak of soma, for example, either as a "god" or as the juice of a plant capable of producing particular effects of exaltation, which were taken into spectacular consideration by rites of internal transfiguration capable of providing a premonition and, we might almost say, a presentation of what immortality means. Well, for the same reason that Buddha does not come to compare the state "that is neither here nor there, neither coming nor going, but quiet enlightenment as in an infinite ocean" (nirvana) in the high mountains, so we in the Yaçna also read that the mysterious haoma grows in the high mountains. In other words, once again we find the association of the idea of heights with the idea of an enthusiasm capable of transfiguring, exalting, guiding towards that which is not only human, mortal and contingent. And so from Iran we move on to Greece, where in the early Dionysian period we find the same theme, inasmuch as, according to the most ancient testimonies, those who were carried away by the "divine fury of Dionysus" at the festivals were drawn to the wild peaks of the Thracian mountains as if possessed by a strange and overwhelming power arising from the depths of their own souls.

But there is something else that rectifies what may be decomposed and not completely pure at the 'Dionysian' level; this is the Iranian concept set out in the Yasht regarding the mountain, 'the mighty Mount Ushi-darena', which is, moreover, the seat of 'glory'.

It should be noted that in the Iranian tradition, 'glory' - hvarenó or farr - was not an abstract concept: on the contrary, it was conceived as a real and almost physical force, although invisible and of 'non-human' origin, generally carried by the luminous Aryan race but, eminently, by the kings, priests and leaders of that race. One sign testifies to the presence of 'glory': victory. 'Glory' was attributed a solar origin, as the sun was seen as the symbol of a luminous entity, triumphing over darkness every morning. Transposing these concepts sub specie interioritatis, 'glory' - hvarenó - therefore expressed the property conquered by the dominant races or natures, in which superiority is power ('victory') and power is superiority, 'triumphantly', as in the solar and immortal beings of the sky. Well, this is what is said in the Yashts, that not only does the haoma plant – of the 'Dionysian' states – 'grow' on the mountain, but that the most powerful mountain, Ushi-darena, is the seat of Aryan 'glory'. We come to the last point. The mountain as Valhalla.

The word Walhalla (Walhöll) is prominent throughout Richard Wagner's works, in which, however, the ancient Norse-Scandinavian concepts of the Eddas, from which Wagner draws much of his inspiration and which are susceptible to deeper meanings, are distorted and 'literalised' in many places.

Walhalla literally meant 'the palace of the fallen', of which Odin was the king and leader. It is the concept of a privileged place of immortality (here, as in Hellenic traditions, for ordinary beings there is nothing after death but a dark and mediocre existence in Niflheim, the Norse Ades), reserved for nobles and essentially for heroes who have fallen on the battlefield. Almost like the saying that "the blood of heroes is closer to God than the ink of the wise and the prayers of the devout", in these ancient traditions the most pleasing worship and sacrifice to the supreme deity - Odin-Wotan or Tiuz - and the most fruitful in otherworldly rewards was to die in war. Those who fell for Odin were transformed into his 'sons' and immortalised alongside the deified kings in Valhalla, a place often assimilated with Asgard, the city of the Aesir, that is, of the luminous divine beings in perpetual struggle against the Elementarwesen, the dark creatures of the earth.

However, the very concepts of Valhalla and Asgard originally appear in an immediate relationship—once again—with the mountain, to the point that Valhalla appears as the name of Swedish and Scandinavian peaks and ancient mountains, such as Helgafell, Krosshölar and Hlidskjalf, which were conceived as the seat of heroes and deified princes. Asgard often appears in Edda as Glitmirbjörg, the 'shining mountain', or Himinbjörg, where the idea of a mountain and that of a luminous sky, of a celestial luminous quality, merge. The central theme of Asgard remains that of a towering mountain, on whose frozen summit, above the clouds and snow, an eternal light shines. Thus, the 'mountain' as Valhalla is also the place where the self-styled Wildes Heer bursts forth and returns to settle. This is an ancient popular Nordic concept, expressed in the superior form of an army commanded by Odin and made up of fallen heroes. According to this tradition, the heroic sacrifice of blood (what in our Roman traditions was called the mors triumphalis, and by which the initiate

victorious over death was assimilated to the figure of heroes and victors) also serves to increase with new forces that irresistible spiritual army - the Wildes Heer - which Odin, god of battles, needs to achieve an ultimate and transcendent goal: to fight against the ragna rökk, that is, against the destiny of the "darkening" of the divine that corresponds to the world of distant ages.

Through these traditions, united in their intimate meaning rather than in their external mythological form, we arrive at the highest concept of the cycle of myths about the divinity of the mountain; and we will affirm that we personally find, in our nostalgic memories of war in the high mountains, almost an echo of this distant reality. The seat of dawn, of heroism, and, if necessary, of heroic, transfiguring death, a place of 'enthusiasm' that tends towards transcendent states, of naked ascent and triumphant solar force opposed to the paralysing forces that darken and brutalise life... Such, then, is the symbolic feeling of the mountain among the ancients, resulting from a circle of legends and myths endowed with great uniformity, of which those cited are but a few chosen from a very extensive list.

Naturally, it is not a question of dwelling on anachronistic recollections... but neither is it a question of curious searches for simple historical erudition. Behind the myth and behind the symbol conditioned by time there is a "spirit" that can always be revived and effectively expressed in new forms and new actions. This, precisely, is what matters. That mountaineering does not amount to the desecration of the mountain; that those who, darkly driven by an instinct to overcome the limitations that suffocate us in the mechanised, bourgeois and intellectualised life of the 'plains', go upwards in courageous physical effort, in lucid tension and lucid control of their internal and external forces, over rocks, ridges and walls in the imminence of the sky and the abyss, towards the icy clarity... that those who are always able to rekindle themselves today and act luminously according to those deep sensations that remain at the roots of the ancient mythological deifications of the mountain: this is the best augury that can be made for our younger generations.

For an ontology of technology
Mastery of nature and the nature of mastery in the thought
by
Julius
Evola
by **Giovanni Monastra**
Diorama Letterario, no. 72, 1984.

When attempting to address a particular aspect of Julius Evola's thinking—the genesis and meaning of technology, especially from the perspective of values—one cannot ignore the overall form of this author's doctrinal system, as well as his most profound assumptions. Evola is not only an organic and comprehensive scholar

scholar, but also a thinker whose cultural roots are deeply embedded in a set of values defined as 'traditional', which are completely foreign to those that currently dominate. In stark contrast to the 'modern' philosopher, guided only by his own subjective view of the world and concerned with being 'original' and asserting 'new things', Evola instead refers, as the basis for his reflections and assessments, to a core of ideas or principles of wisdom considered timeless and objective because of their transcendent origin.

Naturally, the traditional kosmos has been filtered by the Italian scholar according to his particular sensibility ("personal equation") or "own nature," characterised by man directed towards conquest, towards action, under the guidance of a lucid and firm will, a propensity that can also be expressed on the intellectual plane. Thus, Evola elaborates a conception of Tradition that is energising and dynamic, animated and invaded by the symbols of metaphysical Power.

In certain respects, this conception may differ, but more in appearance than in substance, from that of René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon or Ananda Coomaraswamy, scholars characterised by a priestly spirit, that is, contemplative or speculative. And, perhaps it is precisely this particular and suggestive version of Tradition, proposed by our author, that has sometimes distracted the attention of more superficial readers (and sometimes those acting in bad faith) from the essence of Evola's doctrine, which is of a sapiential nature, in favour of purely marginal and external aspects, the meaning of which can only be understood within the context of his own 'worldview'. Tradition, according to Evola's definition, "is in its essence something meta-historical and, at the same time, dynamic: it is a general ordering force based on principles that have the mark of a higher legitimacy - if you like, you can also say: principles from above - a force that acts across generations, in continuity of spirit and inspiration, through institutions, laws, and orders that may present a notable variety and diversity."¹ Tradition, therefore, is a reality of a spiritual order, active and operative in the world ("immanent transcendence"), not a pedantic collection of customs and traditions dignified by the mere fact that, in the past, they were adopted by entire generations. The latter, rather than tradition in the strict sense, is in reality only a "democracy of the dead," according to Chesterton's apt definition.

Since the ideas of force, power, and domination, entities always assumed in their metaphysical valences (in analogy with the Roman numen), are central to Evola's thought, we will follow this particular perspective in our study. It is precisely this shift upwards, this verticalisation of such entities (force, power, domination) in the spiritual dimension, beyond all materialistic-authoritarian trivialisation, that is most evident in the severe judgement that Evola formulates in his early books, during his so-called 'philosophical period', on technology, the illusion of power of the Faustian and Promethean man. In *Essays on Magical Idealism* (1925) we find the following statement:

'Finally, we must disillusion those who fantasise about the realisation of any power through the exploitation of the forces of Nature,

which comes from the applications of physical and chemical sciences (that is, from technology) [...] the infinite affirmation of man through indeterminate series of mechanisms, technical devices, etc. is [...] a tribute of servitude and obedience."

Through technology, which is based on modern science, man establishes an "extrinsic, indirect and violent relationship"³ with Nature, which takes the form of a crude possession of physical reality, since it acts on the latter from outside, whereas in the traditional world man operates "from within, from the level of that metaphysical productivity on which the phenomenon or the physical depends,"⁴ that is, acting directly on the subtle root that lies behind and within physical reality, symbol of a higher, metaphysical reality. Technology is therefore an illusion of power, a mirage of man solidified in his closed ego: it is involution, regression, weakness, if viewed from the perspective of Tradition.

It can also be read in the magazine "La Torre" (1930, no. 9):

"The machine [...] fosters, in the context of an illusion of external and mechanical power, the impotence of man; it materially multiplies his possibilities to infinity, but in reality accustoms him to renouncing any action of his own [...]. The machine is immoral because it can make an individual powerful without simultaneously making him superior."

Thus, we touch upon an essential aspect of Evola's thinking: power must be an attribute linked to an intimate and profound spiritual superiority. Power without superiority, which operates as its cause and justification, is equivalent to pure titanism, becoming brutal, materialistic, and at the same time foolish prevarication, as it turns against man himself, damaging him spiritually.

The ancient myth of Prometheus stealing fire from Zeus is extremely enlightening in this regard. The Greek Hesiod, Evola reminds us, characterises this inner habit as characteristic of an 'active, inventive, cunning mind that wants to deceive the nous of Zeus, that is, the Olympian mind. But this cannot be deceived or shaken. It is firm and calm like a mirror; it discovers everything without seeking; indeed, everything is discovered in it. The Titanic spirit, on the contrary, is invention, even if it is only a well-constructed lie."

Everything that is twisted and opaque is characteristic of it, in opposition to Olympian essentiality and transparency. The counterpart of the Titanic spirit is stupidity, recklessness, clumsiness, inner myopia: in short, we could say, the inability to see far ahead.

After Prometheus' sacrilegious act, his brother, his alter ego, Epimetheus, remains, representing the lineage of men and symbolising stupidity, as the counterpart of cunning, which arouses only the laughter of the gods, what Evola calls "the laughter of eternal forms". Similarly, technology, from this perspective, is foolish cunning, intelligent stupidity, which cannot see into the future or understand the effects of its own actions on the world and on nature.

But what processes have led man to this "conquest"? Here Evola provides us with a first version in *Imperialismo Pagano* (1928): the germ that triggers the technicist disease, in his view, is Judeo-Christianity. In this regard, for a historical and cultural framing of this topic, it seems appropriate to recall that this assertion has had very authoritative supporters, both before and after Evola. For example, the German Jewish philosopher Max Scheler had previously written that the idea of 'violent' domination over nature derives historically from Judaism. In fact, the religious world of ancient Israel first desacralised nature, denying the immanent aspect of God, with all its logical consequences, as observed by the Christian theologian Sergio Quinzio, who identifies the cultural foundations of modernity in Judaism. It should be noted, however, in order to avoid misunderstandings, that by the term 'technique', Evola means that set of knowledge and activities determined by the Faustian conception of the world, which is therefore very different as Oswald Spengler had already noted, from archaic technology, which respected Nature, did not seek to alter it, and instead inserted itself into its rhythms.

Modern technology requires an essential assumption: that Nature is no longer "a great animated and sacred body, a visible expression of the invisible"¹¹, but rather a lifeless agglomeration of material objects, a desacralised, almost hostile steppe, which man no longer sees as a place of "manifestations of elemental powers" with which to interact, according to the words of J. Ortega y Gasset, but as a reality in itself, independent of the spiritual world of those who know it (radical dualism).

Christianity, in its polemical anti-pagan zeal, deepening a path already opened by Judaism, has killed Nature, turning it into a dead thing from which God has withdrawn: "Christianity has torn the spirit from this world"¹³. Nature becomes the realm of sin and temptation, in dualistic opposition to the world of the Spirit. With this justification, the path was ready that would lead to brutal technical domination over Nature, whose first steps—we would say—were the assimilation of living beings to machines and of Nature to a random conglomeration of atoms, according to what the philosopher Democritus had already stated in ancient times, who, moreover, was rightly never listened to. Technology, therefore, did not arise by chance in the West, where the Christian religion has taken hold, which, as has been said, shares with the technical-scientific mentality the "dualistic assumption". Furthermore, since technology is 'impersonal' and 'transitive', i.e. adoptable by anyone, it also requires an egalitarian assumption, which, according to Evola, can also be traced back to Christianity (the 'Bolshevism of antiquity', as Spengler called it). Therefore, the democratic-egalitarian mentality in the field of knowledge and the separatist obsession that has created a clear and arbitrary division between the self and the world (solidifying the two poles into a Subject and an Object that are ontologically different, indeed opposites, and therefore deprived of any intrinsic relationship) are the causes of technicality.

Subsequently, in *Rebellion Against the Modern World* (1934), Evola re-evaluated his harsh criticism of Christianity, while still highlighting the harmful effects of the hypostatisation of the "two orders, natural and supernatural" separated by a deep chasm, characteristic of Christian doctrine, which owes much to Hebrew dualism, restless and excessive, always in sharp conflict between "spirit" and "flesh". Rather, alongside the responsibilities of Christianity, he also highlighted those of humanism and "rationalism", born in the "classical" Greek world, from which factors later became an integral part of technicality (for example, the mechanistic conception of the world) emanated.

But beyond these historical origins, it is true that technology was born in the West also because, in a certain sense, it refers to the nature of Western peoples, who have always been animated by a "will to infinity," by a tension toward domination, which was also expressed in the conquest of overseas colonies.

What did this tension, which in Roman times had also maintained a balance between interiority and exteriority, bring about, which would be discharged only onto the world, also through technology? Evola provides his own answer. 'When the human gaze detached itself from transcendence, the irrepressible will to infinity inherent in [Western] man had to be discharged externally and translated into a tension, an irrepressible impulse [...] in the realm immediately below that of pure spirituality and contemplation, that is, in the realm of action and will. Hence the activist deviation, hence [...] the perennial Faustian dissatisfaction.'

Although written with the intention of analysing mainly the phenomenon of white colonial supremacy, the above excerpt, in our opinion, is also enlightening for understanding the other aspect of the genesis of technicality. The picture thus becomes more complete: to egalitarianism and the separative I-world dualism is added a historical contingency (or a meta-historical necessity?): the progressive secularisation of European man since the Renaissance, grafted onto his particular dynamic and active nature.

In this vein, we could also add that technology represents the solidification and materialisation of the subtle magical practices of direct action on Nature, typical of all traditional societies, which have been illicitly downgraded due to a distortion and mystification of these practices.

The evolutionary conception, therefore, differs both from any regressive, anti-technological utopia of a Rousseauian egalitarian stamp, based on the Enlightenment myth of the 'noble savage' and the 'state of nature', realities that never existed, and from anti-egalitarian ideologies of a technological nature or, in any case, positively oriented towards technology as such. In the latter case, we think of the theories of Arnold Gehlen, according to whom technology is a fruit of human nature and part of it, just as claws and horns are expressions of the nature of the animals that possess them. In this regard, it would be extremely interesting to draw a parallel between the conceptions of Gehlen and those of Evola, two theorists united in their struggle against egalitarianism and enlightenment, but

nevertheless extremely distant in their respective doctrinal foundations: the former vitalist, the latter a follower of supernaturalist and transcendental principles. From all that has been said, it might seem that Evola simply belongs to the large group of critics of modern technology, from Sombart to Péguy, from Scheler to Ortega y Gasset, from Spengler to Berdiaev, exponents of anti-modern, organicist and aristocratic thought. But this is a mistake. A peculiar characteristic of Evola was, in fact, always that of observing events in depth in order to eventually grasp unusual directions, unthinkable because they were positive in their general negativity. In our specific case, one stimulus was certainly Ernst Jünger's famous book, *The Worker*, published in 1932. But it would be superficial to believe that Evola made a banal transcription and passive assimilation of Jünger's themes into his own thought. It would be more accurate to speak of natural affinities and complementarity between two conceptions (in many respects still anchored in the 1930s) with the same order of values. Inserting some of Jünger's insights into the cyclical-involutive vision of human history characteristic of Tradition (the current era would be the dark age, the terminal phase of the entire cycle, dominated by materialism and the subversion of all order in the higher sense), Evola observes that technology has two faces: alongside the one already examined, another emerges, also disturbing, dissolving for the mass man, but a useful stimulus and testing ground for the differentiated man, who, even living in the modern world, feels within himself the values of Tradition as entities that are still operative and active. Well, returning to a Jungian idea, Evola observes that technology, as an already autonomous and global dimension that violently rebels against the very fabric of life, can develop an important destructive action on the typical human figure of bourgeois society: the atom-individual. This is a profoundly undifferentiated being, a numerical unit dissolved from any organic connection with the whole, diversified from his peers (the masses) only by external, labile, subjectivist factors closely linked to the non-values of the bourgeois world.

In Evola's conception of history, technology thus becomes a means of reaching, sometimes actively, the zero point of values, the end of a world, the bourgeois-proletarian, placed in the terminal, descending phase of the current historical cycle. We will see later that, alongside this dissolving action, which, using Hindu terminology, we can place under the sign of Shiva, technology can develop another, positive action in the "formative" sense.

But what causes this destructive attack on the individual? It is a repulsive factor, present in technology: the elemental. In this context, it means 'primitive', but 'it rather designates the deepest powers of reality, which fall outside intellectual and moral structures and are characterised by a transcendence that is both positive and negative with respect to the individual: just as when we speak of the elemental forces of nature'. The bourgeois, locked in his rationalist citadel, in his vacuous intimacy, his small soul directed towards small things, towards the useful, towards the safe, is terrified of the elemental and keeps it at a distance, 'whether it appears to him in the form of power and passion, or whether it manifests itself in the forces of nature, in fire, in water, in earth, in air'.²⁰

This disturbing reality has a dual origin: internal and external to the human soul. The bourgeoisie has tried to exorcise it, to exclude it, but has failed. Thus today the elemental re-emerges in all its manifestations, sometimes brutal, through the excessive power of technology, born as a useful tool for man and now a threatening enemy of his inner structure, as well as his physical structure, as in the case of modern warfare, warfare no longer of men, but of machines, technical warfare, in which the individual, as such, disappears.

But not all men are equally vulnerable: technology can in fact be a testing ground for those who are not broken, those who maintain within themselves a core of ascetic hardness, even if only potential, of detachment from the world, but who do not belong to it. Thus, if many, under the pressure of the elemental forces unleashed by machine civilisation, are inwardly annihilated, de-individualised towards the bottom, that is, towards standardisation placed below the individual, with the creation of an 'empty, mass-produced human type [...] an insignificant, multipliable product', for others 'de-individualisation can nevertheless take an active and positive course'.

This second possibility, born of the union between life and risk, which derives from a continuous challenge with the elemental (in practice: with the machine, in the broadest sense of the term), can take shape in a new form, the absolute person, "characterised by two elements: first, by extreme lucidity and objectivity, and second, by an ability to act and stand firm, drawing on deep forces beyond the categories of the individual, ideals, values and the ends of bourgeois civilisation"²².

Only this transfigured being, also in the features of the face, severe and impassive, will be able to master technology without being contaminated by it. Its presence could set a new course for history, giving rise to a true and proper mutation of civilisation. Moreover, where pure and opaque materiality seemed to reign, new symbols become transparent, which the differentiated man must perceive: in effect, the machine, seen with new eyes, represents an expression of the essentialisation to which one must aspire: no bourgeois tinsel, superfluous, arbitrary, subjective, nothing "picturesque" or "funny" (think of a large factory or a shipyard), only an elemental force, the expression of a creative idea, of a precise purpose, of a cold and objective activity.

"On its plane, it thus reflects in a certain way the very value that pure geometric form had in the classical world."

This forest of resurgent symbols that surrounds us (as in the steel and glass skyscrapers themselves), this Faustian landscape, which can be transfigured by those who have the eyes to see, has the potential to develop an effective stimulus towards the "simplification and essentialisation of being in a spiritual world in dissolution," towards a new active realism, beyond the false problems of the ego, sentimentality, humanitarianism and the entire bourgeois heritage. There is a risk of collapsing inwardly, of going below, rather than above, the individual: but is not risk itself the nourishment of these figures that have appeared on the horizon during the storms of steel? And

on the other hand, 'there is nothing in the present era that is not risky. For those who remain standing, this is perhaps the only advantage it offers'.

Notes

1- J. Evola, *Gli uomini e le rovine*, Volpe, Rome 1972, p. 20. There is a Spanish translation. Back to text ^ 2- J. Evola, *Saggi sull'idealismo magico*, Atanor, Todi-Rome 1925, p. 55. back to text ^ 3- J. Evola, *Imperialismo pagano*, Atanor, Todi-Rome 1928, p. 82. back to text ^ 4- J. Evola, *Saggi ...*, p. 56. On this subject, see, among others, the lucid pages devoted to Tantrism and its subtle ways of dominating the world, to its concept of external power that symbolises and manifests the internal (see J. Evola, *Lo Yoga della potenza*, Mediterranee, Rome 1994, pp.

31-37). There is a Spanish translation. Back to text ^

5- *La Torre* magazine, collected in one volume: Ed. Falco, Milan 1977, p. 332. Back to text ^

6- J. Evola, *L'arco e la clava*, Rome 1995, p. 91. Spanish translation available. Back to text ^

7- *Ibid.*, p. 93. Back to text ^

8- M. Scheler, *Essenza e forme della simpatia* [Wesen und Formen der Sympathie], Rome 1980, p. 177. According to the author, modern science selects the data to be used in order to construct a symbolic image of nature that makes it "guidable and controllable, but this forces such science to ignore all those aspects of physical reality from which the "supra-mechanistic and amecanistic nexus of meaning" that links natural phenomena in their being part of a whole becomes transparent" (*ibid.*, p. 176). Back to text ^ 9- See Sergio Quinzio, *Raíces hebraicas de lo moderno*, Milan 1990. On the attitude of the Judeo-Christian tradition towards nature, see also: Various authors, *Religiones y ecología*, Bologna 1995. Back to text ^ 10- O. Spengler, *La Decadencia de Occidente* [Der Untergang des Abendlandes], Milan 1970, p. 1405 ff. See also the work by the same author, *Man and Technology* [Der Mensch und die Technik]. Back to text ^ 11- J. Evola, *The Hermetic Tradition*, Rome 1996, p. 45. Back to text ^ 12- J. Ortega y Gasset, *The Spectator*, (Italian translation, Milan 1984, p. 21). The Spanish philosopher appears to be in perfect harmony with Evola:

"We have pigeonholed the world: we are classifying animals. Each pigeonhole is a science, and we have enclosed within it a mountain of splinters of reality that we have removed from the vast maternal womb: Nature. And so, in small piles, gathered by chance, perhaps capriciously, we possess the rubble of life. To obtain this soulless treasure, we have had to dismantle the original Nature, we have had to kill it. Ancient man, on the other hand, had before him the living cosmos, articulated and without divisions. The main classification that divides the world into material and spiritual things did not exist for him. Everywhere he looked, he saw only the manifestations of elemental powers, torrents of specific energies that created and destroyed phenomena. Back to text

13- J. Evola, *Imperialismo ...*, p. 81. Back to text ^

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- 14- J. Evola, *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno*, Rome 1998, p. 327. There is a Spanish translation. [Back to text](#) ^
- 15- *Ibid.*, p. 297. [Back to text](#) ^
- 16- Rivista «Lo Stato», July 1936, republished in Rome, 1995, p. 155. [Back to text](#) ^
- 17- cf. A. Gehlen, *L'Uomo* [Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt], Milan 1983. [Back to text](#) ^
- 18- cf. E. Jünger, *L'Operaio* [Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt], Milan 1984. [back to text](#) ^
- 19- J. Evola, *L'Operaio nel pensiero di Ernst Jünger*, Rome 1998, p. 46. [Back to text](#) ^
- 20- *Ibid.*, p. 47. [Back to text](#) ^
- 21- J. Evola, *Cavalcare la tigre*, Rome 1995, p. 102. Spanish translation available. [Back to text](#) ^
- 22- *Ibid.*. [Back to text](#) ^
- 23- *Ibid.*, p. 104. [Back to text](#) ^
- 24- *Ibid.*, p. 106. [Return to text](#) ^
- 25- *Ibid.*, p. 23. [Return to text](#) ^

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