

## Evola: Initiation and Transcendence of the Pagan Anarch

by Sean Jobst

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As with his other views, Julius Evola's spiritual worldview cannot always be reduced to the specific, however there were consistently two main themes: Initiation and Transcendence. The strongest case can be made that Evola found both themes by looking within the indigenous European traditions broadly labelled as Pagan - the localised pre-Abrahamic faiths tied to how tribes interacted with their biospheres and holding to a polytheistic worldview rooted in ancestor veneration and an animistic view of the landscape. It contained similar motifs and concepts that were universal, but was inseparable from tribes and thus not universalist with all that entails of centralisation. I contend that worldview can be harnessed to the metapolitical as much as the metaphysical, leading to an ideal we can call the Pagan Anarch. Philosophers like Evola laid some of its foundations, as he wrote in his 1928 book, *Imperialismo Pagano*:

"The world is to be cleansed, returned to its pre-Christian state. It is to be returned to a free, overabundant, essential state within which nature is not yet nature or the spirit, in which 'things' and 'forms' do not exist except as powers; in which every instant of life is a heroic event, made up of acts, symbols, commands, magical gestures, and rituals, accompanied by great waves of sound, light, and terror. This is our truth and this is the threshold of our great liberation: the end of faith and the world's emancipation from God. No 'heaven' will hover over the land, gone will be 'providence', 'reason', 'good', and 'evil', masks for the terrified, pallid escapes for pallid souls. At last, those who think themselves men, unaware that they are sleeping gods, will be left to themselves: everything, all around, will return to a state of freedom; everything will finally breathe. The weak will collapse. The strong will assert themselves and will be rekindled as the 'holy race of the kingless' of the ancient Gnostic oracles; the race of 'those who are', of the unchained and the unburdened, of redeemed justifiers of the world, lords of necessity and suffering. This is our truth. This is the 'myth' that we pagans oppose to the superstition of Galilee, the myth that we affirm today as central to the values of our race and to the restoration of the empire in the West."(1)

Whether Evola was a professed Pagan himself is unclear, but certainly he found a personal inspiration from ancient Roman spiritual forms. Alongside the archaeologist Giacomo Boni and neo-Pythagorean esotericist Arturo Reghini, Evola tried to revive an imperial Roman Paganism. Evola, Reghini and several other Italian esotericists founded the UR Group as the vehicle for that Paganism in the hope that it would imbue Italian society with a spiritual basis. He explored Mithraism, attracted by its martial virility as a cult of the Roman military, in a magical text for the UR Group.(2) This led him to identify a "Mediterranean tradition" whose "archaic reality" was expressed in Egypt, Greece, Mycenae, the Balears, Syria, and Etruria; the mysteries of Mithraism - laden as they were with various astrological symbols - were the interior expression of its deeper initiation expressed in *Imperialismo Pagano*:

"Infused with the spirit of paganism it was then borne by the mystery cults of the Mediterranean basin until, against the Judeo-Christian tide, it became Mithra: Mithra, the 'ruler of the sun', 'killer of the bull', symbol of those who, reborn in the 'strongest force among all forces' are able to go beyond good and evil, lack, longing and passion."

He identified this Tradition as being transmitted through a series of initiations, expressing "the living and immanent spirit, spirit actualised as initiatory knowledge and power, glory of kings and conquerors." Founded upon an affirmation of life (much as Nietzsche defined Paganism), in contrast to the life-denying ethos of the Abrahamic religions. For Evola, "Roman spirit is pagan spirit (Romanita e paganita)" leading to "a pagan restoration" based around "remembering that Christianity was one of the principal reasons for Rome's downfall." Although Evola identified it as distinctly Roman, he identified such ethnically non-Italian philosophers as Nietzsche, Otto Weininger, and Carlo Michelstaedter as later transmitters of that Tradition whose work he and his fellow initiates in the UR Group sought to continue.

The UR Group's objective was "to revitalize the esoteric roots and initiatic processes of the Roman Tradition." (3) Reflecting many years later in his autobiography, Evola wrote that their "chain" had the task of "awakening a higher force that might serve to help the singular work of every individual" and act "on the type of psychic body that begged for creation, and by evocation to connect it with a genuine influence from above" so that "one may perhaps have the possibility of working behind the scenes in order to ultimately exert an effect on the prevailing forces in the general environment." (4) Towards that end, they sought unsuccessfully to identify and encourage that spiritual chain within the Fascist political movement.

Evola already held doubts in his mind as early as 1925, when he wrote a political essay for *Lo Stato Democratico*, a bimonthly journal published by Duke Giovanni Antonio Colonna di Cesarò, a radical journalist and anthroposophist with pagan interests who was also initiated in the UR Group. In that essay, Evola considered Fascism devoid of spirituality and called it a "caricature of a revolution" (*ironia di rivoluzione*). Throughout 1927, he criticised the rapprochement between the Fascist government and the Catholic Church, leading to Evola being attacked by name in both the Fascist and Vatican press. Priest Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, accused Evola and the UR Group of "abuse of thought and word....rhetorical aberrations, fanatical reevocations and superstitious works of magic." (5) The Concordat signed on 11 February 1929 stripped away "every residual hope of action" towards Paganism. (6)

This was an inevitable occurrence, as centralisation was innate to both contrary to Paganism. Anyone familiar with the spread of Christianity within Europe can attest to the dual powers of Church and State, how the fine line between how both institutions spread their power was always blurred. Despite his use of Imperial imagery, Mussolini reaffirmed Catholicism and not neo-Roman Paganism as the official religion of Fascist Italy, in much the same way Hitler ultimately sidelined German Pagan revivalists and suppressed their movements leading to the disillusionment of many who deluded themselves into thinking that political ideology could also be steered towards an indigenous spirituality. The innate Tribal-Anarch basis of Paganism was a threat to their authoritarianism, which was itself a natural outgrowth from Abrahamism with its dogmas, centralist structures, and claims to universal obedience.

A fatal flaw for Evola was his insistence that "imperialism" was a return to the highest cultural values of the Traditionalist past, whereas historically it was the tribe and clan that was most organic and traditional. Even in the Italian context, Imperial Rome was a later aberration given the highly localised basis of the ancient Italian peninsula. This is recognised by modern Italian Paganisms such as Stregheria that emphasise local Italic forms beyond Rome. The Sicilian Evola apparently forgot that his island was originally a collection of local Hellenic city-states before succumbing to Rome's juggernaut. The hierarchies of the ancient world have nothing to do with the coercion of modern political ideologies, as noted by Troy Southgate:

"I believe that Traditionalist principles can be applied within the context of a decentralised community and that if hierarchy is both consensual and centred around a spiritual vision that harks back to the kind of Golden Age of which Evola himself speaks, that a form of anarcho-monarchism is perfectly viable if the members of a society are in agreement that a regal figurehead should be used as a symbol of transcendent power. Not the power that Evola feared 'from below', but a two-way relationship in which power flows in both directions. Not as 'democracy' or a form of Jacobinism, but in terms of understanding one's wider place in the cosmos. The ancient caste system, after all, was not ruthlessly maintained by force of arms and the correlation between the earthly and divine realms was symbiotic."(7)

Evola accompanied his disillusionment with Fascism with a re-evaluation of where modern Pagans go wrong, in his 1941 book *Sintesi di Dottrina della Raza* (Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race). He began by questioning the very terms "Pagan" and "Heathen", whose use he opposed - perhaps poisoned by the failure of his "imperialismo pagano" political efforts. It may have been a stigma for the Rome-obsessed Evola, but we descendants of the tribal peoples of Europe need not see adjectives of rural and the hearth in such disparaging terms. Rather, we should embrace these terms as the ultimate assertion of our tribal identities, just as we embrace "Anarch" as the primacy of Communities against the State. Aside from "rural" and "rustic", another original meaning of "Pagan" was non-Abrahamic; "Heathen" derived as a Germanic form of Greek "ethne" and Latin "gentile".(8) Being "primitive" and "uncultured" to the Globalist monoculture need not be an insult, although Evola was correct when he noticed the trend of certain Neo-Pagans relying too much on early Christians' perceptions of the pre-Christian world, nor was it the simplistic "nature-worship" some presume:

"What most distinguished the pre-Christian world, in all its normal forms, was not the superstitious divinization of nature, but a symbolic understanding of it, by virtue of which (as I have often emphasized) every phenomenon and every event appeared as the sensible revelation of a supra-sensible world. The pagan understanding of the world and of man was essentially marked by sacred symbolism. Moreover, the pagan way of life was absolutely not that of a mindless innocence, nor a natural abandonment to the passions, even if certain forms of it were obviously degenerate. It was already aware of a healthy dualism, which is reflected in its universal religious or metaphysical conceptions."

Such passages often circulate under a separate title, "Against the Neo-Pagans", by certain Traditionalist Catholics or other Abrahamic Traditionalists who want to read their own anti-Pagan bias in Evola.(9) Yet

he was simply affirming the authentic indigenous European pre-Christian traditions by rejecting later misreadings of the Myths. A criticism of neo-Pagan groups and trends is not the same as a rejection of Paganism itself. Evola could have been criticising the reliance of later Christianised renderings of the lore, which often shape how many neo-Pagan groups construct their worldview. One example is the tendency to build a modern religion around a few hundred years of Norse history by people whose ancestors came from England or Continental Europe, further constructing that based on a literalist reading of a monk's Christianised interpretation of the Myths. The failure to see allegories and different layers of meaning beyond the literal is inherent among such groups.

Another example of anti-Tradition is the politically-charged debates within Heathen circles about Folkish versus Universalist, both ignoring that our ancestral worldview was Tribalist and neither of these two centralisms. Evola's criticism of a "superstitious divinization of nature" explains neo-Pagans whose elevation of Nature owes more to an Abrahamic separation of man from Nature (merely an opposite reaction) than our ancestral worldview that was truly animistic and cyclical. An obsession with forming congregations would be another example of an anti-Traditional neo-Paganism in practice, whereas historically-authentic forms of Pagan faiths being tribalist meant the family, clan and tribe were of paramount importance and the individual was nurtured. What we would now call The Anarch was elevated within Tribal societies, just as God-Archetypes expressed themselves down to the most individual level. Taking the powerful ideal from Ernst Jünger and applying it within a spiritual worldview.

Much can be said of the crucial distinction between universal and universalist, which has been obscured by Globalism in all its successive political-social-mercantilist-dogmatic manifestations. As can only be expected from such a profane leveling system, it does nothing but invert. What it claims to be "universal" values are nothing but bastardisations of specific cultures which are then transposed upon all cultures. What it rejects and suppresses are the innate traditions that are far more "universal" across all cultures albeit with unique expressions to each tribe and culture. For example, common motifs and myths arising from observing Nature and the Cosmos - and our relation to those forces. Perhaps this is what Evola was alluding to when he wrote elsewhere: "The Idea, only the Idea, must be the true fatherland for these men: what unites them and sets them apart should consist in adherence to the same idea, rather than to the same land, language, or blood."(10)

Whereas Evola previously upheld a "Mediterranean tradition", an abstraction that ignores the Celtic, Atlantic and Megalithic cultures of the Iberian Peninsula and northern Italy that diverged greatly from the Greco-Roman, Evola was now focusing more on the common Indo-European heritage. He cited one common element as the "healthy dualism" centred around "the metaphysical perfection of the personality." Examples included the Iranian spiritual dualism, the Hellenic contrast between the world and underworld, the Norse antagonism between the Aesir and Vanir, and the Vedic contrast between sams'ra ('stream of forms') and mokshi ('liberation, perfection'). These traditions "acknowledged mysteries and initiations," extolling "a spirit that is so dominant that under certain favorable spiritual conditions it molds Body and Soul to its own image, and thereby achieves a perfect harmony between the inner and the outer."

Evola continued to overemphasise "the ancient sacred state-concept" - which couldn't help but be centralised and imperial - which he defined as "a hierarchical unity at the top of a pantheon." These perpetuated "superior rights that must accrue to the spiritual authority at the center of any normal state." He favourably compared it to the "merely secular state" but nevertheless was too caught up in a political notion. Yet there are strong traditions of a sacral kingship, what the French philologist Georges Dumézil identified as the Sovereignty aspect of his tripartite function model of Indo-European societies. At its root Evola found "spiritual authority, which was almost a 'divine nature disguised in human form.'"(11)

This authority's seat of power was in an elevated realm, such as Mount Olympus or Asgard. It was often in polar regions, such as in the Greek myth of the Hyperboreans or what Bal Gangadhar Tilak theorised of the "Arctic" origin of the Vedas.(12) Among the Celts, Sovereignty was accompanied by certain weapons and spiritual symbols. Upon his inauguration, a Gaullic chieftain was lifted by his followers while standing on his shield. At the Hill of Tara, an Irish king would symbolically "marry" the land goddess Ériu and fulfill a test by stepping onto the Lia Fáil (Stone of Destiny) which bestowed mythical powers.(13) Evola made a Greco-Roman solar masculine Myth synonymous with Kingship, putting him at odds with the Celtic, Germanic, and Iberian tribes whom personified the sun as feminine and moon as masculine, their lunisolar calendars balancing the two energies. As for the key elements of this sacral kingship:

"The traditional world knew divine kingship. It knew the bridge between the two worlds, namely, initiation; it knew the two great ways of approaching the transcendent, namely, heroic action and contemplation. It knew the moral foundation, namely, the traditional law and the caste system; and it knew the political earthly symbol, namely, the empire."(14)

Initiation was innate to Paganism, contrary to certain Abrahamic Traditionalists who assume the spread of their religions cut off the living transmissions of tribal faiths. On the contrary, they survived through folk traditions and folklore, hidden under a thinly-veiled veneer of the new religions. There is also the ground-breaking discovery of Archetypes as living transmissions that remain embedded within a people, rising to the surface at select times on both an individual and social level as Carl Jung personally found with the Germanic god Wotan. Although free from the dogmas and rigid belief systems of later religions and ideologies, being more about worldview and practice, there were definitely ritualistic elements conveyed through elaborate systems of Pagan Initiation - up to modern times as we shall see later.

Evola was tapping into a yearning deep within the soul of many of his contemporaries: the lack of an Initiation in the modern West and the need to redress that by looking foremost within our own traditions. The German sociologist Max Weber observed: "The fate of our times is characterised by rationalisation and intellectualisation and, above all, by the disenchantment of the world."(15) For the Portuguese novelist Fernando Pessoa, who wrote an "Essay on Initiation", ritual is bound up with initiation - a perfect balance of the individual with the social: "It was individual, because (even when initiation is collective, as it was in the great pagan Mysteries) it is always the individual who is initiated and not the group; it was social, because initiation was communicated in ritual and ritual is social."(16) Such rituals are designed to lead to Transcendence, another theme stressed by Evola.

Much like his friend Evola, the Romanian scholar of religion Mircea Eliade lamented how "modern man no longer has any initiation of the traditional type" leading to transformation of the candidate, whereas the modern "occult sects, secret societies, pseudo-initiatory groups, hermetistic or neo-spiritualistic movements and others" are sterile and unable to lead to such an authentic transformation: "These so-called initiation rites frequently betoken a deplorable spiritual poverty. The fact that those who practice them can regard them as infallible means of attaining to supreme gnosis shows to what degree modern man has lost all sense of traditional initiation."(17) The root cause behind this disenchantment was the arrival of Christianity, disconnecting the Europeans from their indigenous tribal faiths.

This reality was recognised by the Hungarian Catholic philosopher Thomas Molnar, who lamented: "Christianity prepared the way for a desacralized universe and, ultimately, a dehumanized one. The danger was evident: if the Christian religion should at any time show doctrinal or cultural weakness, or if rationalism should gain the speculative upper hand, humans would have lost their spiritual home. And in such a case they would have only one recourse - a return to their earlier mythical worldview."(18) He explains how "Christianity's rejection of folk myth and ritual, its reduction of nature to a created object, and its relegation of all holiness to a distant god left humanity with a wholly profane existence for the first time in history." As noted by John Michael Greer, an American Pagan philosopher and Druid revivalist of the Welsh tradition: "Like many other monotheisms, Christianity strips nature and humanity of intrinsic meaning and value to give all available glory to a single god. Yet this desacralization of the universe opens the way to the materialist vision of a dead cosmos governed by chance and blind force."(19)

Yet these ancient traditions survived in spite of the new faith, for example in the symbols and transcendent language known as Runes. These are most known as Germanic, although the Iberians and Lusitanians (Alvão) had their equivalents, as did the Irish through their Ogham script. These are the partially-hidden transmission, drawn from the superconscious down into consciousness. The American Rune master and scholar of the Germanic tradition, Edred Thorsson, explained how "deeper runes" are divided into two elements: Arfr being the transcendent Ancestral Tradition itself, while Siðr (not to be confused with the magical system Seiðr) are the openly-transmitted myths, customs and fairy tales.(20) Building on the work of the neo-Platonists, prisca theologia was transmitted through various Pagan initiations and later transformed into the concept of an obscured Tradition as conceived by Evola and others:

"Arfr stands for the transcendent Tradition, the philosophia perennis if you like, a set of universal and eternal ideas that are common to all spiritual traditions and are accessible through initiation into them. However, Arfr represents an abstract, philosophical, universal conception of Tradition, similar to the concept of Tradition as formulated by René Guénon and Julius Evola. Siðr denotes then the particular expression of that transcendent Tradition as it manifests in the unique way of each culture in their symbolism, mythology, and customs. The runic student must know the siðr of the Germanic tradition and incorporate it into his practice, but must also study the Arfr, the higher philosophy and universal principles behind the Germanic tradition."(21)

The Runes themselves were revealed to mortals via the Initiation by ordeal by Wodan, whose Act is the archetypal Initiation within the Germanic tradition - emulated by initiatory warrior-societies as we shall see later. Germanic tribes used such lower-case terms as *forn sidr* "old ways" to describe their tribal faith - customs and traditions were as central if not more so within this living transmitted Tradition as devotion to Deities. Such Transcendence within language can be seen in the Greek word *aletheia*, literally meaning "unconcealing" which, unlike the Latin *veritas*, "expresses truth as a process of unfolding relationships and context between beings":

"As such, *veritas*-truth is based on objectification, and in this it loses its way. There is no such thing as an object; Being is a verb, as indeed all nouns truly are. *Aletheia*-truth is animistic, recognizing the sacredness of all and each, whereas *veritas* is always looking for the reduction, the parsing, the impossible equivalence of any two entities. It functions in an 'as if' mentality where the precious, irreducible, nonrepeatable, and fleeting nature of every moment and every place is ruthlessly suppressed."(22)

Evola experienced this transcendent truth in the fleeting nature of the moment when he meditated on the peaks, or challenging his own mortality while walking around a Vienna under aerial bombardment. He thus personified the Pagan Anarch - asserting the ultimate individual freedom and not giving in to the external circumstances. It takes only to assert its tribal, anti-imperial form transcending fleeting political dogmas and social trends. The Pagan Anarch looks within their own unique folk-traditions and deific-archetypes as a free person, no matter their tribal background, so that one may truly achieve the Transcendence within and then manifest this to one's outside reality. When there are enough individuals seeking this same devotion to "the Idea" as expressed by Evola, then initiatory societies were built to transmit this Tradition.

He held up the Germanic *Männerbunde* ("Organisation of Men") as a "family" centred around Initiation, starkly contrasting this with modern political ideologies as he wrote in *Men Among the Ruins*: "From the political class understood as an Order and a *Männerbund* a shift occurs to the democratic ruling classes who presume to 'represent' the people and who acquire for themselves the various offices or positions of power by flattering and manipulating the masses." These were a warrior cult devoted to Wodan, consisting of youthful members old enough to bear arms. Bound by an honour code, they held special Initiation rites through which one could become one of his elite warriors, joining the "Furious Host" or "Wild Army" of the dead (known as the Wild Hunt in folklore), being "initiated" as representatives of the ancestral dead among the living tribe:

"The censorious justice of the *Männerbund* could take precedence whenever Sib-transcending legal mechanisms broke down. The mode of action of the *Männerbund* members was determined by their nature as ecstatic ghostly warriors of Odin, as the initiated members of his 'Wild Army' of the dead. Wherever Wotan's furious host roars forth on the night storm wind, nothing could withstand it and everything was riven by strife and swept away."(23)

Seen in this light, the Wild Hunt itself is part of Pagan Initiation. *Männerbunde* were initiated at auspicious times where the symbolic barriers between death and life were thinnest, such as Yule the

season of the Wild Hunt, or Ostara the springtime of renewal and fertility. It was by their connection to the dead they entered a new life, as noted by the Dutch scholar Frans Farwerck: "the initiate by life became a member of the community of the dead. He became one with his deceased forefathers." (24) The French philologist Claude Lecouteux theorises that processions of these masked initiates around the winter solstice would be mistaken as armies of the dead by those who witnessed them and weren't initiated into their Mysteries, "some of which allowed the participants to go into a trance, leave their bodies, and transform into the entities whose masks they wore - in other words, the dead." (25) He continues to expound upon their shamanic origins:

"The theories of German scholars can be summed up in a few key words: beliefs connected to the soul and ancestor worship, to the elements, and to dreams are the source of what initially appeared as a myth, then as a legend (Sage). They were crystallized in the form of rites of which processions of masked men would be one form. Two essential elements emerge from all this: the importance of the dead for the well-being of human societies, and the role of ecstatic practices that carry with them vestiges of shamanism." (26)

The Männerbunde coming into modern consciousness owes much to the Austrian mythologist Otto Höfler, whose *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (1934) postulated their origins in ancient shamanic processions and practices: "the priority of the ecstatic worship over the mythic legend." The Wild Hunt processions are "the reflection of secret German ecstatic cults" and such "legends about the wild army are not simply nature allegories, but are mainly reflections of the ancient cult of secret societies." The esoteric wisdom of this most ancient cult was transmitted through Initiation:

"Originally it appears that the 'best' (or 'all the good') formed themselves into a powerful force. In archaic warrior terms: the brave and strong. These qualities were tested during initiation and further developed in the community. It is the characteristic of male fellowships that they developed, established, and augmented these male virtues: courage, camaraderie, ambition, and hard discipline. In fact, it appears impossible to tell whether the cultic or the military side of this social image was 'most essential' (or even 'most primary'). Through initiation, the man received a life that was a 'stronger', a 'truer' life than the old one, when he was friends with the uninitiated, servants, and incompetents." (27)

Initiates induced Wodan through certain feats of courage and ordeals as mock-hanging and spear-marking to emulate his own ordeal on the World Tree: "The prospective initiate was hoisted up by a rope around the neck until he lost consciousness, and then he was lowered again. With this, he experienced the 'little death' - a new, deeper dimension of existence, transcendent existence, the spiritual reality." (28) Initiates would acquire abilities and a new spiritual name to symbolise this rebirth. (29) They were initiated in forests around holy trees or wells, or in the fortified labyrinthes collectively known as Wallburgs, where processions to the top would be taken. (30) Initiates would often wear animal skins, symbolic of their spirit transcending the body and the soul outliving the old body they "shed":

"For the young man, initiation into the Männerbund provided access to training in specific ecstatic techniques that enabled him to self-induce the so-called berserker rage, a battle ecstasy that created



invulnerability against iron and immunity to fire and was connected to shapeshifting or soul travel. The warrior was able to transform himself into a wild animal (a bear or wolf) with the animal's aggressive traits or to separate soul forces from his body and send them out into battle in the form of an animal (bear) while his own body fell into a state of inactivity (sleep)."(31)

The Männerbunde are the perfect example of a transmitted Tradition as conceived by Evola, from their earliest origins in prehistoric processions as theorised by Höfler, to the warrior brotherhoods of the Germanic era. In Germania (part 43), Tacitus refers to warriors called the Harii who painted their bodies black and carried black shields, their night attacks giving them the reputation of "a ghostly army." Harii literally means "the warriors" and they were a warrior society among the Suebi rather than a separate tribe. Germanic warriors were often painted black (and Celtic tribes more often blue) when going into battle.(32) Black was as much symbolic of the soil as darkness, fertility being closely linked to a cyclical understanding of death. Farwerck traces the Dutch folk tradition of Zwarte Piet (Black Peter) and similar Yuletide figures (such as Sinterklaas and Knecht Ruprecht) to these ancient warriors of the Wild Hunt led by Wodan.(33)

According to the American philologist John Lindow, Harii could also be related to the "-herjar" element of einherjar - the later Norse warriors devoted to Wodan: "Many scholars think there may be basis for the myth in an ancient Odin cult, which would be centered on young warriors who entered into an ecstatic relationship with Odin."(34) He was backed in this view by the Austrian Germanologist Rudolf Simek, who draws parallels with another one of Wodan's name - Herjann: "One tends to interpret these obviously living armies of the dead as religiously motivated bands of warriors, who led to the formation of the concept of the einherjar as well as the Wild Hunt."(35)

Aside from the Einherjar, there are also relation to the warrior brotherhoods who donned the skins of their totem animal to symbolically take on their power and energy, making them fearless and frenzied in battle. These were the Berserker ("bear-skin") and Ulfhednar ("wolf-skin") warrior societies. Strabo noted the reputation of the Cimbri tribe as ferocious warriors fearless of death, their elites on horseback wearing animal helmets. Tacitus referred to the Chatti tribe of modern Hessen, where warriors would neither shave their heads or beards and around their arms wore a metal band symbolic of Wodan. A similar practice was seen among the Batavians of Holland, whose leader vowed to not shave his head or beard until he defeated the Romans. Returning to the theme of a transmitted Tradition, Farwerck theorised that the Männerbunde formed the nucleus of the medieval guilds and, to avoid persecution, ultimately went underground as occult societies:

"When the Christianisation, at least the external, of the German tribes was completed, the proceedings of the men-bonds were initially continued. They could be divided into two groups, rites of initiation, which were more or less secret and the public proceedings, which sprang from views that were grounded in the initiations. Of these initiations, we find only traces in later periods, enough though to determine their existence. We mostly know the public proceedings because of ecclesiastic prohibitions, but also from many remnants that have survived in folkways."(36)

Similar phenomenon existed in Celtic regions up to the present day. Citing the findings of many Enlightenment thinkers, the Irish artist and occultist Thomas Sheridan made a compelling case that the Druids went underground and transmitted their wisdom through various occult societies.(37) Just like the Germanic example, we see the same survival of a shamanic brotherhood within folklore about the Wild Hunt. In the strongly-Celtic regions of northern Spain, the Wild Hunt is known under such terms as *Güestia* or the Christianised *Santa Compañía*, wherein "ghostly" armies come in search of a dying person's spirit to merge it into the community of the parish dead.(38) The "parish" dead could be a Christianised form of what would have been the ancestors of both the family and the tribe, carrying over the highly-localised nature of such folklore into the parish church. This local emphasis was the cover by which ancient tribal traditions survived within "folk Catholicism" at odds with the official Church's dogmas and teachings.

The most notable example is the Galician *Società do Oso* (Society of the Bone), an initiatory society of masked members who led processions during which it was believed they had the ability to astrally project their bodies through physical objects and create double bodies. The members' divinatory premonitions could be the living transmission of Galician Druids whose practices would have been similar to what has been recorded of Druids in other regions. This meditation of living individuals upon death is also a reminder of their own mortality, and a recognition that death itself can be transitory in the cycles of life. Going to the precipice of death, if even only mentally, can be a profound rite of spiritual transformation. The Galician intellectual Vicente Risco wrote thusly about the *Società*:

"This gathering of souls into a group, often the dead of a parish, ancestors, and relatives, transformed into a secret society made up of living individuals, a society whose functions appear to be similar to that of any other pious fraternity or brotherhood....All the members of this society possess the ability to foresee the death of individuals and announce them with certainty. This death premonition seems to be the privilege of those who are members of the *Società do Oso*."(39)

Through our ancient tribal traditions, which have survived up to our modern times within our folklore and transmitted often through the most subtle ways, there is a powerful Tradition that each person can find within their own ancestral heritage more so than looking to the "revealed" traditions imposed from without. This is the epitome of what Evola considered Tradition, and the first step is for the individual to recognise themselves as a descendant of a tribe at some point in history. With the accompanying wisdom exoteric and esoteric that comes from this understanding, we can then assert ourselves in the most powerful way in The Anarch who has reclaimed the most ancient memory within themselves: "The Anarchist in his purest form is he, whose memory goes back the farthest: to pre-historical, even pre-mythical times; and who believes, that man at that time fulfilled his true purpose....In this sense the Anarchist is the Ur-conservative, who traces the health and the disease of society back to the root."(40) A Post-Evolian transcendence is the Pagan Anarch.

#### FOOTNOTES AND SOURCES:

(1) Julius Evola. *Imperialismo Pagano*. Roma: Atanór, 1928.

(2) Julius Evola and the UR Group. Introduction to Magic: Rituals and Practical Techniques for the Magus, trans. Guido Stucco and ed. Michael Moynihan. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2001.

(3) Renato Del Ponte, "Preface: Julius Evola and the UR Group," in Julius Evola and the UR Group, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

(4) Julius Evola. Il cammino del cinabro. Milano: Scheiwiller, 1972, p. 88.

(5) Giovanni Battista Montini, "Filosofia: una nuova rivista," Studium, XXIV, 6, June 1928, pp. 323-324; quoted in Del Ponte, op. cit., p. xix.

(6) Del Ponte, p. xix, fn17.

(7) Troy Southgate. Return to Evola: A Fresh Look at Revolt Against the Modern World. Black Front Press, 2020, p. 221.

(8) Search for both terms on Etymonline.com, which breaks down its etymology. They are synonymous with tribe and ethnicity, general terms for those holding true to their own tribal ways and not religious Proto-Globalism.

(9) Or my own attempt a decade ago to twist Evola towards a Sufi Muslim framework, via my article "Islam and Tradition: Evola on Islam", in Evola: Thoughts & Perspectives, Volume One, Black Front Press, 2011. I have since drunk from the wellspring of my own ancestral European Paganism and the current work rectifies those previous paths of my spiritual journey. In the process it now represents a more accurate Evolian perspective.

(10) Julius Evola. Men Among the Ruins: Post-War Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2011, p. 131.

(11) Julius Evola. Revolt Against the Modern World. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995, p. 8.

(12) For more information about the Hyperboreans, I recommend Otto Rahn, Lucifer's Court: A Heretic's Journey in Search of the Light Bringers, Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2008.

(13) Raimund Karl, "Celtic Religion - what information do we really have," 1996, <<https://campus.murraystate.edu/academic/faculty/tsaintpaul/celtreli.html>>.

(14) Revolt Against the Modern World, p. 6.

(15) Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," Munich University Lecture, 1917.

(16) See my article: "Tribute to Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) - 3. Paganism and Occultism of Pessoa (& His Heteronyms)," <<https://sjobst.blogspot.com/2020/06/tribute-to-fernando-pessoa-1888-1935-3.html>>.

(17) Mircea Eliade. Rites and Symbols of Initiation. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1994, pp. 132-136.

- (18) Thomas Molnar. *The Pagan Temptation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987, p. 9.
- (19) John Michael Greer. *A World Full of Gods: An Inquiry into Polytheism*. Tucson, AZ: ADF Publishing, 2005, p. 192.
- (20) Edred Thorsson. *Northern Magic: Rune Mysteries & Shamanism*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1998.
- (21) Matthew Hern, "The Marriage of Heathenry and Chaos Magic: A Dagazian Paradox that Gave Birth to a Bastard Child," in *Elhaz Ablaze: A Compendium of Chaos Heathenry*, Elhaz Press, 2018, p. 37.
- (22) Heimlich A. Laguz, "Chaos Heathenry: Incompleteness & Elegance," in *ibid.*, p.80.
- (23) Hans-Peter Hasenfratz. *Barbarian Rites: The Spiritual World of the Vikings and the Germanic Tribes*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2011, p. 61.
- (24) Frans Farwerck. *Noord-Europese mysteriën en hun sporen tot heden*. Deventer, Holland: N. Kluwer, 1970, p. 15.
- (25) Claude Lecouteux. *Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and Ghostly Processions of the Undead*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2011, p. 204.
- (26) *ibid.*, p. 206.
- (27) Otto Höfler. *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen*. Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, 1934.
- (28) Hasenfratz, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- (29) Farwerck, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-172.
- (30) For a detailed discussion of the etymology of Walpurg, see my article: "Walpurgisnacht - A Journey Across Time, Space, and Darkness," <<https://sjobst.blogspot.com/2020/04/walpurgisnacht-journey-across-time.html>>.
- (31) Hasenfratz, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- (32) Farwerck, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
- (33) *ibid.*, pp. 255-259, 282-286.
- (34) John Lindow. *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 104–105.
- (35) Rudolf Simek. *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, trans. Angela Hall. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007, p. 71.
- (36) Farwerck, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

(37) Thomas Sheridan. *The Druid Code: Magic, Megaliths and Mythology*. Street Druid, 2017.

(38) J.L. Perez de Castro, "El Origen de la animas y su presencia en la etnografia del Eo," *Revista*, No. 34, 1978, pp. 273-289.

(39) Vicente Risco, "La procesión de las ánimas y las premoniciones de muerte," *Revista de Dialectologia y Tradiciones Populares*, Madrid, No. 2, 1946, pp. 423-425.

(40) Ernst Jünger. *Der Weltstaat. Organismus und Organisation*. Stuttgart: Klett, 1960.