

SNIPPETS

Strangeness and Familiarity

A masculinist theologian has said truly that religion is a contact with the Holy, which is the absolutely Other. That is true, but at the same time, the Holy is also the absolutely familiar - more familiar than anything we have ever encountered in this life. The essence of this world for us is that it is unfamiliar. We cannot truly know another person, however long we live with her, however much we try - we cannot even really know ourselves. Usually we hardly notice; we are content with the outward gestures which substitute for real knowing. But every now and then, the essential alienness of the world, our absolute and irremediable isolation, engulfs us in a sudden chilling wave. Things, people, our own body, our own mind, all of these are quite other, out of reach of real communion.

Only Deity is truly familiar. She is other because She shatters all the conventional gestures of familiarity. She is terrible, because She shows us these in all their meaninglessness - but She is the one thing which we really know - the one place which is truly our spiritual Home. And when we finally come to perfect union with Her, all things will have become familiar, and nothing will be other.

Resurrections

Life is full of resurrections. The archetype is that of our Lady: the victory of fear and evil, and the triumph of Good out of that victory. But every time we grow inward and petulant, hating a fast or a penance, and are suddenly flooded with a consciousness of the tremendous privilege of doing it for Her; every time we stray from Her in prayer and bring ourselves back to Her; every time we commit a fault and truly repent, that is a little resurrection: the victory of fear and our triumph over that victory. Every such triumph is made possible by Her resurrection. Without that source

of spiritual power, we, who have given ourselves to
kneel at the beginning, would have no defence against
it. The process is continual, shadowed in the year,
the cycle of the moon, the rise and set of every sun.
But through this continual enactment of little resurrections,
we bring ourselves ever closer to the absolute resolution
of the one absolute Resurrection.

Modern Psychology....

Psychology is the study of the human soul (Psyche).
Modern psychology begins by assuming that the soul
does not exist. If one begins by eliminating the
supernatural, that is in one sense legitimate. I
cannot complain if a chess player asks me to assume
that bishops move diagonally - that is her game, and
either I play it or I don't. The psychologists game
is akin to the game of looking at a light bulb and
saying: "Eliminating the existence of electricity,
how might this work?" Many ingenious answers could no
doubt be devised.

...Freud and Jung

As a raconteur and wit, Freud is infinitely persuasive -
and, of course, to the arid materialism of the
nineteenth century he brought the revelation (not new,
but as old as the hills) that there was actually
something in the human mind beyond the fussy little
filing clerk of the rational consciousness. (but how
typically Victorian to see this "beyond" as a quagmire
of repressed carnality!). Herein lay his deep attraction
for the starved souls of the turn-of-the-century
intelligentsia. Their unconscious minds craved so
strongly the bread of the Spirit that they were even
grateful when Freud gave them a stone - or, more
precisely, when he told them that their unconscious
minds craved raw flesh.

Jung is very jolly, and quite the darling of the
'esoterics'. But it does seem mighty daft to accept

for no particular reason the materialist hypothesis and then trying to drag in the super-natural by the short hairs backwards (for there has never been a shred of evidence for materialism - modern society accepts it out of emotional need. If one doesn't need it, why accept it?). At these times, he seems like the chap who, when the electric light bulb game has reached the stage of suggesting that the globe is lit by a gross or so of glow-worms, suddenly pipes up "Aha! But what if the glow-worms are powered by electricity?" If materialists merely stand agog and cry "But that's cheating!" they are not being in the least unscientific. It is cheating. You can't move a bishop along the rank and files.

Behind the Veil

The body is a thing essentially alien to the true self; a limiting thing, subject to pain, disease and decrepit age. It is also a powerful source of illusion. How quickly we tire of the ill behaviour of an ugly and unprepossessing person; and yet if a person of breathtaking beauty and enchanting manner did these same things, how easy it would be to forgive. To the spiritual perception, the soul at prayer or in even partial harmony with the Goddess is more radiantly beautiful than anything that can be seen on earth. How easy is it then for our guardian Genia to love us in despite of all our faults. But the rejection of deity is an act more hideous than we can conceive; though limited to our material perception, we are apt to suppose the word hideous to be merely a metaphor. Could we but push aside the veil of matter, what a world of brilliant light and abysmal darkness, of dazzling beauty and dizzying horror, would meet our sense, as we saw the true spiritual colour of the most everyday moral choices and actions. Let us try to act as though we could "see" as well as know the meaning of our actions.

Punishment

Punishment

Does our Lady punish us? Perhaps; but not after the fashion of masculist legalism: "such has been your crime, such is the punishment due, the account must be settled". When She punishes, it is an instrument of our progress. Hers is the rod of a Preceptress, uncompromising in Her standards yet infinitely patient, not of the public executioner. "Justice" is simply the nature of things: distance from the Goddess=evil=pain. But when we have come close enough to Her and have given ourselves in complete submission to Her, perhaps She may manipulate that suffering which is the inalienable condition of our particular state of fallenness in the form of precisely those punishments at precisely those times when they will do us most good. But I do not think She gives us pain. I do not think She adds to that which we must suffer. If anything (by a paradox) She lessens it.