

of muddy root no clarity comes out

“And who try to use the mind for the senses
drive screws with a hammer”.¹

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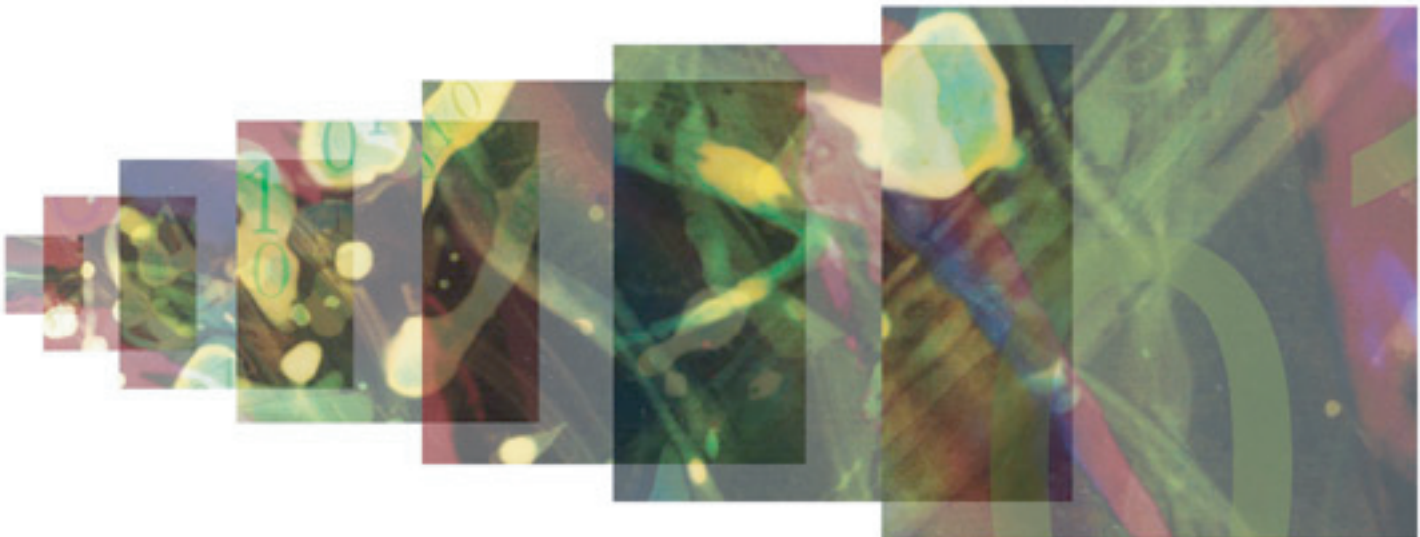
We live in a time when the naturalistic/ zoological language underlying the mechanistic description of nature, along with the informational/ interpretative one involved in the operation of understanding and explaining natural phenomena, have utterly estranged man from his poetical/ evocative competence, the only one that would enable him to detach himself from the equivocalness of events and move on to a higher level, the one ruled by syntony and symbolic decipherment.

Such a current line of operation, despite its basic perversity, can actually meet with its own proper sense, provided that it remains confined to a materialistic and scientific context - and, even so, only if we draw all due distinctions between sacred and profane science²; but it all turns into a shady and destructive strategy as soon as it is applied to reducing the complexity of man and, more specifically, of his psychic expressions.

As for the two critical acceptations of power and force, they require an acknowledgment of their being mutually unrelated, even opposite indeed, regardless of whatever captious synonymy; to this end, we obviously must restore them to an absolutely precise discursive context, to a rigorous intellectual apparatus - and let's point that out, by the term "intellect", we are not referring to the *diánoia*, to reason, that notorious mathematical paradigm of a knowledge that is neither phenomenal nor subject to hypotheses, but to the contemplation and the intuition of relations and of Ideas according to the *noûs*, the pure knowledge³.

On the one hand, the traditional idea as a manner of interpreting and participating in life which tends to move from high above upwards, thus actually rejecting any all-embracing and all-demonstrating rationality, a refusal that doesn't entail a debasement or a drifting towards the irrational: in fact, it means overcoming material barriers by virtue of a superrational drive; on the other hand, the progressive idea, presenting and claiming a system of explanations and manipulations whose nature is "discursive", therefore arguable, comparable, testable, in an attempt - all too often very awkward and deceptive - to force the most varied range of events into the laws of logic and systematization. As an example - though a partial and quite circumscribed one - of this procedure, we may mention the verification means applied to the so-called "unexplainable healings", or miracles: a swarm of distinguished clinicians, frantically seeking to come up with scientific validations to mysterious phenomena - there they are, for instance, examining Lourdes water with chemical-physical analyses and pharmacodynamic tests, which should allow them to assess its "electrolytic index of miraculousness"; pathetic manoeuvres of cheap epistemology and of gross hermeneutics, indeed.

Tradition links up with the Symbolic - etymologically: from syn-bállain, "putting together", something that unifies, complexio oppositorum -, therefore Tradition refers to Totality: it is beyond any ideological narrowness and relies on the essential issues of the "axiomatic and metahistorical doctrine"⁴; it stands up not against reason and its implications, but for a different form of reason⁵; in other words, and according to Jünger's intuition, it presupposes a "stereoscopic perception".



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Progress, on the contrary, is grounded on the diabolic - that is, on what separates, what is apt to disgregate - that is, on the procedure of fragmentation; an offspring of the deification of Reason carried out by the Enlightenment philosophers, it is bound up with functional immanency and utilitarian contingency; so, it focuses on the particular by means of the concretization of signs and of universal meanings.

Having laid down these basic distinctions, we find the sense of power firmly settled at the core of the traditional idea, while the force index places itself at the centre of the progressive view. The traditional idea avails itself of the criterion of an immutable nucleus as source of will, whereas the progressive one has recourse to an opposite parameter: becoming as a casualness-based process. The former represents acting [agire], the wu-wei of the Zen tradition - "the secret skill of mastering circumstances without countering them"⁶ -, the latter enounces doing [fare], action and reaction, that is, being acted [essere agito] in a reactive way. Power resolutely asserts, having Hamlet as its spokesman, that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy"; force wants all things to be explainable to everyone, by way of an evolutionist and rationalistic horizontalization.

These two conceptions, so utterly different from each other, involve the whole range of human knowledges and activities, from history to politics, to philosophy, art, and sociology, and, all the more so, their rivalling perspectives affect the very evaluation of the essence of man, of his being-in-the-world, of his pathologies as well as his so-called normality. Depending on the primary selection between either one of these approaches, all assessments concerning man himself do radically vary, resulting in opposite ways of defining and dealing with the goals to be achieved, with the problematic issues, with the deciphering procedures applied to such issues, as well as any methodological evaluation.

Indeed, the psyche is the optimal arena, the most fertile ground for the "traditional" interpretation - though tarnished by some predictable modernist contaminations - and the progressive one to differ from each other. On the one hand, in fact, Freud's psychoanalysis is born, theoretically, out of the "crisis of reason"⁷ - which doesn't prevent it, however, from reaffirming, in practice, the rationalistic and mechanistic view - whereas, in its turn, Hillman's archetypal psychology emerges from the "crisis of psychoanalysis", as a "freeing of psychic phenomena from the curse of the analytical mind"⁸.



The former comes to be the paradigm of the interpretative force that becoming is endowed with, the latter prompts us to take advantage of its many cues, and think back on the evocative power of being.

The "thermodynamical" layout of the Freudian psyche is thoroughly displayed in Freud's description of the psychic apparatus, through the structuring of the id drives, through the realistic filtering by the ego, as well as the "no thoroughfare" decrees by the super-ego; but, in fact, it all comes to light, properly speaking, in 1985, as Project for a Scientific Psychology: "The main idea of the Project is the correlation of psychological processes with the distribution and circulation of quantities of energy throughout certain material elements, that is, hypothetical brain structures. The energy called quantity by Freud is equated to sums of excitation originating either from the outer world through the sensory organs, or from the inner world, that is, the body"⁹. Nothing is created, nothing is destroyed, but, rather, all is transformed inside a predefined setting; what we are granted, at most, is the interpretation of facts; and these facts occur dynamically and are experienced likewise. Even the banishment from consciousness of a traumatic event - which is bound to show up anew, sooner or later, in some different guise - is called repression, and its deferred re-emergence is termed return of the repressed - action and counter-reaction in a determinate show of strength.

The method hinged on the exploration and the liberation of the unconscious - at first called abreaction¹⁰, that is, reacting to some previous action - has been bound up with speech, and on speech the cognitive procedure is founded. Later on, Lacan would codify speech through his "law of language"¹¹, as he felt that an absolute rigour was required within communication, both therapeutic and otherwise; still, such thoroughness involves a major limitation: the expunction of any speech feature which should elude "scientific" approval; which shows, just once more, that even Lacan wouldn't do without anchoring to Freud's materialistic preliminary issue; and against this very background was to stand out an apt, well-aimed remark by Evola: "Psychoanalysis, as "psychology in the depths", may be of positive value only when it is preceded by some sort of "ascetical practice" [...]"¹². We can make this point clearer by stepping a little forward and disclosing some key features of the other frame of thought on both man and the world: it states that speech, as an informational/ interpretative instrument - the force of speech - must exhaust and transform itself into the poetical/ evocative perspective: "'W ords of power". [...]. [...] As supreme power the W ord comes to its complete and perfect fulfilment, because it holds, right inside itself, the origin of all manifestations, and, through them, it actualises itself in a linear correspondence between the will that realizes and the entity that is realized. Speech is the realization means [...]. Speech, then, is not only sound, it is form as well"¹³.



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Anyway, the feature that characterizes this view, in that it establishes its materialistic frame, is the denial - way beyond incommunicability, reaching as far, indeed, as a downright anathema - of man's mystical, superrational, transcendent constituents. Freud makes himself undeniably clear and straight with regard to this matter; replying to a letter by Romain Rolland, he delivers this very confession: "What sort of worlds, utterly foreign to me, you are wandering about! The mystical experience is something I am just precluded from, so much as music is too"¹⁴. The father of psychoanalysis doesn't confine himself to this autobiographical statement of fact; actually, he ventures on a diagnosis, on a psychopathological observation: "[...] the idea of life having a purpose stands or falls with the religious system"¹⁵; quite predictably, this attitude results in Freud's dismissive evaluation of whatever supernatural pursuit as a sheer deviance, because: "[...] in some respects, each one of us behaves like a paranoid, as we correct, through a creation of wish, some facet of the world that we just can't tolerate, and inscribe this delusion into objective reality"¹⁶. In conclusion, just as much predictably, Freud decrees that the power of transcendence, of vocation, of the suprasensible can be nothing but the manifestation of some disease: "We must characterize human religions, too, just as another kind of collective delusion. Delusion, of course, is never acknowledged by the one who still takes part in it"¹⁷.

Through this all, the force of reason circumscribes its own totalitarian scope: psyche as an energetic organization, speech as the explanatory instrument, mechanism as the parameter of reality; and then man, there he is: settled into a chance-ruled becoming, an alternation of drives and repressions, of aversions and cravings - a triumph of existentialism indeed. Being something else, that is, otherness, would amount to nothing more than an individual relativized to his own ego, a formless structure subjected to lines of force that are utterly extraneous to him, which he is bound to reckon with anyway, in an endless series of precarious settlements. The essence of being gives way to, and has to rely on, the force of becoming, which has come to be the yardstick of any historical and mundane accomplishment, while man's temporal performance fills him with anguish, and he's afraid of being unable to carry out the flimsy plan he's conceived. With transcendence placed somewhere outside man, or even in an "else-reality", a substitute one rooted in some psychosis, man himself turns out to be off-centred as to any destiny of his own, to any personal calling; he is transformed into "an entity, who doesn't have being deep within himself (nor is it behind him, as his root), but ahead of him, something he's got to run after, and try to grab"¹⁸.

The force of becoming is, all in all, a relentless rushing forward, much like a parkinsonian movement, wholly directed to the pursuit of a barycentre; but this target gets more and more fleeting, and man's anguish just grows and grows.

Now, there's a peculiar view that stands out as an antithesis to this whole anthropological notion of an ego that is divested of a self-centredness and of autonomy - and yet, endlessly prey to drives and complexes that not only contradict one another, but also, as a whole, clash with an outer reality, therefore engaged in a perpetual motion of readjustment: it is Hillman's approach, granting "primary psychological reality to the call of fate"¹⁹. And, well, the paradigm is subverted. Psyche is no longer an entity operated (acted) by heterogeneous forces, needing to sort itself out with

a ceaseless exogenous/ endogenous confrontation, that is, by means of centrifugal operations; psyche, instead, becomes the bearer of an inner message that must be deciphered and complied with, a superrational call worth being responded to by means of a centripetal harmony. Freud's original distortion, the neurological/ mechanistic root of his scheme, the ensuing universalism and homologization: the whole lot is countered by Hillman's principle of personalization: "[...] growth is less the key biographical term than form"²⁰, and "development only makes sense when it reveals a facet of the original image"²¹. Here it is, then, the fulfilment, on the psychological plane, of Nietzsche's prophetic announcement, that everyone becomes what one is, and, as regards the faculties man acquires or loses in the course of his existence, "the innate image of your fate holds all in the copresence of today, yesterday, and tomorrow. Your person is not a process or a development"²². It's not the force of becoming, but the power of being. The process-based view, besides, implicitly brings about irresponsibility as a matter-of-fact notion - there's an aim for me to attain, an existential logic I'm expected to come up to, and, if I don't succeed, all the blame must be laid on external circumstances that have hindered me: "Fatalism would give all over to fate"²³. The daimon, fate - according to its classical meaning, that is, Moira, an individual's allotted share and role - has a downright different programme: each man is fully answerable for his own achievements, since "fate does not relieve me of my responsibility; in fact, it calls for more"²⁴; remaining impassive in the positions of one's own fate means answering one's duty, finding the point of immutability within the vortex of vegetative life.

Being, then, is to be regarded as potential, because its self-realization is not a progression towards some indefinite point of individualization; on the contrary, if we intend to detect and attach a motion to this process of self-fulfilment, we are bound to refer back to Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. In other words: "[...] the soul has an image of its fate, which time can show only as "future"²⁵, and a fully, harmonically realized future is just the earthly manifestation of a man's original nucleus, of his own vocational inscription. Believing that the rejection of personal fate is possible, or even desirable, actually amounts to reasoning like Kant's notorious dove did, as she wondered whether the absence of friction would have granted her a lighter, smoother flying. Friction may serve as a metaphor for



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personal destiny: an unceasing trial, which most of us experience as nothing more than a disharmonious and jerky fluttering, whereas others are able to turn it into a well-balanced and fully conscious flight. The power of being disregards the easy ways, it doesn't ask itself "what purpose does this serve?", since such a question befits a servant, someone who needs a master to instruct him on good and bad, true and false, right and wrong; the power of being only answers to Ananke, Necessity, in that she is mistress of a specific calling, which cannot be ascribed to explanatory speech.

Being and becoming, power and force: the two antagonistic models of the psyche; two archetypes that have a place in all ancient cosmogonies. Enlil, god of the air, born of Ouranos and of Mother Earth (the Sumerian Ki), identified with the storm, with the force of action; Anu, father of all gods, spirit of the heart, power of being: Enlil's destructive motion is opposed by Anu's eternal image of the firmament ²⁶. Small jihad, the struggle against the enemies out there, the force employed in opposition to the external evil; great jihad, the soul exerting its power in its - far more important - commitment to the inner good.

We might say, then, that each differentiated human being is endowed with a peculiar and distinct essence of *énégeia*, recognizable as his identity, and that such an available asset may come to light either as *kńesis*, as a force apt to express itself - to borrow Schopenhauer's words - through what a man has and what a man represents, or as *dynamis*, immutable power of what a man is. Some people, driven by their shallow inwardness, which entails a precarious identity and poor self-recognition, need to show off their force all the time, in order to obtain an outward identification, while others, being their own masters and judges, mould their powerful inwardness giving it a consistent, well-rounded configuration, without all that waste and centrifugal dissipation of energy. The force of becoming corresponds to the "I must"-logic, the power of being to the "I am" one; the decisional cut between these two options is given by the "I want"-rule, in an act of full and irrevocable responsibility. Indeed, responsibility is the key factor whenever the utilization of energy is at stake. Throughout the unique and unrepeatably enterprise that we use to call life, each one of us is free to dissipate that energy by turning it into outward force, thus confirming, with his ineffectual demeanour, just how much he is a fleeting man; or else, one can treasure it up into a self-regenerating power of his own integrated and consistent style. In the former event, the individual simply strives to adapt himself to the pressures of reality, believing that this trick will exempt him from a good deal of the suffering that reality brings about: "[...] he doesn't know what he wants. His purpose is not his own, he doesn't know what he's doing why he's doing it: when he acts, he's actually just being passive: because he doesn't own himself [...]. So, in life, the weak man adjusts himself [...]. [...] He does not experience things in a deeper way, on the contrary, in them he affirms nothing but his own shallow relations, his own narrow world" ²⁷. In the latter event, the differentiated man reveals the power of his being by refusing adaptation and denying things as supposedly bestowed once and for all: "[...] instead, he must have things by virtue of his own will, be the one who creates them, love his whole self in them, and, by conveying the individual value, identify himself. [Because] there is no ready-made thing, no traced-out path, no finished work, through which you can possibly reach life, there are no words capable of delivering life to you: because life lies precisely in creating all things by oneself, in conforming to no path at all" ²⁸.

The force of becoming is the drive of the rettorica, and who relies on it “[...] senses that he’s been long-dead, and yet he lives on, and is afraid he might die”²⁹; the power of being is the way of persuasion, and who decides to go that way “[...] keeps his own self’s balance, whatever point he’s at; he does not thrash about, he’s never faltering, never worn-out, if he never dreads pain but has honestly taken it over as his own self”³⁰.

Existing, or else living: the choice lies with each and every man, be it an irresponsible or a fully conscious one.

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