

PARANOUS: A Proposal

Introduction

During the daytime, a miller (moth) hides from the light of the sun. This gray or brown delta-shape powdery winged creature can be found in the folds of a drape near a window. But at night these creatures can be found flying around electric lights. If a candle is available, they fly around and at it, until they are singed or even incinerated in its flame.

Western culture has been like a miller circling further and further away from the light of the Sun, the divine source of light, yet, circling closer and closer to an artificial one B the ego=s reflected light B and toward its destruction. Culturally, we are in danger of giving ourselves over to that nihilism at the core of our social life. We are in danger of incinerating ourselves.

Circling away from the true and toward the false is the essence of Aparanous@ (pronounced para-noose). Para-nous is any culture=s circling away from the Anous@ B the divine Light or the Spirit B and a circling toward its own death and destruction.

I will focus on the West, but, as has been noted by Buddhism, culturally the East has the same issue.

Mytho-Poetic Views of the Western Cultural Condition: Two Voices

William Butler Yeats penned a poem titled AThe Second Coming.@ In it he says that we live in a time when we, the Afalcon,@ cannot hear the voice of the Afalconer.@

In my present interpretation, the falconer is the sacred, the spirit, or the divine Light. Culturally, we cannot hear the voice of the Spirit, for we are flying ever further away from and thus widening the gap between us and the divine. We have lost contact with the divine Acentre,@ that is, the divine center no longer holds us in place.

Before Yeats, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote a little story titled AThe madman.@ Like the falcon, no longer connected to voice of the falconer, Nietzsche=s madman asks why we have Aunchained@ the Aearth from its sun.@ I hold that this Asun@ is the divine Sun, well known to Europe in the Middle Ages. But, by the seventeenth century C.E., modernity had unchained itself from the divine Sun.

The West has unchained itself and circles away from direct contact with the divine. So, as Nietzsche says, we are like a madman arriving at dawn in the village market with a lighted lantern, that is, our ego. We believe that we are now the source of Light. We have lost the knowledge that our ego is merely the locus of Light’s manifestation; its mirror.

So, we light the Alantern@ of our egos, for we feel the continuous encroachment upon us of the Anight.@ That is, as Yeats suggests, we live in a time when we are losing direction and things are falling apart. Therefore, we Westerners are faced with the destructive nature of that “relative” nothingness called nihilism. Nihilism is the state of our present Western cultural condition; because of para-nous – our having circled away from the Spirit or the divine Light.

Extended Definition of the Proposed Term AParanous@

The proposed cultural diagnostic category of AParanous@ acknowledges our circling away from our own luminosity and God=s uncreated Light; from pure consciousness as the ground of all phenomena; from a pure, transcendent, watchful, and translucent consciousness; from non-dual experience and gnosis as mystical union; from the Platonic Ideas and the Plotinian Forms; from the Intellect or the Spirit; and from the universal Mind.

AParanous@ is our circling toward and into the destructive forces of that Arelative@ nothingness known as nihilism; with all the consequences that nihilism entails.

Where do We Go from Here?

According to C. G. Jung, World War I pushed Western collective consciousness over the diaphragm and into the heart center. In the heart center we now have contact with the throat chakra or the psyche as it is in itself. I suggest that this throat center puts us into contact with the true nature of post-modernity, that is, into contact with the reality of the world as a substance which is psychical in nature; potentially into contact with the psychoid realm, one that is both psychic and material-spiritual in nature.

Our cultural task is to situate ourselves in the heart chakra and then to move on toward the throat center. In time, this cultural move will be followed by a move into that chakra that is in the head. Finally, as we collectively move on around the gyre of the evolution of consciousness, we will find ourselves once again outside the body, but not, as with primal peoples, at the tail end of the body, but this time, above the top of the head. Then, once again, we will be living outside consciousness and will be living with a form of knowing that is purely sensory.