

A Schuon Sentence: Some Remarks

by

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But, if the King cooperating with and assimilated to the higher power is thus the Father of his people, it is none the less true that satanic and deadly possibilities inhere in the Temporal Power: when the Regnum pursues its own devices, when the feminine half of the administration asserts its independence, when Might presumes to rule without respect for Right, when the 'woman' demands her 'rights', then these lethal possibilities are realized; the King and the Kingdom, the family and the house, alike are destroyed and disorder (anrta) prevails.¹

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

The eye, owing to its particularly adequate correspondence with the Intellect, lends itself spontaneously to traditional symbolism, and it is to be found—although varying widely in degree of importance—in the symbolic language of all Revelations.²

Frithjof Schuon

The language of traditional thinking is anagogic-symbolic: it is, of course, at the same time analogic. It is figurative and, as Coomaraswamy shows, figures of speech *are* figures of thought. (Are there, then, no figures of speech, purely and simply? Perhaps not; but let us proceed.) Analogic-symbolic thinking (and expression) is innately transcendent and so its procedure of representing/suggesting is to let the lower, the empirical, suggest, lead to, the next higher level, *ad infinitum*.

In the Schuon Sentence, the "eye" is to be understood microcosmically, macrocosmically and acosmically; correspondence between the eye and the Intellect is hermeneutically an identity; the Intellect is, in the same way, identical with the Heart. Thus the triad eye, intellect, heart constitutes a triple anagogic unity. This unity constitutes the Eye of the Heart. The Eye of the Heart is a name of *Pasyanti* (*Pratibhâ*), penultimately the highest power of all language. In

¹ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1978.

² Frithjof Schuon, *The Eye of the Heart*, Bloomington (Indiana): World Wisdom Books, 1997, p. 3.

his all-time classic in metaphysical semiology, Bhartrhari (in *Vâkyapadîya*) posits four hierarchically constituted powers (*Sakti*) of language (any and all language): *Vaikharî*, *Madhyamâ*, *Pasyanti* and *Parâ*. In this hierarchy, *Vaikharî* is the lowest, elementary level and power (*Sakti*) of language. *Madhyamâ* is next in the hierarchy. *Pasyanti* is the highest power and level if we do not go up to *Parâ* which, strictly speaking, suggest the Beyond the beyond. Other metaphysical semiologists stop at *Pasyanti*. An adequate "exposition" of *Pasyanti*, in the very nature of the concept, takes one to the limit. All that I can do is to quote at some length Gopinath Kaviraj's exposition, truly a marvel of insight and fathomless depth.

It [*Pasyanti*] is eternal (*anapâyini*), undivided (*avibhâgâ*) and devoid of succession (*akrama*), i.e., is of the nature of an intuition continuum. The supreme transcendent *Sabda* is as it were the dark background of all manifestations and forms the Absolute of the grammarians. But the *Pasyanti* stage, though also eternal like *Parâ*, differs from it in being, as its name indicates, luminous.³

This *Pratibhâ*, *Pasyanti*, which is Veda proper, is subtle, eternal and supersensuous. Upon realization of this, the *Rsis* desirous of communicating it to the world expressed it in the form of the so-called 'Vedas' and 'Vedangas', that is, of articulate language.

Kaviraj goes on to ask us to remember always:

...that in the *Pasyanti* stage there is no *Vibhâga* (actual split) or *Krama* (succession) in *Vâk*. This stage [or level] is distinguished from the *Parâ* in this only that It is aware of Itself, whereas the *Parâ* is beyond such self-awareness. To put the matter a little differently we may say that it is the self-awareness of *Parâ* which is known as *Pasyanti*.⁴

The usual classification of *Vâk* is fourfold: *Parâ*, *Pasyanti*, *Madhyamâ*, and *Vaikharî*. Kaviraj says,

The *Parâ* seems to me to stand really for that aspect of the *Vâk* when it is one with Parama Siva and is transcendent. The *Pasyanti* represents the *Vimarsa*, and the remaining two, viz. *Madhyamâ* and *Vaikharî* are only cases of *vikalpa*.

As *Vimarsa* means the self-revelation of the Lord (*prakâsasyâ' tmavisrântih*) it is intelligible that it is another name of *Pratibhâ*, with which, in the system of grammatical philosophy, *Pasyanti* has been shown to be synonymous.⁵

In the very beginning of this essay, the Eye of the Heart has been identified with *Pasyanti*. Our task now is to explicate this concept (*Pasyanti*) with reference to the two lower modalities (*Madhyamâ* and *Vaikharî*) and to show how *Pasyanti* is identical with *Parâ* yet significantly different. (Here again, I follow Kaviraj.)

³ Gopinath Kaviraj, *Aspects of Indian Thought*, Burdwan: University of Burdwan Press, 1966, p. 16. Brackets added.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Brackets added.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Now both physiologically and in terms of the symbolics of the human body the heart is the center of human life. (This, of course, is intimately connected with analogical identity of the macrocosm and the microcosm.) In analogically identifying the Eye of the Heart with *Pasyanti* we are basing ourselves on the doctrine of Hermetic alchemy. It may *seem* to coincide with Jungian alchemy at some points, while there are important points of contact between modernistic alchemy and traditional doctrines of trans-mutation of base metal into gold (where gold is symbolic, among other referents, of the Sun). And this is in deep conformity and consonance with the Hermetic dictum: "We are called through words to that which is beyond words; communication is meant to communicate the incommunicable, what must and in fact can be only directly experienced."⁶ Indeed, in general and at a fundamental level there is no point of contact between modern psychology (in all its reaches and schools) and traditional thinking and teaching on the human mind, psyche and its reach and functioning. Our psyche and our consciousness, our spirituality has to find its center in the Spirit which appears in time but remains timeless, transcendental.

Traditional and sacred psychology takes for granted that life (bhava) is a means to an end beyond itself, not to be lived at all costs. Traditional psychology is not, in fact, based on observation; it is a science of subjective experience. Its truth is not of the kind that is susceptible of statistical demonstration; it is one that can only be verified by the expert contemplative. In other words, its truth can only be verified by those who adopt the procedure pre-scribed by its proponents, and that is called a 'Way'. In this respect it resembles the truth of facts, but with this difference, that the Way must be followed by every individual for himself; there can be no public 'proof'. By verification we mean, of course, an ascertainment and experience, and not such a persuasion as may result from a merely logical understanding. Hence there can be no 'propaganda on behalf of the sacred science.'⁷

That we, especially the "social" scientists, have forgotten this simple, obvious truth is because we as "scientists" prefer to separate man from humanity and then naturally see the transhuman as a glorified human image—because of our stupidity. (So spake Durkheim.)

Adorno is outspoken on this point:

Intelligence is a moral category. The separation of feeling and understanding, that makes it possible to absolve and beatify the blockhead, hypostasizes the dismemberment of man into functions. Praise of the simpleton has an undertone of anxiety lest the severed parts reunite and put an end to the derangement. "If you have understanding and a heart", a verse of Hölderlin's runs, "show only one. Both they will damn, if both you show together." The defamation of limited understanding in comparison to infinite—but because infinite, to the

⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson in Arthur Versluis, *The Hermetic Book of Nature*, St. Paul (MN): Grail Publishing, 1997, p. 23.

⁷ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 2: Selected Papers—Metaphysics*, ed. by Roger Lipsey, Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 334. (Hereafter *Coomaraswamy 2*).

finite subject forever unfathomable—reason, which resounds throughout philosophy, chimes in, despite its critical claims, with the catch-tune: "Be honest evermore and true."⁸

Let me, at this point, return to the triadic anagogic identity posited in the Schuon Sentence: The Eye = Intellect = Heart. We have so far tried to explicate the anagogy of the Eye and the Heart and we showed this by establishing the meta-semantic identity of the Eye (of the heart) and *Pasyanti*—a central idea of the Indian *meta*-physical semiology. It is the name of a transcendental power that can let one see the truth in any given context without any mediation whatsoever. In other words, *Pasyanti* is the translogical power of seeing the truth face to face without any mediation: sign-signified and the mediating devices leading from the sign to the understanding of the signified without any interpretant. (In the Peircean technical sense namely, a sign or *representamen*, is something which stands for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, it creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates is the *interpretant* of the first sign.) *Parâ*, as we have already said, is Beyond the beyond. It is the Primordial Darkness: no self-reflexivity, no self-reflectivity. *Pasyanti* is the light of the Darkness of the *Parâ*. The Heart is the Center: no human eye can see it. *Pasyanti* lets us see and move towards the Wisdom Gone to the Other Shore (*Prajñâ Pârmitâ*). *Madhyamâ* is mediated knowledge and *Vaikhari* is not really any knowing power but only that which enables us to carry on our day-to-day life at the aesthetic level. *Vaikhari*, we suggest, should be understood in the light of Coomaraswamy's distinction between the aesthetic and the rhetoric uses of language:

We are peculiar people. I say this with reference to the fact that whereas almost all other peoples have called their theory of art or expression a 'rhetoric' and have thought of art as a kind of knowledge, we have invented an 'aesthetic' and think of art as a kind of feeling.

The Greek original of the word 'aesthetic' means perception by the senses, especially by feeling. Aesthetic experience is a faculty that we share with animals and vegetables, and is irrational. The 'aesthetic soul' is that part of our psychic makeup that 'senses' things and reacts to them: in other words, the 'sentimental' part of us. To identify our approach to art with the pursuit of these reactions is not to make art 'fine' but to apply it only to the life of pleasure and to disconnect it from the active and contemplative lives.⁹

The classical treatment of the aesthetic in human life, after Plato, is Kierkegaard's distinction: Aesthetic, Ethical and Religious in his *Stages on Life's Way* and *Concluding Unscientific Post-script*.

Now we come to the triadic unity of the knower, known and the relation between the two. The truth to see (understand) here is: it is man's (that is, yours and mine) nature and part to see

⁸ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, tr. from German by E. F. N. Jephcott, Frankfurt: Verso Editions, 1951, pp. 197-198.

⁹ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy I: Selected Papers—Traditional Art and Symbolism*, ed. by Roger Lipsey, Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 13.

and live his life in the shadow and light, illumination, of the Eye of the Heart, *Pasyanti*, realizing this possibility and meaning as the ultimate meaning of man's life: that is, of the infinitely (self-) reflexive nature of his consciousness.

We may now briefly comment on essential *askesis* (*Mumuksha-sâdhana*): ultimately freedom from *askesis* (desire, effort for *mukti*), the idea of ultimate freedom, falls now on the way: that and nothing else. Fortunately for me, the Black Elk quote given by Schuon at the very start of *The Eye of the Heart* is the jewel of the late Shaykh's teaching, unparalleled in depth, scope and reach in our time. "Man's reach must exceed his grasp" (Robert Browning). The Shaykh's teaching has been doing this for us for no less than half a century now. Says Black Elk (the Ogalalla Sioux holy man):

I am blind and I do not see the things of this world; but when the Light comes from On High, it illuminates my heart and I can see, because the eye of the heart (*Chante Ishta*) sees all things. The heart is the sanctuary at the center of which is a small space where the Great Spirit (*Wakan Tanka*) lives, and this is the Eye of the Great Spirit by which He sees everything, and with which we see Him.¹⁰

This straight away involves the huge question of Omniscience. I will be guided here as everywhere by Coomaraswamy, the great master:

Memory, taken absolutely, coincides with omniscience and is not a procedure; but remembering is learning and would be a contra-diction in one whose memory never fails. This is, in fact, Philo's distinction of Memory from recollection, the later being a means of escape, but evidently needless as such on the part of one whose memory has never lapsed (*Legum allegoriae* III. 91-93). This distinction, if I am not mistaken, is that of *smara* from *smarana*, the former denoting love as well as memory, and the latter the act of remembering, which implies a desiring or seeking rather than a loving.¹¹

The Eye of the Heart as *Pasyanti* (*Pratibhâ*) has a deep kinship with Omniscience as understood by Coomaraswamy:

It is, of course, 'only as it were with a part of himself' (BG, XV.7) that the Supreme Identity of Being and Nonbeing can be thought of as Omnipresent, Omniform, Omniscient. For Omniscience can be only of the possibilities and actuality of manifestation: of what remains (*ucchistam*, AV, XI. 7, etc.) there can be neither science nor omniscience, and it is from this point of view that, as Erigena justly remarks, 'God does not know *What* he is, because he is not any what' (cf. Buddhist *âkimcaññâ*). It is only his possibilities of manifestation that become 'whats' of which there can be science or omniscience.¹²

Returning to Black Elk, we can easily see that while the whole is only pragmatically divided into part and it is therefore necessary to preserve its seamless, impartite wholeness and hence its Holiness. The part only definitionally implies the whole. And hence it may or may not lead to the

¹⁰ Used as the title motto in Frithjof Schuon's *The Eye of the Heart*.

¹¹ Coomaraswamy 2, p. 56.

¹² Ibid., p. 60. (BG=*Bhagavad Gîtâ*: AV=*Atharva Veda Samhitâ*.)

whole, that is in its failure, it can breed partiality, that is blindness and sin. It is in this meaning that Black Elk is not at all bothered about his physical blindness which, if it must happen, is obviously and strongly preferable to seeing things without the will and the wherewithal to seek at-one-ness with the Heart of the matter.

There is a sense, preeminent in an important way, wherein to be unable to see the heart of things, that is, the Light from On High, the Mystery of Creation *ex nihilo*, is to be blind in a manner that is willful and infrahuman. The Eye of the Heart understood concurrently as the Light from On High and *Pasyanti*, as the transmudane, transtemporal, immediate knowledge leads dialectically to the transsyntactic and transsemantic plane of knowing. In light of these far-reaching and far-seeing observations of Coomaraswamy, we can now attempt to understand *Mumuksha* as unremitting work on the path "leading" to the goal of goallessness, the realization of the identity of the eye to see God and the Eye by which God sees us.

To do this let me attempt a commentary, necessarily brief and non-exhaustive, on the AKC sutra quoted above, "Memory, taken absolutely, coincides with omniscience and is not a procedure..." Let us, for the sake of our central argument (which, I may remind my readers, is not and could rarely be a thesis; it is an aid, a means to clarification for an interlocutor or for oneself) go back to the Coomaraswamy identity: it does not necessarily talk about the human faculty of remembering, recalling, recollecting: *not* precisely the same as Re-remembering: the distinction lies in this: that to learn requires the natural gift of "almost" ready use of what has been taught and learned. To recollect is to recall to the present occasion that which is already stored in one's memory. This easily reminds one of the Buddhist theory of *Ālayavijñāna*. We, however, do not think that the idea and theory of Recollection have an internal connection with *Ālayavijñāna* and hence let us see first the functioning of memory in the ordinary business of life. This would help us to get an insight into the AKC equation of (absolute) memory with omniscience; this together with the AKC dictum: memory is not a procedure. I do think there is an internal connection between this and the theory of absolute memory coinciding with omniscience. *Pasyanti* is omniscience, but goes beyond it in a sense that I cannot explicate.

The concept of theory of omniscience is perhaps unavoidable, in any general theory of memory and knowledge. First of all, memory is built into the stream of consciousness. Or else the continuity of the stream, if not absolutely impossible, would certainly be of a nature that this writer cannot imagine in a consistent and practical way. If the logical (or dialectical) possibility of a non-conscious memory (and its bizarre consequences) cannot be ruled out, let us not unduly complicate the argument by talking about this logico-dialectical possibility. We may proceed now to (a) absolute memory, and (a1) noting that it is not a procedure. It is clear that memory is spontaneous, autonomous, and automatic. It is spontaneous for if an effort were needed to remember something (experience, thought, intention, information), it would be relative to one or more of these; its absolute character will be compromised. It follows that all procedure, method (and effort, straining, trying) is out. Though obvious, it may be useful to add that what this

exclusion of procedure refers to is the ability to recall to one's mind (consciousness) any aspect of the past (near or far) at will, effortlessly. The Buddhist concept and theory of *Ālayavijñāna* has been seen by some scholars as cosmic mind. This is no exception to the Coomaraswamy sutra that absolute memory coincides with omniscience and needs no procedure of remembering: it is a function of will or at a higher level *dhyāna* (concentration—*dhyāna*, in certain important ways and under special conditions, can be spontaneous: something analogous to *sahaj samādhi*). We can, I hope, begin to see the identity analogy (tri-unity) of the Eye, Heart, Intellect and (supra-) consciousness.

Let me return to omniscience and absolute memory. In ordinary parlance, memory is of the past, either distant or recent but with a certain premium on the distant. Absolute memory in the Coomaraswamy sutra paradoxically but certainly includes the future as well. Let us say that "future" memory is anticipation: to anticipate an event is to transfer it to the present. (Psychologically one may say that the present is experiencing, the past is remembering, and the future is hoping or fearing; principally the future is hypothetical arising from the dialectics of human temporality whose experiential, as also logical, reality is its momentaneity in which time and eternity meet.)

The intrinsic (and hence obvious) beauty of this meeting of Time and Eternity is that dialectically it is impregnable: for the momentaneous nature of time cannot be denied and/or refused. And it is the momentaneity of time without which no theory, no understanding of duration (of time) as contradistinguished from space would be possible. In other words, to deny momentaneity is to spatialize time: and to do so, let me venture to say, is the ultimate sin of man: the sin of idolatry. In other words, it is stopping at the figure of speech: unable or reluctant to advance to the figure of thought. Coomaraswamy's classic essay 'A Figure of Speech or a Figure of Thought?' only seemingly puts the two at the same plane and thus making it a matter of decision for man. Coomaraswamy's argument is to show once and for all that figures of speech *are* figures of thought, thus showing that any idolatry properly so-called is impossible: for no man (who *qua* himself) can stop at an objective, crude, referential level which properly is not a human level: for man all experience is transcendent. From the trivial to the tremendous, from the sublime to the subnormal—it takes us beyond itself—and to beyond the beyond.

There is a hint in all this of a belief that there exists a certain spiritual plane on which life and death, the real and the imaginary, the past and the future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, are not conceived as opposites. It would therefore be vain to attribute to surrealism any other motive than the hope to determine that plane, as it would be absurd to ascribe to it a purely destructive or constructive character: the point at issue being precisely this, that construction and destruction should no longer be flaunted against one another.¹³

¹³ André Breton, *What is Surrealism*, London: Faber and Faber, 1936, pp. 71-72.

The bipolar and bilateral nature of the reality of the world is so well brought out here—and I quote here not a realist but a master surrealist, a great leader, if not the pioneer, of the Surrealist Movement. I do so in order to show the universality of this experience and theory which is irrefutable by any theory whether empirical, scientific, or historico-scientific that starts from the unsupported and wholly non-warranted rejection of *creatio ex nihilo* (in other words which is compelled to accept some kind of evolutionism however flimsy and odd its arguments and presuppositions may be). Stephen W. Hawking's strangely titled book, *A Brief History of Time*, is, when examined, unbelievably full of crucial nonsequitur, unexamined presuppositions and implications. Benjamin's essay on Surrealism powerfully albeit obliquely supports our analysis: "And it is as magical experiments with words, not as artistic dabbling, that we must understand the passionate phonetic and graphical transformational games that have run through the whole literature of the avant-garde for the past fifteen years, whether it is called Futurism, Dadaism, or Surrealism." How slogans, magic formulas, and concepts are here intermingled is shown by the following words of Apollinaire's from his last manifesto, *L'esprit nouveau et les poètes*. He says, in 1918:

For the speed and simplicity with which we have all become used to referring by a single word to such complex entities as a crowd, a nation, the universe, there is no modern equivalent in literature. But today's writers fill this gap; their synthetic works create new realities, the plastic manifestations of which are just as complex as those referred to by the words standing for collectives.

If, however, Apollinaire and Breton advance even more energetically in the same direction and complete the linkage of Surrealism to the outside world with the declaration, "The conquests of science rest far more on a surrealist than on a logical thinking" — if, in other words, they make mystification, the culmination of which Breton sees in poetry (which is defensible), the foundation of scientific and technical development, too—then such integration is too impetuous. It is very instructive to compare the movement's overly precipitous embrace of the uncomprehended miracle of machines— "the old fables have for the most part been realized, now it is the turn of poets to create new ones that the inventors on their side can then make real"

It may help a deeper understanding of Breton's thinking if we point out that he makes it clear in this and other writings that in our day to day "real" life we invariably come across signs, signals, and symbols calling us to a transmundane plane, reminding us of the Center and remembering, hearkening to the still small Voice—that Voice whose source is unknown—perhaps unknowable—and which is certain and arresting. (No human experience but would whisper to lead us to hearken to the Voice from afar; calling us to Hear and See the Supreme, the Surpassing Truth.) The onto-cosmological Unity of Creation and Absolute Transcendence of the human as the destiny of man, the creature, is powerfully stated by Breton in his huge sutra. Coming from a pioneering leader of the Surrealist Movement of the mid-century it has a significance which needs no spelling out.

(Apollinaire)—to compare these over-heated fantasies with the well-ventilated utopias of a Scheerbart."¹⁴

We return now to the triadic identity: Eye/Heart/Intellect (the last subsuming human consciousness). It has already been shown that the Eye of the Heart corresponds to (indeed, is identical with) *Pasyanti*. The experience of life and the experience of our actual situation belong together—and that even in the area of knowledge. This view contradicts, of course, Descartes' philosophy, whose concern for certainty has enticed us, with our consent, into having a certainty and security complex. Bonaventure, a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, says in amazingly severe words: "Concerning the theory that some kind of science is all the more valuable (noble), the greater its certainty, one will have to say that this science does not contain any truth." And the ingenuous Augustine formulated an earlier version of the Cartesian *Cogito ergo sum: Si enim fallor, sum*: "Even if [I am] mistaken, I [still] am" (De civitate Dei, XI, 26).

Nihil: We have to probe yet deeper. True experience of life carries with it the experience of contingency, the touching (*tangere*) upon the nothing. 'If someone upon seeing God knew what he saw, he has not truly seen God,' Dionysius the Areopagite says. A text of Shivaism from Kashmir says: 'The biggest secret is that there is no secret.' Evagrius Ponticus says: 'Blessed is the one who has reached infinite ignorance.' Ignorance, *agnosia, ignorantia*—yet it needs to be infinite!¹⁵

Here our commentary introduces into the analysis the concepts (or the "discourse") of Ignorance and Contingency. The above quotations from Panikkar have an intimate, if slightly oblique, bearing on the unity of knowledge, consciousness and Intellect.

As for the essential distinction between mentality and pure intellect, we will recall only the following: the intellect, in the passage from the universal to the individual, produces consciousness; but consciousness, being of the individual order, is in no way identical with the intellectual principle itself. Consciousness does proceed immediately from it, however, as the result of the intersection of this principle with the special domain of certain conditions of existence, by which the individuality under consideration is defined. Furthermore, it is to the mental faculty, united directly with consciousness, that individual thought rightly belongs. Individual thought is of the formal order (in which, following what has just been said, we include reason as well as memory and imagination), and is not in any way inherent in the transcendent intellect (*Buddhi*), whose attributes are essentially non-formal. This shows clearly to what degree this mental faculty is in reality something restricted and specialized, while still being susceptible

¹⁴ Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, tr. by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, London: NLB, 1979, p. 232.

¹⁵ Raimon Panikkar, *A Dwelling Place for Wisdom*, tr. by Annemarie S. Kidder, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishing, 1995, p. 60.

to the development of indefinite possibilities. Thus it is at the same time far less and far more than in the simplified—even simplistic—conceptions current among Western psychologists.¹⁶

Let me make some brief comments on the above passage. It could *seem* that Panikkar's view quoted here with full approval does not harmonize with the main thrust of our remarks on the Schuon Sentence. It does. And so does the Breton passage on Surrealism, "radically different" terminology notwithstanding, or perhaps because of it.

Providence and contingency and the celebrated Cartesian "proof" of "my" existence (*Cogito ergo sum*) have relation of semantic-metaphysical identity. Let me begin with the Cartesian "proof" of "my" existence. We need not be bothered about the tautological nature of the dictum (Truth is always tautological). The usual, perhaps near unanimous, practice is to contingent see the conceptual theory of the contingent in terms of necessity. René Guénon too pairs contingency with necessity:

Principle and sufficient reason are thus basically the same thing, but if one would understand the idea of contingency in its meta-physical sense, it is particularly important to consider the principle under this aspect of sufficient reason. To avoid all confusion we would explain again that the sufficient reason is exclusively the final *raison d'être* of a thing (final if one rises from the consideration of this thing to that of its principle, but, in reality, primary in the order of sequence, both logical and ontological, leading from the principle to its consequences). Sufficient reason is not the immediate *raison d'être* of a thing, because all that is in any mode, even though contingent, must have its immediate *raison d'être* in itself, understood in the sense used previously when we said that consciousness constitutes a *raison d'être* for certain states of manifested existence.¹⁷

This is, of course, based on Leibnitz's distinction between necessary and sufficient Reason. For me the Leibnitzian distinction itself is problematic. Necessary reason is necessary in terms of logico-dialectical necessity and in the sense that given the validity of the procedures of logic and/or dialectics, the result is certain and non-refutable and this must or ought to be accepted. As we have already noted all reason and truth is liable to be tautological. I say liable because the relation of tautology and dialectics is by no means simple and it can surely be argued that a "tautological" result dialectically arrived at is in the last analysis transcendent. (Cf. André Breton: "The first sentence will come of itself; and this is self-evidently true, because there is never a moment but some sentence alien to our conscious thought clamors for outward expression."¹⁸) It is (obliquely) from this that I find it difficult to understand that "Principle and sufficient reason are thus basically the same thing . . ." (René Guénon). My problem is the Leibnitzian distinction of Necessary and Sufficient Reason. As is clear from Guénon's

¹⁶ René Guénon, *The Multiple States of Being*, tr. from French by Joscelyn Godwin, New York: Larson Publications, 1984, pp. 81-82.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

¹⁸ André Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

formulation: Principle and sufficient reason are the same. This formulation implies that a principle *has* to get expressed at the phenomenal level.

This implication, in the present context, I find difficult to accept. The difficulty in the analysis of necessary and sufficient reason (or condition) is the disparity of the levels at which they operate: logical and general, empirical and specific. It is therefore more useful to see contingency in the context of Providence. Providence: the foreknowing and beneficent care and government of God.¹⁹

It is clear, then, that at the plane of Providence (which ultimately is Divine) the concept (and fact) of contingency is simply ruled out. One could also say that the contingent is not an epistemological but a cosmo-ontological concept. Its meaning, experience and functioning is beyond the limitless "domain" of Divine Providence. It is a severe and risky error to try to make Providence explicable; Providence is Providence, is Providence, is Providence.

If this is so it is clear that contingency is an aspect of human life and thought insofar as one has not arrived at at-one-ment with the Supreme Being (as Providence). It follows that the distinction between the necessary and sufficient conditions of a phenomenon is wholly unwarranted and untenable: a function of the logical *sans* filiation to the *logos*. We cannot digress to argue our rejection of the theory of the sufficient conditions as an indispensable complement (and pairing) of the necessary. The two planes (the necessary and the sufficient) are discontinuous: the ultimately empirical and hence contingent nature of whatever would go under the category of sufficient conditions involves a kind of category mistake.

We return to the triple unity of consciousness, knowledge, and Intellect (and the Eye of the Heart as *Pasyanti*). The contingent is the temporality of the Atemporal Providence (*Parâ sans* its self-consciousness as *Pasyanti*). Consciousness is the temporal, active aspect of the forgetting of Providence. An active backward movement restores the "triunity" of the Eye (Sun), Heart (Moon), and the Twilight (the meeting of the temporal and Atemporal, the subsumption, the fulfillment of the Relative in the Absolute).

At another, no less significant level, this is replicated in the Coomaraswamy doctrine of the non-dichotomous distinction between the inner and the outer: "That the inner and the outer man are the trace of the two natures, Sacerdotal and Royal, *in divinis* can be shown as follows: it is as the Truth or Reality (*Satya*) and as Untruth or Unreality (*anrta*) that Brahma enters into these worlds nominally (*nâamna*) and phenomenally (*rûpéna*, SB. XI. 2.3.3-6), in other words both as Affirmation (*om*) and as Negation (*na*, AA. II. 3. 6) ..." ²⁰

The idea that after this war life will continue 'normally' or even that culture might be 'rebuilt'—as if the rebuilding of culture were not already its negation—is idiotic. Millions of

¹⁹ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. II, London: Clarendon Press, 1973.

²⁰ *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, pp. 73-74.

Jews have been murdered, and this is to be seen as an interlude and not the catastrophe itself.
What more is culture waiting for?²¹

²¹ *Minima Moralia*, p. 55.