

Frithjof Schuon and Our Times

by

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Frithjof Schuon's earthly life coincides almost exactly with the twentieth century during which Western civilization has been witnessing the triumph of secularization through the largely unchallenged assertion that man is the sovereign power here on earth.

Frithjof Schuon lived in the West, he spoke and wrote in Western languages, and thus he delivered his universal message in the first place to the Western world. He lived in the midst of a time of crisis, primarily characterized by a progressive disintegration of all traditional values and beliefs, which is on the point of transforming human consciousness into an existentially meaningless and aimless flow, as most notably expressed in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.

This crisis is called "modernism", and has been the subject of penetrating analysis by René Guénon. It had its first important period of emergence during the late Middle Ages, with both macrocosmic and microcosmic implications: macrocosmically, modernism implies that nominalism is opposed to the idea that earthly things have heavenly prototypes, thus rejecting the Platonic archetypes. Microcosmically, it involves a conceptualism, so successfully advocated by William Ockham, which implies that the material world proclaimed by nominalism is only experienced as real and true in the meeting between human sense organs and individual objects. True knowledge of a higher spiritual reality is thus impossible, and must instead be the object of faith. Consequently, there appears an incipient separation between heaven and earth, between faith and knowledge. The world exists as a state of matter, a "multiverse" of "facts", and man can only obtain true knowledge about these "facts" by means of his own sense organs.

Man has thus exalted himself to be judge of what is real and unreal: man is "the measure of all things". The truth about the Real is no longer objective, but has become "subjective", since it is exclusively expressed *via* the mental faculties of an individual. The individual human, and thus "subjective", perception of the material world inevitably leads to a ruling "principle" for life: everything is related to everything else: "everything is relative".

The gates are now open for what was called *via moderna*, even during the late Middle Ages. During the following centuries, the forces of secularization were indeed quick to exploit the possibilities provided by continually new human "conquests". There are essentially two main

avenues of approach, corresponding to man's two nervous systems, the central and the autonomic. Under the guiding star of rationalism, supported by logic, structural analysis, and empiricism, and strongly connected to the conception of a causal nexus, positivistic profane science carries out its crusade. In parallel with this rationalistic stream flows a river of sensualism, striving for a good life, security without conflict, and "happiness". Western secularization and modernism develop primarily in these two powerful streams, constantly conquering new domains, and constantly building castles in the air.

The time of triumph and final victory for the efforts of the "Kingdom of Man" seems to have arrived in the middle of the twentieth century: the time of human supremacy and popular sovereignty on earth. It is just now that the crisis, barely concealed beneath the antagonisms and conquests of previous generations, becomes obvious and can no longer be hidden, in spite of constant attempts to disguise it. The emptiness of life as an existential stream, its lack of purpose as well as meaning, cannot be concealed, however many fires are lit on the altar of democracy. It is in this epoch that Frithjof Schuon appears on the scene with his message and his writings.

The central element in Frithjof Schuon's message can be expressed in one single word: the Absolute. In opposition to the existential flow, in opposition to the increasing emptiness of the material world, the world of phenomena, in opposition to the conception of existence as one-dimensional, where "everything is relative"—in opposition to all of this, which has led to the naked emergence of the spiritual crisis during the latter part of the twentieth century—in opposition to all of this, Frithjof Schuon presents an unyielding alternative. The Absolute is the Transcendent, beyond time and space in Its immutability and plenitude. We are not confronted with a doctrine or with a theological construction: the Absolute Reality, understood as absolute, immutable, total. A third aspect or dimension of the Absolute, is the Hierarchical. The Absolute includes within Itself an order, a harmony, a structuralization, within Its own totality.

These three aspects of the Absolute—the totally immutable, the Real, and the Hierarchical—are superficially contradictory, but in reality they open the way to a living Essence, from which all life emanates. The Absolute as source of this Supreme Essence, the Divine Source from which everything emanates, the Divine Sovereign Good, Plato's *agathon*, is not a celestial construction. The Absolute appears as God's highest incomprehensible Essence, encompassing everything in Its divine plenitude. This Essence expresses and encompasses Life, which becomes an emanation.

We are thus faced with the great and incomprehensible mystery called the Creation. It is in the Creation that we encounter the Infinite, primarily expressed in its modalities in time and space, and in its creative radiations manifesting everything that lies encompassed within the Creation itself, the All-Possible. This is why Frithjof Schuon connects the Absolute with the Infinite. "*Qui dit Absolu, dit Infini: l'Infinitude est un aspect intrinsèque de l'Absolu*".¹ It is

¹ Frithjof Schuon, *Du divin à l'humain*, Paris: Le Courier du Livre, 1981, p. 41.

precisely in His Infinity that God opens Himself, so to speak, for His creative acts, and His Infinity in its turn opens a window onto the Possible.

The Infinite, immanent in the Absolute, an aspect of the Absolute, is indissolubly connected with the Creation, and its mode of appearance is primarily in time and space, form and multiplicity. Here again Frithjof Schuon makes a link to the Platonic Sovereign Good, *agathon*, and this Good also has another aspect, originating in the Absolute: Perfection. Alternatively, as Schuon expresses it in *Du Divin a l'humain*, Perfection is an “image”, “*en image de l'Absolu produite par le Rayonnement.*”² We can say that the Creation is a Divine affirmation, which Frithjof Schuon expresses as *agathon*, the Sovereign Good.

When Frithjof Schuon allows us meet the ultimate foundation of existence as the Absolute, with all of its aspects, we are confronted with the Real, that simultaneously expresses the Immutable, the all-encompassing totality. It is with the Absolute as the ultimate foundation of existence that Schuon meets a world dominated by existentialism, atomism, relativism, and a chaos of values. Like no one else in our time, Frithjof Schuon presents us with an alternative to the growing consciousness in the twentieth century that we are in a deep crisis, in an existential flow without foothold and without meaning, a state in which, ultimately, *survival* remains the only motivation for human existence. He opens a dialogue of Truth, in which he confronts the relative with the Absolute, the futile flow with the Immutable, and a subjective chaos of vision and pragmatism with the Real.

The transcendent is in its essence a totality, and this totality expresses a unity, which at the same time encompasses a multiplicity. The Creation as unity and multiplicity appears as a duality, a world of order and harmony subordinate to the hierarchy of creation. Thus, God as the Immutable and the totally Absolute comes to meet us in a creational process in which the Absolute brings forth within Itself a duality: the Absolute and Its own relativity, the created, encompassed by the divine transcendent unity, and simultaneously revealing Itself as manifestation and multiplicity.

In the face of the overwhelming mystery called the Creation, in which the Absolute brings forth Its own relativity, a duality encompassed by the transcendent unity, we encounter Being: the Absolute, beyond definition, unqualified, appears as Its own “affirmation”. God cannot be comprehended as “non-being”, as a negation, as a “nothingness”. It is thus that God’s “Self-affirmation” becomes what we express conceptually as Being, and it is in this Being that Creation has its foundation. God “ontologizes” Himself, if we may use this expression, and thus Jehovah answers Moses from the burning bush: “I am that I am”. Creation, resting on the foundation called Being, also has a beginning. Creation as an operative process must be brought forth, and this is expressed in the opening words of the Gospel of St. John: *In the beginning was the Word, en arke en ho logos*, and the Greek word *arke* is the Principle through which creation

² Ibid., p. 42f.

so to speak takes its first step into Being.

The ontology we encounter with Frithjof Schuon must however not be confused with the corresponding concept in ancient Greek philosophy, the Aristotelian *to on*, as an abstract concept on which profane existence rests, an ontology adopted in our times by Martin Heidegger. In Schuon's perspective, Being is encompassed by the Eternal as the Principle from which creation emanates. Being is the uncreated and the non-manifested in the *Logos*, the divine order Itself. For the ancient Greeks, Being was the abstract basis for the phenomenological existence which the reflecting human being confronted with his conceptual faculties. For Heidegger, Being is the pseudo-metaphysical "basis" for the flow of existence. Frithjof Schuon's ontology is the living spiritual alternative to the pseudo-metaphysical and pseudo-spiritual "thought products" we find in the profane philosophical and theological so-called existential speculation of our time.

In Schuon's ontology we thus encounter two principles, the Infinite and the Hierarchical, which exist as aspects of the Absolute Itself. Here Frithjof Schuon allows us to encounter the most basic elements of his metaphysics. Above everything is the divine, absolute Essence, but due to one of the aspects included in the Absolute, namely the Infinite, the Absolute so to speak descends to the level on which the divine is "ontologized": the Divine appears as Being. Here we encounter, as Schuon states in *Approches du phénomène religieux*,³ Being as the "lesser" Absolute, preserving Its divine immortality, but simultaneously opening Itself to a creation that progressively deepens itself in the phenomenological, material world. Thus, two aspects of the Absolute are revealed, one of which is Infinity, opening itself to the Possible, and with God's Omnipotence as the transcendent foundation. The other is the Hierarchical, shaping the ruling structure of creation.

At this point we can see the basic features of Schuon's, cosmology, the "pure" Absolute or transcendent Beyond-Being, and the "lesser" Absolute, Being.⁴ When Being, as pure spirituality, divine and uncreated, appears as manifestation, as *Logos*, the creation has entered the stage at which the boundary between the created and the uncreated is passed. This is symbolized, for example, in the two faces of the Roman god Janus.

Here Schuon confronts us with the relative. The creation rests upon Being as its foundation, which is uncreated, divine. The creational process proceeds to become more and more embedded in phenomena and matter. A relationship arises between the divine source and its product, the created. The source that produces the created is "above" its creation, i.e. the Divine is superior to the created, the world. The Absolute is superior to the relative. There is an apparently obvious connection to an intrinsic aspect of the Absolute, namely the Hierarchical. But here Schuon confronts us with an example of an apparently obvious relationship which leads to questions that

³ Frithjof Schuon, *Approches du phénomène religieux*, Paris: Le Courier du Livre, 1982, pp.42f and 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

must be answered.

The ongoing secularization is mainly characterized by the conviction that knowledge of reality can only be obtained by man's observations of the phenomenal world with his senses. The endless diversity of material things and their mutual relationships are claimed to be reality. Existence is experienced as a "multiverse" of relationships, and for the secularized man, "everything is relative" appears more and more as an existential postulate. For the profane twentieth century, this way of thinking provides a one-dimensional view of existence.

One of Frithjof Schuon's contributions to meet and refute profane existentiality is his examination of the concept "relative". First of all there is the false conception which holds that man is capable of comprehending reality by using only his physical senses, eventually aided by instrumentation. This is however impossible because the senses are only *part* of the total creation, and a part is not capable of comprehending the whole. Then there is another false conception about reality associated with the first one, i.e. that presumes that these relationships can be measured, and that this can be done only in *quantitative* terms, by means of measurements in time and space. Furthermore, it is precisely such quantitative verifications which are the cornerstone of modern science. But this mode of thinking is only concerned with the outside of creation, so to speak, and the creation will remain incomprehensible as long as we do not consider its inner, qualitative significance.

In stark contrast, Frithjof Schuon's message declares that what we call the relative must include a qualitative aspect, which in the final analysis is the Absolute Itself. Indeed, this is of constitutive significance for the whole of creation. We cannot emphasize this strongly enough, he writes, and it is here that he formulates what he calls the "relative Absolute", the qualitative Presence in everything created, which gives creation its hierarchical structure, and thus gives the world its homogeneity. Schuon refutes the exclusive claims of modern science to provide a verifiable explanation of the structure of the material world. At the same time, he dismisses secularized one-dimensionality, and re-establishes the hierarchical nature of creation.⁵

For the profane man in the twentieth century, existence, the world, is an undivided sensory entity, with no transcendent connections, and modern theology provides increasingly unclear answers. Frithjof Schuon's work enters our century with a message of unparalleled clarity. In opposition to the one-dimensional profane view of the world, he presents a creational order with a hierarchical structure comprising the transcendent Beyond-Being and an ontology, Being, the spiritual foundation for everything and the operative prerequisite for creation. "Heaven and earth" are not two separate concepts. The Real is absolute Spirituality, the transcendent, incomprehensible divine Essence, which brings forth everything that "is" and everything that "becomes". The creation, "the world", is an outpouring, at the same time that it remains at rest in

⁵ Frithjof Schuon, *Les stations de la sagesse*, Paris: Buget/Chastel, 1958, pp. 40f and 57f; *Avoir un centre*, Paris: Maisonneuve Larose, 1988, p. 127.

its manifested totality in absolute Spirituality. “The world is naught, *Atma is all*” is what the Vedanta says about the highest Reality, and this statement ultimately makes all of creation an illusory reflection of this Reality.

In his own lifetime, Frithjof Schuon encounters secularization and godlessness in all its confused and confusing final stages. He confronts our era with existence as an inner spiritual reality, an inner order, whose outer, sensibly perceived state is full of existential contradictions. The “outer and the inner” is a duality, simultaneously symbolical and real, to which Schuon constantly returns. With this dialectical outer-inner, and with the hierarchy of the Divine Order, Frithjof Schuon demolishes the false conception of the secularized world about itself as an uncontradictory one-dimensionality.

When Schuon rejects the profane conception of the universal relativity of things, he instead puts forward the inner and the outer as an intrinsic dialectical duality in the Creation: the relative is ultimately not a quantitative relationship, but the bearer of an inner quality. The qualitative thus becomes the manifested expression of the Creation as the bearer of an inner spirituality, down to the very core of sensory phenomena. This microcosmic testimony expresses the essential contents of Frithjof Schuon’s teachings on the unity of God and His work. God is present in His Creation; He encompasses it, upholds it, and gives it life. “The world is naught, *Atma is all.*”

Man is the center of Creation. Like no other creature, man has been endowed with spiritual faculties as a result of which man, “the image of God”, has been given vicegerency in this earthly existence, and consequently a responsibility for his life and his actions. In Schuon’s work, man’s spiritual faculties, which give him this special place in Creation, are summed up in the term “intelligence”. This term occupies an important position in Schuon’s teachings and writings. Rational, logically discursive thinking; the faculties of emotion, memory and imagination with its creativity, are all valuable gifts we have received. In addition to this “mortal spirituality”, the Creator has given us a Spirit, an immortal Intellect, *increated et increabile*, as Meister Eckhart expressed it. Man is thus part of eternity, joined to the Divine Itself, and in possession of the ability to conceive of and connect himself to the Absolute.

Secularized man, as we meet him in the twentieth century, relies entirely upon his mortal sensory organs. His understanding of reality is that which he receives and acts upon with his sense organs. By means of empirical data, structural analyses, model building, and postulated “forces” and “laws” of nature, from whatever outer manifestations, the Creation may provide, he attempts to form an “idea of the world”, an idea of a “reality” that he can control and dominate. Contemporary secularized man lives in this illusory world, and refuses to realize that everything is based on two fundamental mistakes: in the first place that his mental faculties are themselves part of the totality he believes he can understand, that his thinking is only “*un outil pour faire des outils*”, a tool for making other tools, as Henri Bergson so strikingly expressed it. Secondly, he refuses to see that a created thing is related to its creator, and consequently limited by form,

imperfection, and contradictions. Since secularized man sees only the outer manifestations of the Creation, like Sisyphus he faces a hope-less task. In addition, the rational is analytical and separative in its very nature, and is thus incapable of providing a unified coherent “theory of the world”.

Secularized man believes he can obtain an objective, i.e. true, conception of reality by means of his own thought processes. In fact, it is exactly the opposite: he enters his own subjectivity, and his evidence is only what the sense organs can observe about how the outer manifested forms of the Creation appear and how they are understood. The secularized world claims to possess great authority because of the belief that it has evidence for the true and the real in a pure and unadulterated form of objectivity. At the same time, this authority is presented as a moral asset of the impartial scientific method, and it becomes part of the illusory conceptual world in which secularized man lives. In his subjectivism, he winds up in a *cul-de-sac*, incapable of obtaining a true picture of objectivity.

In dealing with the concepts associated with subjectivity-objectivity, Frithjof Schuon’s message is also of very profound significance. For secularized man, experiencing his existence as a one-dimensional sensory phenomenon, any concept of objectivity will be limited to such phenomena, in a world of matter where empiricism, measurements in time and space, structural analyses, and ideas about causal connections have unquestioned validity. This implies that man experiences himself as the obvious subject, and the world of the senses as the equivalent object. The hierarchical order proclaimed in Frithjof Schuon’s writings is sustained by the sovereignty we express as the Absolute. The Subjective rests in this Divine Order, and that which called “object” is thus the creational order whose source is the Absolute and whose manifested reality is “the world”, and hence man himself.

This hierarchy characterizes the relationship between subject and object. God is the Subject and His creation is the object. This is Schuon’s answer to the illusory view of existence, but it is an elliptical way of expressing a more complicated reality which Schuon describes in many of his works. The Subjective rests in the Absolute, but the Absolute “knows Itself”, and thus brings forth the consciousness that reveals itself as gnosis. This mystical revelation of Immanence makes man himself the bearer of his own God-affirming subjectivity.⁶

God, the transcendent Absolute, is the source of subjectivity and of the consciousness that reveals itself in the object, man as a receptacle for the Immanent. This means that man participates in the subjectivity of consciousness, which in turn means that the subjective objectifies itself. Secularized man believes that he encounters reality in the external multiplicity and flow of material things. According to Frithjof Schuon, the objective is reality in itself; the complementarity “subject-object” implies a meeting with the ultimate foundation of reality,

⁶ *Avoir un centre*, p.77.

Being. We must see things as they are, and not as illusory representations.⁷ Man, with his intelligence and thus with his consciousness, is capable of comprehending the ultimate objective foundation of existence, Being. This is what Schuon calls an expression of the human prerogative. In his subordination under the Absolute, man has the status of “object”, a “mirror of the Absolute”, and at the same time he is a prolongation of the divine Subjectivity. The object and the subject meet and unite in the intellectual Light that is a gift from God.⁸

Reality is not a “multiverse”, an aimless and meaningless existential stream, reality is the simultaneously transcendent and immanent foundation, Being, from which everything emanates and through which everything comes into existence. The twentieth century increasingly reveals the spiritual catastrophe brought about by secularization. All norms, standards, and principles of order are threatened when all human activity finally results in heedless transgression beyond all bounds. In Heidegger’s thinking we encounter a tragic insight into and consciousness of this catastrophic situation, and when he tries to revive the *to on* (ontology) of antiquity, this pseudo-metaphysical fantasy becomes as it were the coda of a great deal of speculation with no basis in reality. Heidegger’s ideas issue forth as the “swan song” of profane western philosophy.

In this time of spiritual crisis, Frithjof Schuon appears with his declaration of the highest Divine Reality, which as Beyond-Being is the source from which everything emanates, and as Being and in Its immanent presence in creation gives existence life and meaning, gives man his *raison d’être* and dignity. The ongoing secularization has led to a situation where not only doubters and deniers, but also those who devote themselves to the Highest, are faced with “problems” with no obvious solutions. Modernism has even affected theology, resulting in confusion and uncertainties. This is especially true with respect to the concept of Omnipotence, *i.e.* that everything in existence is totally dependent upon God.

Omnipotence is above all associated with two questions: what is the meaning of predestination, and how can one explain that God, Who is said to be good, permits evil to exist in the world? It is primarily in his book *Comprendre l’Islam* (p. 89ff) that Schuon deals with these questions, by expounding the concept of a transcendent Reality and a closely connected, subordinate existential order, Being, from which creation emanates. This is a divine hierarchical order, which dialectically links the Absolute to the relative. Predestination assumes that God must have knowledge “in advance” about events that will occur “in the future”. Since contemporary man is bound up in his existentiality, this must seem to be an absurd assumption right from the beginning. Furthermore, since Omnipotence implies that these events are included in God’s immutable plan, the answer given by modern secularized man is that the future is

⁷ Ibid., pp. 73 and 76f.

⁸ Frithjof Schuon, *L’Esotérisme comme principe et comme voie*, Paris: Dervy Livres, 1975, pp. 16, 34 and 41.

determined by positivism, that the “destiny” of the future lies in mankind’s hands, in our own positive efforts. In the gradually increasing theological confusion, the believer, more and more influenced by positivism, finds no answers either.

Schuon’s answer is that the Divine Order Itself is sovereign. The hierarchical order of creation, understood as a principal basis, emanates from the transcendent Absolute. God, in His absolute transcendence, is absolutely free, exalted above anything that is bound by time and space, but in the Divine Being there is what we call the hierarchical order of creation, as an intrinsic existential order. The creational process originates and develops according to this order. In the creation, dominated by time and space, a concept such as predestination becomes incomprehensible, and it is also inaccessible to earthly human consciousness. Predestination belongs to the transcendent Absolute, the Divine Being, where timelessness prevails, where there is neither “before” nor “after”.

It should be strongly emphasized that the hierarchical order of creation occupies an important place in Frithjof Schuon’s teaching. This order is pre-existential, it is the principal order upon which the creation-to-be rests, and it is immutable. When theological aberrations culminate in the idea that God’s omnipotence encompasses a Will, which would mean that any event can be abolished or reversed by an act of divine Will, the hierarchical order of creation constitutes an immutable hindrance to such speculations. God cannot make done undone, He cannot change justice to injustice, truth to falsehood. This is why Schuon does not give the Fall of Man a dominant place in the Judeo-Christian story of creation: it is not the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it is the Tree in the midst of Eden that becomes the center of Paradise, because the Tree of Life is a symbol for the hierarchical order of creation.

This order is in Being, the Logos, but Being has a divine, uncreated aspect, which becomes manifested in creation as an ongoing process. It is in uncreated Being that we encounter the hierarchical order of creation, which is thus understood as pre-existent. Creation means duality and relativity, a relationship between something superior, and something subordinate. In view of this relationship, the concept of power becomes meaningful. God is Omnipotent in His creation, but the immutable hierarchical order of creation is encompassed within this power. Here Frithjof Schuon gives an answer to the second question that arises when man ponders over God’s Omnipotence: why does evil exist, if God is declared to be Good?

When we encounter the hierarchical order of creation on the existential level, we are continually faced with limitations and contradictions. Creation is form, and form is limitation, contradiction, and thus all ideological belief systems are powerless to realize their dreams of a conflict-free existence, “a Heaven on earth”. The work of creation is related to, and subordinate to, the Creator, and thus, due to its confinement in form, it is also subordinate to the conditions of the hierarchical order, however much we may strive to avoid its effects. We fight against illnesses, and we manage to cure many of them, but illness as such cannot be abolished. We strive and pray for peace on earth, but we must live with existential contradictions, as we meet

them in fraternal conflicts. We meet suffering, we meet evil, and in our helplessness we tend to give all of this a principal significance: evil as such. In Frithjof Schuon's writings, even this question is answered.

The entire creation is a radiation of the Sovereign Good, an expression of God's outpouring love. This positive radiation carries within itself its own negation, which is manifested in existential contradictions. As Schuon expresses it, in the prolongation of the creation, negation and denial finally appear. To the plus sign must be added the minus sign, so to speak. It is in negation and denial that we encounter evil, but evil is and must remain a negation, subordinate to the power of destruction expressed by God's Omnipotence.

The unique position of Frithjof Schuon's message is especially characterized by the fact that he provides an answer to the spiritual misery of our times. His message is an alternative to the spiritual crisis of the twentieth century, which contemporary secularized man cannot resolve. Frithjof Schuon was not a reformer, who would reestablish "lost values" and make "promises" for the future. The deepest significance of Frithjof Schuon's message is an unveiling of the Real, formulated as a Truth expressing this Reality as *sophia perennis*. When we say that this is an alternative to the plight of our times, we mean that this is a message that bears within it the attributes of eternity and plenitude.

In the long chain of esoteric tradition there are many links to which Frithjof Schuon often chooses to make reference. René Guénon was a thinker of great importance as an interpreter of oriental wisdom and as an interpreter of fundamental symbols in a world of materialistic idolatry. His interpretations, together with his penetrating criticism of modernism, comprise spiritual works of pioneering significance *in* a world sinking into spiritual darkness.

However, Frithjof Schuon's work is connected in a special way with two historical figures. Plato rejected the secularized world of the ancient Greeks by means of his speculative philosophizing, his ontology, and his dualism. Plato's profound work was that he reestablished transcendent reality, i.e. the position of the Spirit as predominant, uncontradictory unity, and the presence of the Spirit as a guiding light for the human soul. Plato's spiritual work has been a source of guidance for two and a half millennia. It is Shankara who formulated the eternal truths of the Vedanta for posterity in an understandable *way*. From the Vedantic *Plana*, the knowledge of the Real, Shankara extracts the pure Subject, the pure Self. Shankara proclaims an objectification of the Real as a totality, and hence he becomes, as Frithjof Schuon writes, the paver of the great path to gnosis.

Looking back in time, we like to pause before historical figures who have produced a legacy of spiritual work that is characterized by timelessness, the Eternal. We pause before three names: Plato, Shankara, Frithjof Schuon.