



About the traditionalist gossipry

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There has been in the recent years a strange focus, or fascination, by some modern scholars for the private life of René Guénon, and some analysis that seem totally detached of the deep spiritual and initiatory aspect of his work. In other words, the recent books published about Guénon seem more interested in the man himself than in the content of his work. Some examples of this fascination can be found in the books about the history of traditionalism and its modernity (sic), as well as, among other subjects, numerous articles on the internet dealing with the political extensions of traditionalism or some negative aspects of Guénon's and other traditionalists personal lives.

All these articles, because of their rational and down to earth approach, seem to come to the same conclusion, and denigrate René Guénon, as well as Tradition by extension, by bringing up various accusations, and by focusing over and over on René Guénon's life as an individual (and the one of other traditionalists or spiritual masters by extension) instead of the content of his work. This is taking the wrong approach, the materialistic approach, and forgetting that a man, as imperfect as he is, can become the vector of very strong spiritual influences while walking on the path of initiation, which would lead to the writing of very inspired works of knowledge that are independent of the quality of life the author himself decides to live. It is however an undeniable sign of our times that the gossips attract more, while the texts of spiritual masters like Shankarâchârya or Ibn 'Arabî attract less the attention of the "traditionalist seekers."

Guénon himself observed these symptoms at the time he published his work, and his words could not be of more actuality, more than half a century later:

"Here stands, before all, an obvious symptom of the intellectual confusion that reigns everywhere in the world of today; but we should not forget that this very confusion is wanted by what hides itself behind the modern deviation as a whole; this reflection is particularly essential when we see cropping up, from diverse directions at the same time, some attempts of illegitimate utilizations of the very idea of "tradition" by some people who wish they could unduly assimilate what it implies for their own conceptions in any given domain. Of course, it is not about suspecting beyond the good faith of the ones or the others, because, in many cases, it might very well be just pure and simple misunderstanding; most of our contemporaries' ignorance toward everything that possesses a really traditional character is so complete that there is no good reason to be surprised at it; but at the same time, we are forced to also acknowledge that these errors of interpretation and these involuntary mistakes serve certain "plans" too well so that we could wonder whether their increasing diffusion is not due to one of these "suggestions"

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which dominate the modern mentality and which, precisely, always tend at the end to the destruction of everything that is Tradition in the very sense of the word.”¹

So is ignorance the word which should be retained to explain the lack of interest for the spiritual masters’ texts and the attraction for gossips? But one should wonder if this is really ignorance that leads “historians” to write about Tradition and politicians to associate Tradition to fascism, sending the wrong message therefore spreading a fire of misunderstanding through the world. Since one of René Guénon’s wishes was to restore an authentic initiatory teaching, his determination which implied some direct actions in the modern world in order to push the counter-initiatory influences away, was interpreted from the outside as a political action, even though it was only question of a genuine traditional action. This is what Guénon also has to say about this:

“But there are other distortions that are more subtle, and because of this more dangerous; all have, besides, as a common character the ability to make the idea of tradition descend to a purely human level, even though, on the very contrary, what is really traditional can only imply an element of a suprahuman order. There stands indeed the essential point, the one that constitutes in some way the very definition of Tradition and of everything that is linked to it; and there also stands, of course, what must be prevented to be acknowledged at any cost in order to maintain the modern mentality in its illusions, and all the more so to give it even more new illusions, which, far from agreeing with a restoration of the suprahuman, on the contrary will have to lead more effectively this mentality toward the worse modalities of the infrahuman. Besides, if we needed to be convinced of the importance given to the negation of the suprahuman by the conscious and unconscious agents of the modern deviation, we just have to see how much all those who pretend to be “historians” of religions and of the other forms of Tradition (which they blend moreover generally under the same name of “religions”) are bent before all on explaining them exclusively with humans factors; it does not matter that, following some schools of thoughts, these factors are either psychological, social or other things, and even the multiplicity of the explanations thus offered allows them to seduce a greater number of people more easily; What is a constant, this is the definite will to reduce everything to the human level and not to let anything subsist that is beyond it; and those who believe the value of the destructive “criticism” are from then on all ready to confuse Tradition with just anything, since there is indeed, in the idea they have been instilled, nothing left which could really distinguish it from what is devoid of any traditional character.”²

The work of René Guénon unveils very clearly the nature of the traditional mind and its completely opposite position toward the modern thought, therefore the individuals in affinity with the materialistic mind are directly targeted by Guénon’s work. Showing that the traditional mind proceeds from an Intelligence that embraces all the domains of existence (in his metaphysical acceptance), and that the materialistic mind is absolutely groundless, or to express it differently, that its basis is his refusal to accept that the universal existence proceeds of unifying principles whereas everything in the universal functioning proves the contrary, is a difficult thing to accept for those who persist in promoting the modern thought.

¹ René Guénon, *Le règne de la quantité et les signes des temps [The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times]*, ch. 31, p.203-204, Gallimard, 1994. Translated by the author.

² Ibid. p.206

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Since René Guénon's work approaches some metaphysical concepts inaccessible to the criticism of the anti-traditionalists, the criticism can only concentrate itself on the individual. Get the bottom dirty in order to hide the Top. This is still done today in the form of personal attacks on the individuals who show interest for Guénon's work: attacks on their race, the religion they decided to embrace, their affinity to an initiatory organization, disdain regarding their level of education, the geographical location where they decided to live, the person they decided to marry. The expression of this criticism is often expressed violently, in the form of personal insults directly targeted at obtaining a similar emotional reaction. Even more destructive, because they have a long term effect in the public opinion, are the attacks in the form of lies and unfounded rumors. These attacks are intended to affect and stimulate the ego of the targeted individuals, which by the way do not affect in any way the traditional principles since they are of a metaphysical and non-individual dimension. Rarely do we see attacks directly targeted toward the basis of Tradition.

Therefore, based on the warnings quoted above, offered by René Guénon more than half a century ago and of such actuality today, we would like to warn our readers to stay away from anything that brings Tradition down to the human level and to focus instead their efforts on the study of spiritual masters texts. The initiatory path implies that the seeker takes an active part in meditating on the content of the old masters texts. Secular subjects will not bring the seeker closer to the center of the world. On the contrary, they will keep him stuck on the circumference of the circle, which represents the material world, and therefore the center of the world becomes less and less tangible, and most detractors of the traditions of this world just do not believe it exists because they themselves closed the door that gives access to this sacred kernel. The spiritual masters' texts, as well as a spiritual influence obtained by an initiation, are the only guides that will keep the sincere seekers on the path to perfection, towards their ultimate goal which is the spiritual realization.