



A commentary about Mark Sedgwick's interview

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At the occasion of the 2004 release of Mark Sedgwick's latest book, given so conveniently, and without much originality, the title "Against the Modern World," the web site *religioscope* interviewed the author about Traditionalism and *René Guénon's legacy today*.

Very unfortunately, it quickly appears from the superficial answers given by Sedgwick that the status of *historian* he decided to take does not give him the position of an objective observer, but instead his answers show a complete lack of understanding of the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Tradition. A typical example would be his comparison of René Guénon with Jean-Paul Sartre: "I'd honestly compare Guénon to Sartre [...] they're the same sort of figure. [...] I don't know whether I myself prefer Guénon or Sartre though!" The fact that Sartre was an atheist philosopher does not seem to bother the "historian of traditionalism," who keeps referring to Guénon as an *amateur philosopher* who was not recognized by his peers.

René Guénon's work is before all metaphysical and the spiritual content underlying it seems to have escaped Sedgwick's scholastic, if not superficial, scrutiny.

Throughout the interview, a recurring thesis seems to be used as a rhetorical figure of speech, *Traditionalism being, in many ways, essentially modern*. This kind of argumentation is obviously very sterile and based uniquely on the historical emergence of Guénon's work in the 20th century. It is as if the author wanted to create a confusion, by diminishing the importance of Tradition with such cheap shots, ultimately in order to sell his book.

Once and for all, Tradition has nothing to do with existentialism, conflicts of personal relationships and historical elements, and describing it through such unfair themes is a search for sensationalism, if not something ugly hides behind it.

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At the beginning of the interview, *Religioscope* says, announcing Sedgwick's view: "The Traditionalist movement, composed of a number of often secret and sometimes very influential religious groups in the West and in the Islamic world, affected the lives of many individuals and entered into both mainstream and radical political life in Italy and Russia. It also influenced the development of religious studies in the United States and France." What *Religioscope* affirms here is a huge, arrogant, ignorant, and malicious untruth. The fundamental and intentional error is to confuse religion with Tradition, to confuse René Guénon's work with the sectarian religious thinking and to attribute to Tradition the agitations of the religious groups.

If we ask the standard question *quid prodest?* we will understand what hides behind this masquerade.