

The Two Names of God

‘As far as we can see the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of unconscious Being.’ C.G.Jung

The creation account in Genesis is, like all the early myths of mankind, a groping towards it, but it is extremely contradictory, with woeful results for our culture. For in it, there are two names of God and two quite different creation myths, and our first duty as heirs of that tradition, is to distinguish between them.

Everyone who ever read the Book of Genesis has noticed a change of style and content at midpoint. There is no explanation of it in the commentaries and no warning in the text. But what is simply called ‘God’ in the early stages, becomes ‘The Lord God’ in the later ones. That, however, can give us the hint. It marks the entry of lordship into human culture under the impact, almost certainly, of war. It also marks the coming of ‘religion’ in a way that first myth does not. The first myth is not religious. It is a statement that everything that is, is ‘good’, and expresses the natural instinct for the sacred that marks the human creature. The second myth has crossed into a command culture, in which ‘truth’ is explicitly what we are told it is. It has nothing to do with the natural instinct for the sacred, though it exploits it. The gap between the two myths marks one of the great transitions in human history: from a primitive nature-religion in which the deity comes male and female together, one and multiple, dark and light, birth and death, in short all those opposites which we find in the world and which the Chinese called the Tao, the Will of Heaven: to a god who is all male, states repeatedly that there is no other god beside him and demands an absolute obedience. And it is difficult, honestly, to grant Him that, for the Twoness of the world is manifest in everything we see and feel. The animals come in two by two. The plants are male and female (sometimes on the same tree). And the human creatures, when they appear at the end of a process very like the evolution for which Darwin got into such trouble from religious people, comes male and female too. The principle of the Two shines out of the very fabric of Being, like the *Lumen Naturae* of the alchemists, whose avowed work was consciousness, bred always between a man and the soror mystica, or ‘sister’. The first myth is empirical in this deep sense. What speaks is what is.

The second myth is not empirical at all and is indeed contemptuous of what merely is. Tertullian’s famous cry, ‘I believe because it is impossible’, *Credo quia impossibilis*, is the only way it can be believed. Figure it: an all male God creating the man first of all the creation, planting up Nature around him, bringing the animals to him to accept his lordship, as he accepts the lordship of ‘God’, creating the woman only at the end and taken out of man’s side in the clearest possible reversal of Nature, deliberately offensive to common sense, empirically absurd. Belief is now a matter of obedience, and the penalties for doubt are so extreme that doubt is usually left undeclared. This has been the great obstacle to consciousness in the Western world, and the reason for the strong element of hypocrisy and undeclared atheism among professional churchmen. ‘God has given us the papacy,’ said Alexander VI, who had in fact purchased it. ‘Let us enjoy it.’ They are not the words of a believing Vicar of Christ. In short, the second myth is an aid to tribal cohesion, but it has nothing to do with consciousness. The two myths are important for us, because if the first one had survived, a tradition of natural science would have grown up in the West far earlier than it did, and there would have been none of those conflicts between scientists and the Church which made religion publicly ridiculous. There is a great fall between the first myth and second., and it is a fall in consciousness. How could it possibly have happened? But we know

that already. It is what happens when an army breaks into an ancient civilisation, declares martial law in the cities, imposes curfews and subjects all the values of that civilisation to the war. We have known that in our own time. Every century has known it for some five thousand years; we can hardly imagine a world without it. Yet the first myth of Genesis came out of a culture which preceded it, and is becoming, for that reason once more important. The Neolithic culture which the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas called Old Europe and believed to be the original character of the culture, grew up from the beginnings of farming in the seventh and eighth millennia and was undisturbed until the beginning of the third—some thousands of years, therefore, of unimpeded development. The culture stretched from the islands of the far North, down through Europe and the Mediterranean to the great alluvial plains of Tigris and Euphrates where it reached its highest development, the written cuneiform script and a rich literature. This can, to a degree, stand for the whole culture. The wonderful device of pressing marks into damp clay and drying them into virtual immortality, found no equivalent elsewhere. Yet the culture was remarkably uniform, founded in the same human nature and the same earth, in a co-operation on which the civilisation totally depended. Thus at the same winter solstice the sun came up the passage in the great tumulus-temple at Newgrange in Ireland, lighting its inmost chamber with the gold and scarlet of the winter dawn, while Horus was being born in Egypt (as Christ would be born at Bethlehem); and the rite of the Sacred Marriage celebrated in the great, earth-brick temples of Sumer: always between a man who represented the people, and the Goddess who was Nature.

This was the fundamental symbol of the Neolithic culture. In multiple forms it was expressed in all its religion. And as the culture shared the same character, so it shared the same fate. Through all the millennia of its development they had built no castles and trained no armies; and then, quite suddenly, they needed them. The time was the beginning of the third millennium. The great Sumerian scholar, Thorkild Jacobsen, writes: 'As far as we can judge the fourth millennium and the ages before had been moderately peaceful. Wars and raids were not unknown; but they were not constant and they did not dominate existence. In the third millennium they appear to have become the order of the day.' (Jacobsen 'The Treasures of Darkness' p77) At the same time as this was happening in Sumer, the temple at Newgrange went out of service and the long peace of the Neolithic all over Europe collapsed under the impact of people who had undergone none of the thousands of years of tutelage by earth, but were good horsemen and good thieves. It was the end of the Neolithic and the beginning of the Bronze Age, the first great time of war. Jacobsen continues: 'Queens and great ladies like their humble sisters faced the constant possibility that the next day might find them widowed, torn from home and children and enslaved in a barbarous household.' (Jacobsen *ibid.*) The bell was tolling for an unbelievably rich and interesting culture, as a bronze-weaponed people with no inkling of what it was about, penetrated into every corner.

The small promontory on the edge of Asia which would one day be Europe was a highly attractive object, perhaps the most naturally green and fertile territory on the whole globe. With the long growing season of its Northern latitude, but warmed by the gulf stream and watered by its rains, it was the natural place for a civilization to develop. There were others, certainly, generally in the valleys of great rivers where irrigation performed the same service as the weather, and brought its own lessons in the interaction of man and Nature. But even today Europe, when we return to it, seems uniquely damp and green.

To put a seed in the ground and watch it grow is an education, and the incomers had never had it. It surpasses the production of food, for it teaches also the creative power of mortal men and women with the earth which is immortal. It is rich in potential religious meaning,

though not in the sense of either prohibitions or commands. The human creature itself is far more in the centre. The hunter kills his food or takes it from a neighbour. To create it with the earth gives a different sense of that earth. That was the secret of the Neolithic, and the basis of its religious ritual. It is the space-between, the syzygy which is a Greek word standing for the wonder of the Two, or rather the force-field that forms between them. (See appendix, Syzygy). The man or woman who puts in the seed in and the earth that receives it are the fundamental Two in that new reality of civilisation. The human is masculine to Nature, which is eternal, the Goddess; the human is of far greater consequence than in the father-god cultures that followed it. The great steppes of Asia bred a highly skilled human being, but not such as to create a civilisation. They could, however, destroy it; and from the Bronze Age onwards, that fertile promontory that would be Europe was totally remodelled in their image.

Yet the Neolithic remains of absolute importance for us for two reasons. The first is that the roots of what Europe has to give the world are there, and not in the squalid hill forts and battles of a later age. The second is the evidence it gives of how the human psyche develops, in relationship with the sky and earth of its environment, if not continuously interfered with and distorted by war. Since we may be approaching a time in which this becomes once more a possible condition of human life, the Neolithic stands as a vital inspiration. Particularly the warning of Marija Gimbutas assumes of prophetic importance.

It is a gross misunderstanding to imagine warfare as endemic to the human condition. Widespread fighting and fortification building homes have indeed been the way of life for most of our ancestors from the Bronze Age up until now. However this was not the case in the Palaeolithic or the Neolithic. There are no depictions of arms (weapons used against other humans) in Palaeolithic cave paintings, nor are there remains of weapons used by man against man during the Neolithic of Old Europe. From some 150 paintings which survive from Catal Huyuk there is not one depicting a scene of conflict or fighting, or of war or torture.

The first myth of Genesis comes out of this period. Its first image is the Spirit of God hovering over the waters, and the visible world emerging from between them, as in an act of birth. It is one in which both 'God' and those waters are involved as with each other. In it the principle of the Two, the relationship between things rather than the individual things themselves, is at the centre. Moreover, as the work of each Day in the seven of creation is finished, it is pronounced 'good'. It is a value judgement quite absent in the second myth, and it concerns the mere fact of being. It is the emergence of that mysterious, blood-pumping muscle which is the human heart, as the most important element in consciousness. For it sits at the centre of the body and it changes the chemistry throughout it, in response to what is happening in the outer world. And the body's chemistry is its consciousness. The heart, in that sense, is like a wind-harp hung in an apple tree that hums with the breezes, and thunders and crashes with the storm, but always in response.

Aeschylus, the first great Greek dramatist, is rooted in the same Neolithic soil. The great and amorous sky curved over the earth and lay upon her as a pure lover. The rain, the humid flux, descending from heaven for human and animal...germinated the wheat, swelled the furrows with fecund mud and brought forth the buds in the orchards.'

This is Aphrodite speaking. The relationship between the people and their environment is essentially erotic—expressed in various ways throughout the culture with, at the centre, always some version or other of the Sacred Marriage, the Syzygy. (See chapter... 'The Pre-Patriarchal Cultures')

In the first myth of Genesis the name of God, Elohim, is identical with what is. 'God' is 'is-ness'. From this angle, the problem of consciousness is to bring 'God' into flesh--in the sense of the almost universal religious theme of incarnation. Otherwise, 'God' can have no consciousness, will have no guts to feel it with, no sentient stomach, will not suffer and will not have joy. Nature is shot through with joy, as we know from watching any family of young animals at play. As the first myth continues, a process of evolution unfolds, always in the 'place between' some Two Light is separated from darkness, the waters from the dry earth; and between them everything else happens. When the animals form, it is always two by two—with the power of more creation between them. . When the human follows them, they come also two by two, and they are 'made in the image and likeness of 'God', that is Elohim—for they are the conscious Two. The first creation myth is undoubtedly a spiritual document but it makes no prohibitions and no commands. In the Yahweh myth. the locus of the sacred has changed; the Two has contracted into a One. Nature has become the enemy; the creative miracle of the Syzygy has become enemy too. There is no more love, only obedience. 'God' is a tribal deity, capable of ordering a genocide on a troublesome neighbour and leading His people through the centuries of blood-soaked history recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. The value of consciousness itself has vanished—absorbed into the consciousness of the tribe, as happens always in war.

It is only necessary to watch the fox picking his way down a hedge, or a hawk hovering over a valley to know that Nature is shot through with a consciousness so brilliant that Adam and Eve's was only a twilight. But they had the heart. And the heart is a burden as well as a joy and most of us don't want it. The fox does not feel for the rabbit that screams in its jaws, and we would rather ourselves not feel it either. The lion will chew through the haunch of an eland without troubling to kill it first; and if it does kill it, it is not to cut short its suffering. We can feel for both predator and prey, and if we don't nobody will, it will remain unconscious. The task of containing both the horror and the beauty of what exists descends on us, simply because Nature has made us capable of carrying it. We don't want it. We escape anywhere we can, into intellect, cruelty, power, entertainment: the escapes are so many. Yet consciousness is only in the reality of syn-pathy, en-pathy, con-passion: that suffering-with which is also joy-with, as the mystics know. It is only in that, that we are made 'in the image and likeness of God'—Elohim in matter, which dies as gods cannot die, and feels as gods cannot feel. If the deity (as Jung suspected) longs itself for consciousness and can only reach it in the breathing, suffering creature which is the animal, then that is a purpose implicit in creation since the first emergence of the stars.

The whole of Western history can be seen in terms of its evasion, the evasion of that huge responsibility which is the Two, ourselves and that mystery which is only manifest in that Nature which surrounds us. When we pass from Elohim into Yahweh, chasms open within the nature of things and destroy our consciousness of what they are, for their reality is always only in the whole. When we think logically, that opposites exclude each other, we are immediately out of contact with the is-ness. Jung's central image is the Self, simply because it is what he found. It is the Whole working continuously in the multiplicity which is its own nature. How can we think a God who is male and also female, one and also many, a hawk and also the mouse in its claws, a lion and also the eland? But in the first myth the world comes out of the darkness bit by bit, and always in terms of opposites. The simple, lapidary words in which it is described have been the womb of the mystical currents which survived within all three patriarchal religions by keeping a low profile. They are the water-table of the psyche, essentially the same everywhere: found in the Tao of Lao Tsu, the Upanishads of the

Hindus, the words of 'the dark philosopher' Heraclitus. They are a level where Jung moved by nature, and met again in the Pueblo Indian in New Mexico. It is like the Well in the I Ching. You can change the city but you can't change the Well. It is simply the ground level of the psyche, the opposites and the world that emerges in the space between. For the great Muslim mystic Ibn'Arabi, the imagination was where they met, where matter and spirit themselves meet. It is the first great Syzygy, perpetually making what is new, what has never happened before, never will again. For Ibn'Arabi the mystics are those who are possessed by it. When Thomas Traherne says that 'something eternal behind everything appeared', Ibn'Arabi would say, yes, that it is the imagination in that child, the meeting of the divine and the human. When he adds that it spoke to his expectation and moved his desire, Ibn'Arabi might say, 'Yes, it is erotic as Elohim is erotic.' Its light is always kindled in a space between: someone reads a book or looks at a painting, or meets someone else in whom it is present. It evokes, it calls-into a space between.

It was the same light that burst upon Jung, when like those first mythographers he looked out upon the world and just looked. It was the brilliance of an African dawn, and watching the herds of grazing animals moving like slow rivers over the plain, the predators no doubt coasting like outriders around them and occasionally picking one out for themselves, he imagined himself as the first man to see all this, and who did not yet know that he had in that moment created it; for without a somebody to see it, (and we should add the feeling response specific to the human), it would all have gone on, eating, giving birth, dying, heads nodding through hundreds of millions of years, down to its unknown end.' In that moment the human, for Jung, found its place in the creation, and Jung had found his myth. It would run, now, like a leitmotif through all the work. 'As far as we can tell the sole purpose of human existence is to strike a light in the darkness of unconscious being.'

We don't want it. That is the tragedy of the human. We cannot bear the responsibility of the Two, we cannot bear Love. Or is it a sign only of the time it needs to develop an ego capable of taking it on? Meanwhile we avoid it. We have the richest possible symbol of consciousness at the centre of our culture. It is a natural symbol, as old as human consciousness: the man hanging on the World Tree, at the centre of all the opposites and, in his nature as man, holding them together. 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'—yet held there by what they do. And after the hanging on the tree, the resurrection. Both together would be consciousness and we don't want it. We have turned the symbol on its head. Christ did it, so we don't have to. It is much easier to obey.

The reluctance of the human to carry the burden of consciousness, was perhaps understood better in the pagan world than in our own. Ovid knew it well. In the *Metamorphoses*, all is change, but always down, into less than human states of being. It is as if suffering consciously the passion of the instinctual world, were just too much. Teilhard de Chardin makes a passing reference to 'men of prey': those who take refuge in the simplicity of the eagle and care as little. Our mental hospitals shelter (inadequately) those who have retreated into the consciousness of tree or stream of water, for the same reasons, like Daphne into her tree. But there is no invention quite as good, for that purpose, as the Christian dogma of the atonement. For that lifts the whole responsibility off the shoulders of an always grateful people, and loads it onto Christ. People want this very much, and the more authoritarian the better. It begins in the second myth of Genesis, the Yahweh myth. Let us rehearse once more its absurdities, for the crux of the matter is still why anyone ever believed it, let alone oneself: the God called Lord, who is all-male; the human male made first in the creation, the garden planted up around him and for him, Eve at the end, born out of his body in a parody of

Nature. And then the curious story of the serpent and the tree of knowing good and evil, the ethical consciousness that among all the aspect of consciousness is most forbidden—and which men in war are so willing to let go. The anaesthetising, therefore, of the natural sense of good and evil which distinguishes what is good and healthy from what is decayed and stinks. The quality of the last five thousand, blood-soaked years is simply that so few used that faculty: the doctrine of atonement made it unnecessary . Nature's sin was disobedience, and indeed it obeys nothing except itself. The bizarre argument was invented that Christ became human in order to atone for our involvement in Nature, and open the doors once more to God's love. It would be strictly conditional, so not love at all. Little would be required of us. We must be baptised, which meant washed clean of Nature. Then we could benefit from Christ's death, dispensed by the Church's ministers who must stand in the place of God. Consciousness does not come into any of it anywhere. It is the real reason for the moral squalor which is emerges out of religion like puss squeezed from a decaying organism.

I end on a lighter note, the sheer folly of heroic men. When the Duke of Ferrara made a treaty with the pope by which he married his daughter, the famous Lucretia Borgia reputed to be so good at poisoning, the deal included a whole sheaf of certified indulgences. They conveyed remission of punishment due after death for sins, of which the Duke had a great many, like all of us. Questions of theology he left to the Church. They were not, he felt, in his field; but he did not sleep well. We may think that some remnants of natural ethic still remained to disturb his nights. He liked, therefore, the assurance that the pope was on his side, even a member of the family, so that he need not fear too much from the fires of hell, which were, of course, just another stupid invention of the patriarchy.

Psychologically it is difficult to get out of the Yahweh myth, it is so powerful a force: but once we are outside it all seems, like Alice said, 'curiouser and curiouser.'