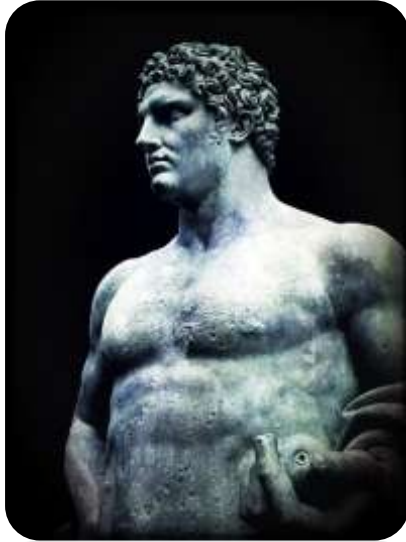


# The Concept of European Tradition we are fighting for

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“The term “Tradition” does not seem to have the same appeal to everyone, nor the same meaning. Of those who use it extensively, some mean the supposed “Christian” Tradition and others the so-called “European”, referring to two different trends that were for centuries interrelated, although they were born independently and operated separately, and which today tend again towards their separation. Others, the esotericists refer to an inner Tradition, which is nothing but the product of their imagination or their credulity. On the other hand, when I refer to Tradition, I define it as the special structure and display of a very specific way of thinking, in which the different socio-cultural forms of a well specified culture have registered through time and, especially, the traditions (in the plural, namely the “transmissions”), which represent all the habits and rituals that not only constitute the foundation of this culture, but they additionally characterize it.

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The persuasive power of a Tradition is mainly based on whether it is generally perceived as a “natural” manifestation, intended to regulate the human life from birth to grave, thus creating a kind of parallel time measurement through the ages and the cycle of the seasons. Tradition, however, like every rule, remains valid as long as you do not question it, or more precisely, as long as no question about the reason of its existence arises. The reason, of course, is always there and it is not difficult for someone to perceive it. Tradition creates the necessary framework for the harmonious unfolding of the activities and the days. Without this context, all meaning is lost and all cultures are annihilated.

By connecting the members of a nation with a series of official ceremonies and habits, Tradition helps them unite around a common destiny and in return this togetherness guarantees the perpetuation of a consensus. At the same time, by introducing an element of normality in the social relationships, the need for “mental food” is satisfied; a need that emerges from the deepest parts of all human beings (to use the phrase of Raymond Rouille) and has absolutely no connection to the food for the body, neither the food for the spirit.

Tradition therefore is not something useless, but its usefulness should not be perceived as a typical utility. From the moment the voice of the “eternal no” rises, the one Goethe refers to, from the first moment that a voice rises, asking “what is the use” of Tradition, the latter stops being obvious, it gets disconnected from the creative depths of the collective unconscious, gradually atrophies and eventually dies. Even worse, just the mere fact that such a question is raised, is literally the sign that things are not going well anymore. And the more those in favor of the Tradition try to justify it in order to support it, the more it gets stripped off the internal power that gushes from its self-generated and spontaneous character. Hence the paradox that Tradition is more powerful and



functional when people do not “feel” it as such, but it diminishes when the obligation to justify it arises.

What really represents Tradition cannot, therefore, be understood only by

logic, but is instead the object of inner knowledge and experience. In this case it is the soul that is important and not the intellect. In this sense, Tradition constitutes a totality, which the people of a certain nation, at a certain place and time, consider their collective property; an entity that allows these people to be who they are.

It is obvious that the respect for Traditions, even a tacit one, is directly linked to the respect for those who founded and delivered them. At this point there is a close relationship with the process of self-identity and the awakening of personality. The person is “born” through contrasts and “shaped” through a series of antagonisms that are capable of creating forms; antagonisms that are always relevant: people manifest themselves as being “unique” in the world, but at the same time identify with a stronger “traditional” image thanks to which they put themselves into perspective and find the place they deserve in space and time, as well as their rightful place within the environment and their heritage. However, the unscrupulous recognition of the ancestors, as well as the founders of the heritage and the creators of the Tradition, is required. One of the reasons why today Tradition is diminishing, could be the fact that the creators of the individual Traditions, those that shaped the specific structures of our culture, are no longer the subjects of respect, but on the contrary, their existence is now forgotten or forsaken.

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Tradition is not the past. We should never stop saying and repeating that. Tradition has the same relationship with the past, as with the present and the future. Tradition is beyond time. It does not refer to something that is ancient, something that is supposed to be “behind” us, but to something that is durable and “inside” us. Tradition is not the opposite of modernity, but the context in which all novelties that deserve seriousness and duration can occur. We should finally put an end to the linear conception of history in which the past, present and future correspond to three different “time frames”.

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No one can regenerate the lost Tradition, neither by orders nor with lamentations. Instead, we need to create a new one, or make the old one return in new forms, similar to those that existed in the beginning and then were gradually lost: the very ancient is thus restored with the strength of the very young. But let us emphasize this once more: Tradition is a framework in which renewals should constantly occur. A Tradition that is not constantly updated is a Tradition already dead and rightly so.

The rebirth of a Tradition does not mean the restoration of those things that belong to the irreversible yesterday, but instead, the giving of an appropriate, new and timely shape to something that is eternal. It does not mean an attempt to return to the past, but an attempt to connect with it. In order to emulate those who founded and delivered a Tradition, it is not enough to transmit it. We need to begin FOUNDING”.

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