

## ESSAY 33 – BOOK REVIEW

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### Five Best Books: from the Tree of Insight

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*But the devil whispered to him, saying:*

*O Adam! Shall I show thee the tree of immortality and power that wasteth not away?*

- Quran 20:120

Its once high walls may have long crumbled, its once mighty gates may have been breached, its once broad avenues may have become overgrown by crawling weeds and its once delightful pavilions may have been invaded by fork-tongued vipers, but even now, as night falls over the old garden once known as European Culture, an observant wanderer may still trace its perfect outlines, still smell its exquisite flowers and still admire its towering trees. Deep down, hidden in the forgotten heart of this old garden and unbeknown to the car-bound and screen-absorbed crowds that pass it by on highways leading elsewhere, stand two trees - they are invisible from the outside. They are very old - in fact, they date back to times long before there was this garden of them. One is of a golden and one is of a silverish hue - it is the latter that we are here concerned with. The builders of the garden referred to that silverish tree, which stands slightly off-centre and is somewhat smaller than its golden counterpart, as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, although visitors from the East more commonly referred to it by its older name: the Tree of Immortality. In any case, its oldest, original name has now been forgotten by all but a hidden few. It hardly matters because, these days, hardly anybody at all visits the old garden. These days, 'no trespassing' signs are posted all around it and unnamed authorities, concerned with public health, have been busy putting up wire fences and surveillance cameras to protect the good citizens from its dangers. Even so, occasionally a few intruders find their way in, sneaking in at night through some crack in the wall or some hole in the fence: mostly these are adventurous children, furtive outlaws and homeless weirdos. Whispered rumours have it, however, have it that, very occasionally, 'old believers' come to haunt the place, which to them is a sacred temple precinct, and that they there continue long-forbidden rites, speaking forgotten words, worshipping at the two old trees at the heart of the garden.

When the author's publisher, Arktos Media, suggested to him that he present his 'Top Five Books' to its readers, it became inevitable that he divulge his trespasses into that old garden of European Culture, but he cannot fully explain what it is like to actually be in that garden: the reader must enter it and see it for him- or herself. There are no secret passwords and magic spells to enter (well, for some purposes, there are a few but these are only for the few and the garden is meant for all, to stay or to visit) - one only needs the courage to brave the mad traffic, cross the busy highway, ignore the camera surveillance and worm one's way through the barbed wire. The silverish tree is easy to locate but hard to reach - it is found in the densest part of the forest where it is hardest to cut a path. The path leads through the grand old libraries, the mighty old museums and the dusty antiquarian bookstores of Europe. These may be, almost all, reduced to tourist attractions, selfie-decors and trophy-hunts for pretentious baby boomers, but this is where the sign-posts and road markers are hidden - in plain sight. It is obviously impossible to

reduce all these to a ‘Five Best Books’ fast food menu - especially because the highest art form in European Culture is, in fact, not literature, but *music*. Five minutes of a Bach concerto, a Mozart aria, a Beethoven symphony or a Wagner opera hold the same ‘immersive power’ with regard to European Culture as an entire library full of Europe’s high literature combined, a literature which, in the author’s considered opinion, also includes highlights from North and South American literature - from Poe to Borges (for a Traditionalist take on the Modern Era trajectory of European culture, cf. Wolfheze, *Sunset*, 222-43). Nevertheless, Arktos Media’s ‘culture war’ rallying cry must be heeded - so here is another ‘Five Best Books’ short-list. To align this ‘mountaineering’ expedition to the literary highlights in the garden of European Culture with the quest for the Tree of Insight around which this garden was created, however, the author will chose an appropriate theme: the *Woman of the West*, viz. the female anima of Europe (cf. Wolfheze, *The Former Earth*, 615-27). Europe is the only continent and the only culture which carries the name of a female. In Latin, the root-culture language of Europe, the name of continents are expressed by feminine nouns, but only one is the name of an actual, individual female. This is not a coincidence - it expresses a unique quality and it codes a distinctive reality. Here we are not speaking of some pathological ‘mother goddess’ complex or some nebulous ‘eternal feminine’ principle, waiting to be ‘discovered’ by some psycho-babbling analyst or some rambling mystic: this female quality and reality, although possessed of abstract, poetic and even mystical dimensions, is also as flesh-and-blood concrete and as down-to-earth tangible as it gets. As a woman who guides your mind, inspires your words and fills your dreams, but also calls your name, makes you home and holds your hand.

Let us start our literary journey up the Tree of Insight, starting at the root (book number 5), climbing up the trunk (book number 4), tracing the branch (book number 3), turning the leaf (book number 2) and, finally reaching the flower (book number 1). Our guide will be the Woman of the West - she will be there at the start and at the finish. But beware: she is tricky and wily, stronger than steel and quicker than mercury.

*Note that the following ‘Five Best Books’ list concerns itself with works of high literature, which per definition excludes non-fiction and non-mythopoetic works of (true) philosophy and science. Given the accumulative effect of decades of education-promoted ‘dumbing down’ and media-sponsored ‘idiocracy’, both categories have become near-inaccessible to young generations of Western readers. For some basic advice on how to approach the latter category, cf. Wolfheze, Alba Rosa, 278-9.*

5. *Divina Commedia*, ‘Divine Comedy’, by Dante Alighieri (completed 1321, following a vision in 1300). Here, we find not only the literary zenith of High Middle Ages, but the absolute literary summit of European civilization, written in the language that is not only closest to Europe’s root-culture language, Latin, but also Europe’s ‘language of love’ by excellence: Italian. Dante’s literary quest was guided by his ‘love before first sight’, the enigmatic Beatrice, and by its destiny, which is the Beatific Vision of the Empyrean, we know that she was the then-incarnation of the Woman of the West. Its 3-partite 99 cantos of verse, which occasionally gain the unearthly quality of genius inspiration, may well be said to be at the root of the entire European literary tradition. They have been subject to a sheer endless series of commentaries and meditations, but their reflection of *Prisca Sapientia* has been best analyzed by Traditionalist scholar. René Guénon. Because saying anything more about this work of high art, rightfully

dubbed Europe's *Summa Theologica* in verse, is bound to be either presumptuous - or worse - trite, we will here just let its author summarize its source:

*Oh abbondante grazia ond' io presunsi  
ficcar lo viso per la Luce Eterna  
tanto che la veduta vi consunsi*  
'O abundant grace by which I presumed  
to set my face to the Eternal Light  
so much that it my sight consumed'  
- *Paradiso*, XXXIII 82-4

4. *Le rouge et le noir*, 'The Red and the Black', by Stendhal, pseudonym used by Marie-Henri Beyle in honour of a beautiful blonde girl for which he stayed in the northern German city of that name (published 1830). Here, we find what is probably the most archetypal - and best written - product of that most modern and most unique form of European literature: the novel. It is written in the language that is, till today, Europe's most prestigious language of high culture: French, and with a mastery of narrative technique and psychological character-analysis that established it as a true bench-mark of literary craftsmanship. Stendhal's literary *tour de force*, literarily reflecting the glory of the age of Napoleon and Beethoven, achieves a perfect fusion between the typically modern 'personal development' narrative and the traditional heroic quest theme. Written by a 'typically French' womanizer, Stendhal is probably the first writer to write about women as 'equal' fellow-humans with private thoughts, motivations and experiences, worth recording outside of social and historical imperatives, but he does retain the timeless themes of courtly love and knightly grail quest for his male protagonists. In Stendhal's female protagonists, the Woman of the West no longer appears as angelic guide and supernatural muse, but she still retains an air of transcendent grace and natural nobility, both wholly appropriate to the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century's 'Romantic Age'. Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century European readers, inevitably exposed to the lowest forms of self-glorification and self-pornification practiced by (most of) post-modern Western 'women' (cf. *Alba Rosa*, 168-77), may wish to revisit *The Red and the Black* - and rediscover alternative femineities. They may also wish to remind themselves that Western men 'once were warriors': that, before 'masculinity' was re-defined in terms 'Wolf of Wallstreet' and 'rap gangster' role-models, there existed true warriors, of both the red (aristocratic) and the black (clerical) variety, dedicated to things that were more and stood higher than themselves, warriors pursuing these thing without being deterred by death and destruction (let alone by the 'Covid Karens' or 'BLM girls'):

*Chacun a devant les yeux un but qu'il poursuit jusqu'à la mort  
mais pour beaucoup ce but est une plume qu'ils soufflent devant eux dans l'air*  
'Everybody has set his sights on a goal that he pursues till his death  
but for most that goal is a feather that they blow into air in front of themselves'

3. *Преступление и наказание*, 'Crime and Punishment', by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (published 1866). Here, we find Europe's modern novel genre applied to a doubly psychological and philosophical analysis of the head-on clash between Tradition, as embodied in Christian ethics and rural-based social values, and Modernity, as embodied in materialist secularism and urban-imposed anomie. It was written in Russian, the language of the then still standing Third Rome of the last tsars, the last state-bastion of authentically Christian and fully legitimist

Europe. In the borderline-psychedelic setting of mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century St. Petersburg, Dostoyevsky surveys the resulting train-wreck, ruthlessly describing the human impact of early-industrial social-darwinism and nihilism. In this setting and in Sonya, the key female protagonist of *Crime and Punishment*, the Woman of the West is finally stripped of all status and mystique, but even as she is reduced to a poor prostitute, she fully retains her transfigurative power. The final episode of the book describes a dream by the key male protagonist, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, raising the entire work to the level of prophecy. Applying it to the ‘mass-formation’ and ‘demonic possession’ Great Reset sequence ‘Covid’-‘BLM’-‘Biden’-‘Vaxx’-‘Ukraine’-‘Israel’, currently ‘zombifying’ the Western masses, it may be worth quoting in its entirety:

*He dreamt that the whole world was condemned to a terrible new strange plague that had come to Europe from the depths of Asia. All were to be destroyed except a very few chosen. Some new sorts of microbes were attacking the bodies of men, but these microbes were endowed with intelligence and will. Men attacked by them became at once mad and furious. But never had men considered themselves so intellectual and so completely in possession of the truth as these sufferers, never had they considered their decisions, their scientific conclusions, their moral convictions so infallible. Whole villages, whole towns and peoples went mad from the infection. All were excited and did not understand one another. Each thought that he alone had the truth and was wretched looking at the others, beat himself on the breast, wept, and wrung his hands. They did not know how to judge and could not agree what to consider evil and what good; they did not know whom to blame, whom to justify. Men killed each other in a sort of senseless spite. They gathered together in armies against one another, but even on the march the armies would begin attacking each other, the ranks would be broken and the soldiers would fall on each other, stabbing and cutting, biting and devouring each other. The alarm bell was ringing all day long in the towns; men rushed together, but why they were summoned and who was summoning them no one knew. The most ordinary trades were abandoned because everyone proposed his own ideas, his own improvements, and they could not agree. The land too was abandoned. Men met in groups, agreed on something, swore to keep together, but at once began on something quite different from what they had proposed. They accused one another, fought and killed each other. There were conflagrations and famine. All men and all things were involved in destruction. The plague spread and moved further and further. Only a few men could be saved in the whole world. They were a pure chosen people, destined to found a new race and a new life, to renew and purify the earth, but no one had seen these men, no one had heard their words and their voices.*

2. Also sprach Zarathustra, ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’, by Friedrich Nietzsche (completed 1885). In a certain sense, Dostoyevsky’s prose fiction work finds its natural continuation in this work, Nietzsche’s masterpiece of ‘philosophical fiction’ (Nietzsche much admired Dostoyevsky), resulting in a truly genius psycho-analytical and psycho-historical description of the genesis, condition and trajectory of ‘modern humanity’. Inspired by the founder of Indo-European (a.k.a. ‘Aryan’) philosophy, the Persian prophet Zarathustra, it is written in German, the language of the nation that was meant - but not destined - to become the next carrier of European civilization by resurrecting the Roman Empire as well as restarting Greek philosophy. As the philosophical equivalent of Phaeton’s chariot ride, ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’ may be said to represent the zenith of European civilization in the realm of thought, the point at which it surmounts all things human - and all things woman. Thus, in some ways, this work

‘overrides’ and ‘overwrites’ the Woman of the West, but it should not be forgotten that it - one may say *necessarily* - followed her here-and-now appearance to Nietzsche in the time-appropriate but *non sequitur* form of Louise von Salomé. Rilke, Nietzsche’s part-contemporary and one of Germany’s greatest poets, also knew this incarnation of the Woman of the West and wrote this to and about her:

*Warst mir die mütterlichste der Frauen  
ein Freund warst Du wie Männer sind  
ein Weib so warst Du anzuschauen  
und öfter noch warst Du ein Kind  
Du warst das Zarteste das mir begegnet  
das Härteste warst Du damit ich rang  
Du warst das Hoh, das mich gesegnet  
und wurdest der Abgrund der mich verschlang*  
‘To me, you were the most motherly of women  
a friend you were as men may be  
a woman you were to behold  
but more often still you were a child  
You were the softest that I met  
the hardest were you that I fought  
You were the high that blessed me  
and the abyss that erased me’

1. ‘Omega work’ (to be published 20xx). The final but also *first* place in this ‘Five Best Book’ list must stay open: the work that will occupy that place is still being written. As the only one of these Five Best Books, it will not be written by a man but by a woman, and not in a high-culture continental language, but in the simplest English, the world-conquering language through which the West has reached the whole world. With ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’, the Woman of the West exited from Europe’s high literature. Not long after that, high literature - and high culture - exited from Europe. But the West’s last word has not yet been said. That final time, *she* is appointed to say it. She will open her mouth ‘for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction’. Some of her actual words:

‘You stand within a glorious sunset and you are drenched in colour - in gold’

Thus, at long last, the great cycle of Western culture and civilization will come to close - by reaching back to its beginning:

*Noi siamo usciti fore  
del maggior corpo al ciel ch’è pura luce  
luce intellettüal, piena d’amore  
amor di vero ben, pien di letizia  
letizia che trascende ogne dolzore*  
‘We now have exited out of  
the largest sphere to the heaven of pure light

light intellectual filled with love  
love of the true good filled with happiness  
happiness that transcends every sweetness'  
- *Paradiso*, XXX 38-40

In the final analysis, the fall of Western culture and civilization, the decay of its garden walls and the desecration of its temple precinct will not matter - because it will have served its purpose, which, after all, is only worship:

*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved  
we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*  
- 2 Cor. 5:1