
CESNUR Center for Studies on New Religions

Medical Science and Religious Consciousness

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Preliminaries

At this end of the second millennium of modern count a new specter is going around our society and people. This time it presents itself not yet in the political or economical field, but more as a wandering obscurity accompanied by an aura of grayish fog. It is proteiform and mobile, difficult to analyze in its essential aspects and behavior trying to present itself as wellbeing and reassuring. Out of its obscurity it promises marvelous new opportunities, expressing well-known trivia with the flair of important and essential knowledge. Its voice makes us remember that of the "Mice Hunter of Hameln" from the well known fable of the Flanders, enchanting the masses and leading them towards the abyss.

Our modern Society, born from illuministic and cartesian thought of the 18th century and seemingly once and for all vaccinated against everything irrational and not explainable by pure logic, is lately showing a rising interest in magic and mystery. "(...) a new specter is going around in europe and the world at whole" [1] says Massimo Introvigne, referring to new religious movements and sects. A new sense for the irrational is rising in the masses.

We have thrown ourselves forward with vigorous energy in a world of science and positive, reproducibile demonstrability. Only the laboratory evidence has a right of existence. But perhaps a subtle sense of unease penetrates in our lives and becomes dangerously evident every time we encounter something not explainable by pure logic. Actually we have lost the correct tools to deal with Mystery, since everything unexplainable and unknown is rejected as pathologic and there is no place for transcendence any more.

Western Society, by removing the major tool apt to deal with mystery and transcendence, which is religion, has delivered itself to a purely mechanistic quantitative world. Religion retains its right to survival only as a sort of "socially useful" behavior, a helping and caring institution for the poor and derelict, a kind of old-fashioned psychologic counsel, from which true transcendence all too often has been banned.

In a world ashamed of the divine, considered apt only as intellectual courtesy for needy and not as a living testimony of the human being, more and more illuminated minds are indicating the risks of degeneration and drift towards the dark areas of the uncontrolled voices of the sirens. In the void of regular transcendence and traditional knowledge a proteiform, basic and undeveloped irrationality penetrates the cold and revered halls of supreme academic science. Aseptic

laboratories may harbor persons infected with the new germs of mass hysteria.

But before analyzing these facts further, we need to take a look at history.

The fall of Medieval Spirituality

From the very beginning of mankind the question about the sense of our existence -- short, difficult and full of problems -- has emerged as a fundamental need of men. Man's innate yearning for justice is hurt by the apparent senselessness of unprovoked disasters, tragedies and above all, by the unremovable sureness of death. Human societies follow, as do its individuals, precise vital cycles in dealing with this problems. Periods of great force exercised upon the natural world in a quest for dominance of the natural phenomena and forces - completely to be understood by man and human logic-, alternate with others in which the collective mind looks for its basic values and expectations towards sacred and traditional values.

Inserting itself in the world of disintegrating values of the old Greek and Roman religion, the new soteriologic message of the new prophet of Palestine found a fertile soil in ancient Rome, at that time at its height of worldly power but declining towards its low in transcendental human and philosophical values.

Through a long and complex path of spiritual evolution and exegetic search this society evolves toward the middel ages, in which the salvation message of Christ became an integral part of the conscience of man and state. The quarrel between emperor and pope did never touch in any way the firm believe in the message of Christ, but was always only a struggle for worldly predominance and supremacy.

From such a situation of "strong thought" of the state a crisis aroused. Perhaps it is known that every time a system of thought becomes predominant, absolute and monopolistic, it contains in itself the germ of weakness and destruction, loosing its sense for survival struggle. It becomes unable to deal with new and unexpected problems in an ever-changing society. Closed in its self-sufficiency of its unrelenting worldly and spiritual power the system develops the essence of a dinosaur, leaving ultimately its vital space to the faster and more adaptable small and fast mammals. Every time a species through a long and riskless life has become unable to stand up to sufferance, it is doomed to succumb to others used to hard-fighting for their survival.

The monolithic and fossilized medieval society ultimately breaks down not because of external pressure but only due to internal erosion and dismal, through heretics grown in its own womb and reforms that erode the very reason of the state. The society at a whole vanishes with the dead of its basic thought: the imperial idea of the unity of the state in the unity of faith. National states rise as rise national churches and society slides into an uncontrollable chaos of multitude and massification.

The Century of Light

The pendulum of history runs all the way up to the opposite position. As the "old things" are rejected, every believe has right of existence only if compliant with the rules of the "scientific method". Scientific research with its laboratories stands for the new god: New targets arise: material wellbeing, physical health and equality of man. All other doctrinal restrains are progressively removed. The world at a whole is exposed to the light of experimental and rational conscience, only thought conforming to this can exist and everything else is removed and marked as magic and irrational.

A society in which the "Mysterium Sacrum" granted protection and unchallenged values in a static understanding of the world is superseded by a rapidly evolving and dynamic, ever accelerating way of being and behaving, with great promises in the material world and deep uncertainties.

Comparison

As always when talking about the "Great Systems" the partisans on the one or the other side tend to extremism and absolutism. They are really in love with their brainchild and creature and see in it much more than plain reality.

Also the most hardened positivist develops a close to religious relationship with his mental construction. Partisans of scientific positivism promise a world of major material wellbeing and wealth, at times standing up to the outright negation of the divine. They combat the tyranny of an absolute revelation with the absolute necessity of a "social contract", democracy and egalitarianism. Going to the very end of this concept perhaps some extremist arrives to negate all human differences and this negation of the obvious looks much more like a faith than a result of scientific research.

The followers of traditional science on the other hand admit only the "Verbum Revelatum", whatever it may be, and try to adopt the real world to this believe. And here we are again: the "idea" of man becomes lord of the world and obscurantism, fanaticism, dogmatism, and tyranny arise from both sides in an equal fashion. Deviation from the right path gives supernatural value to ideas born from man an man only.

While one side adopts thought to material reality, the other adapts reality to thought. Traditional societies at their outmost reject all science, technology and research in nature as devil's work and the mother of all temptations, while the materialistic way considers everything different from tangible reality as "opium for the people" putting those who seek more in life than eating and dealing with money into the madhouse, for cure and correction.

And in this we come to our main topic. By negating transcendence at its whole, no space is left to discriminate between street vendors of the "elixir of long life", jumping actors, sorcerers and magicians, today nicely supported by the so-called "media", and true salvific messages. In this way both systems tend to touch at the end, in a devilish and dangerous "coincidentia oppositorum".

In world history these extreme developments are clearly visible at all times. If on one side we have the great teocracies in which man has to conform to the divine, on the other hand highly rationalistic democratic societies create cold scientific and positivistic republics of absolute (imposed) consent. In the first, man is lacking liberty, in the second its soul, whatever these words may mean. In the first man buys by his renouncing at liberty his emotional security, group protection and vainquers solitude, in the second conquers clear and transmissible knowledge, accessible to everyone, but loses his soul and lives in ever-growing solitude and lack of sense of life.

Before passing to have a look to our today's world, it is necessary to point out that absolutism and fanaticism are not characteristics of one or the other system, but only ways of implementing them. They are procedures of application and can be found everywhere. With the evolution of the societies the pendulum of the spirit of the epoch oscillates slowly from one extremity to the other, and the bad thing is -- as physics teach -- that while gaining speed at the center, halfway, it tends to stay longer and moves slower at the extremities. That is why at the turning points of history time

seems to accelerate, a thing well known to the ancients.

Today's world

Let us see now what is happening in our modern -- western - society. For certain, we have seen a period of maximal expansion of the positivist thought and philosophy. After a long struggle, in which many paid their quest for liberty and free thought with their own life in the flames of inquisition, we have reached a world of free thought and the empire of experimental scientific method, but at the same time we cannot avoid to see the ever growing unhappiness of man.

Justice put to the extreme easily conjugates with iniquity. Democracy, the great victory of our century, more than one time has been transformed in an experience of madness of the masses with the sacrifice of the capacity and intelligence of the single person to the simple number of the group. In the word "popular", often hides the tyranny of superstition and demagoguery. The equal distribution of rights is so transformed in egalitarian obtuseness which recalls at mind Heraclitus's word:

"axion Ej esioisin hbdon apagxasqai pasi kai toisin aghboisi thn polin katalipein, oitinez Ermodwron andra ewutwn onhiston exebalon jantes . hmewn mh de eiz onhistoz estw, ei de mh, allhi te kai met allwn" [2] .

But since pure rationalism is not able to satisfy all necessities of man today we can see an ever-growing search for transcendence, for a renewal of the sacred thought. This phenomena is accompanied at the crisis of traditional knowledge of the sacred in the western societies, the official church not always answers, can answer or is felt to answer to this request in an adequate way.

The return of the irrational

Today we experience a forceful irruption of the irrational in the society. At a first look this may resemble a return to traditional transcendental values, but a closer look discovers a proteiform mass of deconstructed pseudotraditional ideas, with the founding of all kind esoteric groups and the rise of sorcerers and fortune-tellers, healers and astrologers and sects of ever growing strangeness and way out of true tradition. Often the academic world tend to underestimate this phenomena, believing to be immune, only to realize suddenly to have given space to some magician, to a pseudo-liberatory association or para-religious group. Men's need to structure the irrational is too strong to be ignored, the "mysterium iniquitatis" cannot be solved successfully only by the rational part of the mind. Religiosity is a congenital structural need of man, "satisfaction of a human need said to be natural, at least in the way it is constant" [3]. Even worse, often the scientific positivist viewpoint puts all traditional ideas together, being unable to distinguish the true from the untrue one. By putting side a side true initiation and self-declared prophets, the latter gain even more ability to penetrate society.

In the void of the usual religious tradition archaic archetypal fears of men arise which are not any more tempered by thought and guided by tradition and the holy. They create new, absurd and distorted images aside revivals of more orthodox forms of religiosity and transcendence. This demonstrates perhaps that "religion is not dead and is not going to die, also if its survival is void of the signs sought by its own followers, often more intrigued by diversities felt like radical innovations, than by its traditional constants" [4] .

This phenomena are well known to the traditional churches. It must be remembered that the

greatest heresy is the distorted image of the divine! What resembles most the divine, but is sustained by the profane, contains the greatest diabolic value. In fact the Catholic Catechism defines the concept of the Antichrist with a system only apparently religious and offering a false and not existing solution to all problems [5] .

On one hand true transcendence is negated and destructed by the false and extreme predication of millenarist preachers, presenting themselves often in the disguise of true tradition and transcendence and against which obviously the true tradition of the Word calls for attention [6], while on the other hand exasperation of positivism, negating all reality outside its own, creates the monsters void of ethics of which our modern world has obvious abundance.

While at the end of the "dark ages" the oppressed thought of man rose against the obtuseness of the spiritual power at its greatest expansion until reaching the deliverance of the mind with Voltaire, Descartes and Kant, now we can hear the cry of pain of those who feel the excess in the opposite direction, in the death of transcendence and the traditional knowledge, from Spengler to Guenon and Zolla [7] among others.

The importance of Science

After having seen the general rules that characterize the evolution of our modern society, we can now turn our eyes on the relationship between society and science in this difficult context.

Given the impossibility of the prehistoric man to build with only logic alone a clear relationship between observed causes and effects, facts and technical knowledge, the relationship between man and nature rises from intuitive beliefs. The archaic man looks at natural phenomena not as derived from precise natural laws, but secondary to an external will and power, for which he calls into action demons, man with special powers or gods. Anyway these facts are accepted as basically outside human analysis. In this way the facts are not subjected to analytical logic, but always seen as a whole, and the relationship with them is synthetic and intuitive, generating a magical feeling.

With the growth of the analytical capacity of man sustained by a written and precise transmission through generations, knowledge leaves the restricted groups of knowing "initiates", looked upon as special beings, different from all other "normal" humans. It diffuses through all members of the society like color in water. It becomes everybody's patrimony, independently from special capacities, both moral and technical, of the receiving mind. At one point, when the amount of such transmitted analytical information reaches a critical point, connections between the observed facts and possible causes become evident. At this point more and more human minds are not satisfied with a purely supernatural explanation of the facts of life and nature, and start to examine the data with analytical means, like anatomists on a dead body.

This transition from a purely magical and synthetic thought to an experimental analytical way of thinking, is what is called the beginning of speculative philosophy and science. The experimental analytical method, based on experimental laboratories and repeatable tests, is born. Not more "initiates" with explanations of unknown origin and impossible proof determine the way of men, but researchers, which reproduce, with the system of trial and error, results repeatable by everybody, determine the new way of thought. Knowledge, once given only to the ethically deserving as a qualitative good, becomes a quantitative amount of data, that can be grabbed by everybody, independently from its ethical being.

The role of Medicine

Medicine obviously follows the same way of evolution. Growing out of a magical and emphatic-symphathetic phase, it enters the world of positivistic experimental science. One can observe a real "explosion" of the amount of technical data relating to prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Life expectancy passes from about 40 to more than 80 years in a few decades. Meanwhile medicine tries to give itself rules for a correct use of its knowledge, indicating also precise ways for medical research.

In this picture of unabashed glory suddenly unexpected shadows can be seen. Humanity has never been richer, healthier, sure of itself than today, but is has never been so fearful of disease, war or poverty than now. At the times when one could die also by minor diseases, general acceptance of life and death by men allowed them to live the allotted time in serenity. Today, where medical science saves also highly desperate cases and keeps in life persons who are know to never recover, man is hunted by the fear of death and sees in medicine more an enemy, than a helping hand that restores wellbeing.

In no place like medicine today we observe -- and here one could make a major digression on the relationship of modern men with life, death and distress in general -- a growing mass emotivity, a return of a chaotic irrationality that tends to cover reality with fogs thought to have been vanquished forever. Modern men is ever more far away from that intimate acceptance of life as a cycle with a well known start and a sure end, as known to the ancients. In a delirant thought of omnipotence he thinks of everything as controllable, seeing in sufferance a human error and not a normal part of life. He fears death as the definitive end of everything he considers happiness and wellbeing. Man behaves like a hunted beast, desperate in his obligation to simulate an everlasting happiness.

Maquillage and beauty treatment of the cadavers, often far better looking in death than in life, especially loved in the United States but fastly invading now western Europe, can be seen as innocent folklore, but the rising litigation between physicians and patients is a far more dangerous and tangible result of this development.

The necessity of spiritual assistance, which the patient has become unable to query from the priest, is shifted to the physician, unprepared and professionally not indicated for this. Not gaining the expected satisfaction, the patient sees an enemy in the physician, thinking of him as willingly withholding this kind of service, and considered unable, also if excellent technically.

Today often one has the feeling that physician and patient are in a commercial relationship, looking on each other with suspiciousness, fiduciary relationship has been exchanges with a negotiational, commercial one, in which the buyer (the patient) sees himself as a victim and the seller (the physician) feels hunted.

The return of magical medicine

But where are the "physicians of the soul"? Having in our culture the traditional religion lost its preminence and unquestionability in a world in which progress is everything, a person in crisis finally often winds up to look for psychological help from healers, magicians, sorcerers, comedians, actors and plain cheaters, both of the street and of the television, born on the humus of modern life unsatisfaction. These clownish streethoppers are ubiquitous and in every place today,

always accompanied by their evergrowing purse.

From the small television star to the devilish demagogue everybody proposes quick-fix solutions for the great problems of human existence, generally promising happiness after the victory on the existing system. They gain the masses approval through laughter and nice words, selling political common places as deep philosophical discoveries. But they are also able to rise themselves on the most respected chairs always searching for easy consent, always accompanying themselves with jumps and eyecatching, television-perfect movements and voice tone. Everything what should be found in an actors studio is well represented, only the sense is absent.

In this way, and with a ever accelerating frequency, one can observe cases of acute "medical hysteria", where on one hand terrible illnesses are promised to the unfaithful, and on the other miraculous cures are dispensed, in a crescendo on metropolitan fables. Unfortunately modern science and especially modern mass media seldom succeed (or are willing to) take off the mask of these soap-opera healers, leaving the masses in a pityful state of intellectual stupor.

This is perhaps a typical phenomen of a difficult era, in which the great evolution of the civil society at one hand, with its civil personal freedom, the free circulation of the ideas and abolition of censorship, confronts itself with a millenaristic desperate escape towards the irrational. In a society in which the common man has no certainties, in which freedom is confused with anarchy and the rights live separated from duty, in which the recognition of individual capacities has been substituted by the corroding envy of the unable, where honors are unlinked from duty and deeds, where words and promises have vainquished the facts and where quantity and image has substituted quality and essence, we can only expect that these episodes of mass hysteria happen even more frequently.

The "unofficial" Medicine

At this point we have to examine the multicolored world of the so-called alternative or unofficial medicine. One thing becomes evident immediatly: the definition is negative, it describes something (a different way of making medicine) not by its own characteristics but by being "different from". It contains everything **not** contained in the concept of official, i.e. rational and scientific, Medicine.

Classification

At first we must separate an incorrect way to identify "Traditional Medicine". Often this definition is used erroneously like a Synonym for official medicine, while it should stay for the knowledge transmitted inside well defined entities of traditional science. It is actually part of "alternative" medicine.

1. Popular Medicine

In the centuries and millennaries of human evolution, popular experience has learned, through the well known system of Trial and Error, to use the therapeutical properties of herbs and give hygienical precepts to the ancient tribes whose non compliance showed to be dangerous to the survival of the species.

We can so see a more archaic level of medical knowledge, generally correspondent to the reality in its therapeutical precepts. This medical indications remain perhaps isolated chunks of directly transmitted knowledge. They remain outside of any attempt to insert them in any form of religious, magical or philosophical system. We find here the specific popular knowledge, common precepts for life, hygiene and food. In this context several simple comportamental and alimentary indications are comprised, as for example the fact that certain meat and alcohol are forbidden by Islam, a fact decisively good in hot countries. Similarly can be seen the precept of circumcision in different populations, generally found in areas devoid of water in which personal hygiene is difficult to maintain.

With the evolution of society, this body of knowledge become more and more structured and inserted in a more general vision of society, passing slowly towards a magical-religious structuring of the ideas at their whole.

2. Sacred and Traditional Medicine

As "Traditional Medicine" we must understand the methods, rites and procedures which inscribe in a precise magical and sacred area of thought. In that all acts and behavior has to be fully described, justified and structured. We must include also comportamental and general life hygienic concepts which can be considered facts of public health. These where present "in nuce" in popular medicine and inserted in a rigid sacred structure of thought. One proceeds from shamanic medicine up to highly elaborated concepts of healing, as for example traditional Chinese medicine -- including acupuncture -- and shiatsu, Yoga and the indications found in the YayurVeda.

In all those cases medicine finds the explanation for each act in a dogma and a faith, from which it gains its official right of existence, also if the knowledge derives generally from the more experimental and basic popular medicine. This form of growing more and more rigid in a dogmatic overhead in some cases may lead to a separation between the experimental element and the need of compliance with the surrounding religious structures.

In this case Traditional Sacred Medicine embarks on a dangerous journey away from therapeutically reality, loosing progressively the contact with reality and maintaining acts and measures not any more fully understood, in a process of progressive fossilization. In a situation like this every transmission of concepts, methods and rules, has to be examined specifically and for its own, to be able to reach a general determination for each area. If certainly the experimental basics are present, the general philosophical structure has often generated formal overhead and rituality apt to erode the therapeutic power of the sanitary measures proposed, while drifting away from true orthodox tradition.

3. New forms of "Medicine"

If tradition loses its vital force, the rational medical science is invaded by a growing world of ideas and convictions independent from traditional sacred knowledge. So we can see the growth of "ideas on a free run", unlinked to anything close to knowledge, experimental, scientific or traditional it may be. This is the fertile soil on which grows the activity of those inventing new treatments, new traditions and unbelievable healings. From here to totally personal and invented ideas is short and easy. Subjective voluntarism rules and human

fantasy has no limits any more, fed by the basic fear of life of man. Often these medical sorcerers willingly used this archetypal substrate of fear, other do the same thing while truly believing to do useful things. These occult and mystic behavior resembling traditional ways but far from everything of that type, recalls in the medical field the danger that comes from pseudoreligious groups as described above. One has to put the greatest attention to both extreme sides: first, non to mix true and false tradition in a same basket, and second not to deliver himself to a materialistic worldview.

Final Considerations

With this we have seen that the true roots of the genuine "alternative" medicine has to be sought in the most genuine experimental way of proceeding. It perhaps uses for it's purpose the human practical field experience of the millennia and oral transmission packaged in myths and popular believes instead of laboratories and scientific publications. The evolution of the scientific thought, more and more refusing to take natural things as they are and accepting them only if insertable in the structure of logical and philosophical explanation first and sacrality at second, brings up at first a experimental data and than the progressive adaptation to dogmatic and rigid mindstructures more and more far away from the reality. Obviously this damages the clinical usefulness of the medical data.

The evolution proceeds to a point where structural formalism starts generating its own method and rule, unconnected with the experimental data and reality. This is accompanied by a progressive downfall of the content of the truly traditional dogmatic element, ever more deviated and altered up to a point to contain elements outright invented. Finally one winds up with knowledge and believes disconnected from both the experimental and the traditional elements. Obviously in this field, aside true believers of strong and authentic faith, cheaters and "businessmen of hope" find a well prepared soil to prosper on. The basic desperation of the modern man, unable to cope with limit imposed on life, gives a fertile ground to hope-sellers and magicians.

Our approach to this extremely multiform and obscure world must be extremely precise and devoid of all forms of emotional relationship. A outright refusal is as wrong as a blindfolded acceptance. Popular and traditional medicine have for sure still many things to teach to modern scientific medicine. On the other hand the alternative modern forms have to be studied with attention and condemned in a precise and strong way if found devoid of scientific background and lacking practical evidence in the patient.

Official Medicine has the task to select, examine and take everything that can be useful to its mission, indicating at the same moment clearly, without fear, to public reprove cheaters and the businessmen of hope. It must protect the patient from these movements and the "right of cure" cannot be taken as a forensic "finess" targeted to allow those absurd and often even dangerous techniques -- dangerous not only to the wallet but also to health!

In fact we shall remember that the founding of national medical boards dates back for only a small time and has arisen from the clear necessity to protect the patients from false "doctors", a sort of ante litteram quality control.

Cures which are not medical and for the material live, but useful for the soul, should be sought after in the correct place, not in between the physician's world, but in that of laymen or religious persons how dedicate to this. It should never become an excuse for tolerating economical and psychical exploitation of man's desire and hope.

The physician is called on one hand to remain closely inside of the area delimited by the hippocratic precept of doing nothing that could damage the patient, remaining so definitely in the area of scientific proven certainties, and on the other hand to examine in depth and without any emotionally hampered mindset or preconcept and with wide open eyes all that what come from true traditional science, importing into his science everything of proven utility, also if still unexplainable with plain logic. At the same time, while taking everything working for good, he must unrelentingly reject and publicly expose everything non acceptable and cheatish.

What can and what should we do?

At all times true men of thought have taken into correct account the importance of traditional medicine never rejecting traditional and transcendental knowledge, while teaching that the most important key is always in a correct equilibrium.

Only in a correct harmony of all parts a correct cure of the illnesses of man can have a chance of success, combining both aspects of spiritual and physical health, of medicine and society. Only in this way one can rise against False Tradition and the False Medicine. The ancient greek philosopher Heraklit tells us: "armonia ajanez janerez kresswn" [8] -- not because one should operate in a mysteric and hidden way, but to help us remember that true harmony cannot be restricted to the surface and image alone, but must penetrate deeply inside, involving the visible as well as the invisible.

Such an equilibrium must grow inside every single human being. Only afterwards he will be able to give true testimony of it to all men and the society as a whole.

Only where "Imperium" and "Sacrum", where soul and thought meet developing fully their specific mission in a natural and physiological cooperation, we can protect society from false hope and from the irrational darkness populated by magicians, actors and cheaters, bloodsuckers of the human soul.

"So there is no reason to existence for any kind of competition between Ratio and Faith: one is in the other, and each has its specific and unchallenged space of realization" [9].

Only in this way we can hope to succeed in arginating the new wave of demagoguery and obscurantism, which exploits the genuine faith of the simple people and is fed by the quest for power of those who try to transform and use ideology and myth as a weapon useful for their own personal greed and gain.

And this can happen only through a conscient progress in which every single person acquires through liberty in correct guidance the capacity to have his own opinions, where the sword of a serious and tranquil capacity has the courage to cut the gordonian node of diplomatic cruising, behind which often hides only the unhappy silence of incapacity, the escape from responsibility and the false image with which honor is demanded by those who nothing have to offer to society except their own personal desire to be accepted as something they perfectly know to be not.

Footnotes

1. [back] Introvigne M, La questione della nuova religiosità, Cristianità, 1993, p.5
2. [back] Eraclito, frammento 22B121 Diehls-Kranz, 1907. Il frammento viene tradotto da Colli, La sapienza greca III, Adelphi, 1998 come segue: "All adult people of Ephesus whould do better to hang themselves and leave

the city to the children: they chased away Ermodorus, the most excellent in between them, and said: truly between us no one should be outstanding, and if it happens, he should go to excell elsewhere! "

3. [[back](#)] K. Woytyla, "Paternità-maternità e la comunio personarum" in Idem, Perché l'uomo. Scritti inediti di antropologia e filosofia, Milano 1995, pag. 230
4. [[back](#)] G. Cantoni, "La libertà religiosa come valore", Cristianità n. 275 (1998)
5. [[back](#)] Number 675 of the Catechismo Cattolico: "La persecuzione che accompagna il suo (della Chiesa) pellegrinaggio sulla terra svelerà il 'Mistero di iniquità' sotto la forma di un impostura religiosa che offre agli uomini una soluzione apparente ai loro problemi al prezzo dell'apostasia dalla verità"
6. [[back](#)] Number 676 of the Catechismo Cattolico: "Questa impostura anti-cristica si delinea nel mondo ogniqualvolta si pretende di realizzare nella storia la speranza messianica che non può essere portata a compimento che al di là di essa, attraverso il giudizio escatologico; anche sotto la sua forma mitigata, la Chiesa ha rigettato questa falsificazione del regno futuro sotto il nome di 'millennarismo', soprattutto sotto la forma politica di un messianismo secolarizzato 'intrinsecamente perverso' ".
7. [[back](#)] "Va detto che numerosi falsi profeti giustificarono fino ad un certo punto l'infelice reazione cartesiana, nondimeno questa finì col rovinare la metà delle qualità psichiche dell'uomo e legittimò quel fastidioso uomo medio il cui malinconico livello spirituale, impregnato del più stolto materialismo, è una caricatura dello spirito umano" – "It must be remembered that a certain number of false prophets tried to sustain the unhappy cartesian reaction, but also so it succeeded in ruining half of the psychic abilities of man and gave legitimation to that disturbing mid-level man whose malinonic spiritual level, sustained by the most stupid materialism, is a joke of the human spirit", E. Zolla, 'Cosa è la tradizione', Adelphi 1998, pag. 60
8. [[back](#)] "L'armonia nascosta è più forte di quella palese" – "Hidden harmony is more powerful than open one", Eraclito, 22B54 DK, 1907, citato in Colli, op.cit., 14A20, pag. 34
9. [[back](#)] Giovanni Paolo II, Lettera Enciclica "Fides et Ratio", paragrafo 17, 1998

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