

# The Polemics of Parousia: Further Notes on the First Days after the End of the *Kaliyuga*

by William W. Quinn, Jr.

[Readers are referred, in order, to my article “*Slouching Toward Betlehem: Notes on the First Days After the Kaliyuga*” in *Sacred Web 3* (Summer 1999), and to Alvin Moore’s responding article “*Who or What is ‘Slouching Toward Betlehem’*” in *Sacred Web 4* (Winter 1999)]

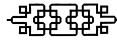
## Part I: Retrospect and Response

It is perfectly indicative of the extremism in positions he takes about topics of Tradition that Alvin Moore has taken the astonishingly extreme position that I am a doorman of the Antichrist. In fact, I am not. It has never been other than my primary intention, from the first time any of my work on Tradition was published—a fact which is part of the published record itself—to encourage people to read for themselves the works of Guénon, Coomaraswamy, and Schuon. Doing this would hardly be behavior consistent with that of such a doorman.

Mr. Moore describes my written work by these adjectives: “meretricious,” “sinister,” “crude.” He labels it “sophistry.” He further accuses me (quite falsely) of ridiculing fundamental Christians, without explaining how I was supposed to have done so. He then suggests that my actual motive for writing the article was to “...form sensibilities that might make an acceptance of the Antichrist more probable.” He then asserts that “Neither in the present instance nor as regards his book do we have any personal animosity for Quinn, *quod absit*.” We gather from this that he has no animosity for the Inner Man.

Under these circumstances, one may be tempted to respond in kind. I shall not. A rebuttal in kind based upon *ad hominem* attacks leading to escalation serves no useful purpose. Instead I shall for the record point *seriatim* to certain mistakes of fact and reason in Mr. Moore’s article, and

together therewith correct the misrepresentations made about me and my work. Then I shall take some time in Part II to discuss a substantially more important question regarding the effects and results of internecine controversies among estotericists.



The first and most significant and, indeed, fatal error made by Mr. Moore in his article is that he forgets poems are polysemous. The poem of a modern poet is not revealed scripture; neither is it susceptible to exegesis as is revealed scripture in the manner Mr. Moore attempts with William Butler Yeats' *The Second Coming*. Forgetting that such poems are polysemous, Mr. Moore accuses Yeats of (a) writing a poem strongly suggesting eschatology but "lacking anything of a traditional eschatological nature," and (b) of promulgating the modern psychological invention of the "collective unconscious" (an apparent criticism of Carl Jung) by virtue of its supposed synonymity with *Spiritus Mundi*<sup>1</sup> which, instead of being simply the spirit world as generally understood by esotericists, Mr. Moore translates for us as an inversion as well as a subversion of the reality of the supra-conscious, based upon his putative understanding of Yeats' "private mythology." Based on the manner of his discussion, it would seem Mr. Moore has the sole and singular understanding of the real meaning of Yeats' poem, *ergo* no others may be considered.

This fatal error is the basis and platform from which Mr. Moore then proceeds to launch his various critiques upon that which he views as anti-Traditional and which, accordingly, infects the remainder of his article. As in the discipline of logic, where the major premise is flawed, so

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1. Yeats' *The Second Coming* was published in 1920. To assert that Yeats had in mind Jung's "collective unconscious" by use of the term *Spiritus Mundi* is erroneous. Jung first professed his theory of the collective unconscious in a work entitled *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* published in 1934, followed two years later by the more seminal work *The Concept of the Collective Unconscious* (1936). If Yeats had meant, as Mr. Moore believes, "collective unconscious" by the term *Spiritus Mundi*, it is far more likely (but not probable) he borrowed the concept, and not the term, from the work of the German ethnologist Adolf Bastian. In any case, to state that *Spiritus Mundi* is a synonym for "collective unconscious" in Yeats' "private mythology" is clearly an anachronism. To conflate the two erroneously, however, does give rise to the opportunity to criticize both in the same discussion.

will be the conclusion. Additionally, from the standpoint of pure reason, the article is conspicuously internally inconsistent, owing to his assertion on the one hand that Yeats' poem lacks anything of a traditional eschatological nature, and his reliance on the other hand in creating an elaborate argument upon the traditional eschatological elements of the Antichrist that he perceives in the poem. Mr. Moore's article is essentially bifurcated, or can perhaps be more accurately described as two separate articles. Pages 33 and 34, and then pages 43 through 46, are devoted to polemical and *ad hominem* attacks, and are subject to the fatal error described *supra*, while the central portion of the article (pages 35 through 42) is devoted to a relatively informative disquisition on traditional eschatology. However, though my article does contain some eschatological references, it expressly was not nor was it ever intended to be a treatment of traditional of eschatology *per se*, the ostensible failing for which it was attacked by Mr. Moore. The readers of this journal can decide for themselves whether Yeats' poem was about, or whether Yeats intended it to be, a treatment of eschatology *per se*.

Being polysemous, poems and poetic metaphors are subject to a variety of differing meanings, uses, and interpretations in quite a different sense than the classic levels of scriptural exegesis. The *sole* purpose for my use of Yeats' poetic imagery of the rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem to be born was to illustrate the "roughness" in the perception of the established culture of the times of the *avatara* or messiah or prophet sent by God to reveal a message. That such a pattern of roughness, or the least expected, occurs in virtually every such appearance of lightbringers is undeniable, as in one of the cases described in my article of the prophet who walked or rode on an ass throughout Palestine, penniless and without property, ministering to lepers and prostitutes and the like, excoriating the necrotic orthodoxy of his day, and preaching the practice of unconditional love. My point was that such a pattern does exist, and is very likely to re-occur in any messianic event, which leads one to wonder who or what might be "least expected" as a bringer of light in our own era in terms of the religio-philosophical or mainstream establishment and its terminal orthodoxies. Anyone who employs Yeats' poetic imagery in this way, in Mr. Moore's perception, does so either purposefully or unwittingly in furtherance of the objectives of the Antichrist, pursuant to his perception that his is the only true interpretation of the poem. Given that he also accuses William Butler Yeats of mak-

ing a “mockery of the *return* of Jesus Christ,” one must necessarily conclude that in Mr. Moore’s view Yeats is also a doorman of the Antichrist.

The second fundamental error made by Mr. Moore, related to his first, is that he believes my article is what it is not and criticizes it for what it is not, not for what it is. To repeat, though it certainly contains eschatological imagery and references, my article is not nor was it intended to be a treatment of Traditional eschatology *per se*. Had we wanted it to be so, it would have been a disquisition not unlike Mr. Moore’s, complete with citation of applicable scripture and Traditionalist authors and so forth. In contrast to what Mr. Moore believes it is, it is actually an inquiry into and examination of the *cultural possibilities* of what lies ahead in the immediate future or, to employ again the phrase of Ananda Coomaraswamy, the outcome of the “application of first principles to contingent circumstances” upon the event of our reaching and surpassing a momentous point in the cycle of duration. Stated alternatively, the article has as much if not more to do with the first principle of periodicity as with eschatology. These two principles are, in fact, interrelated, owing to the fact that every cycle has a beginning and an ending—metaphysically in endless helical succession—and that every such ending has eschatological connotations. Some cycles, and their endings, are larger than others, such as the one now immediately before us—or upon us.

It may be useful to employ Mr. Moore’s own words to restate the questions we posed in the original article and sought to answer there, and which comprise the real topic or subject of that article. We agree with Mr. Moore that (1) eschatology deals with the “four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell”; that (2) “eschatology is threefold: personal or individual, collective, and cosmic”; and *a fortiori* that (3) “the cycle looming immediately in the future is precisely a new Golden Age, a new *Krtayuga*.” Moreover, with regard to the vicissitudes of modernity, inversions of principle, and general conditions in the end times up to the point that René Guénon described as the “cataclysm,” there is no real disagreement between us. The core disagreement lies in the inquiry pertaining to (1) the exact nature of the cataclysm, (2) the nexus (if any) between the pre- and post cataclysmic worlds, and (3) the exact nature of what lies just on the other side of the cataclysm in the “first days after the end of the *Kaliyuga*” for humanity. To use Mr. Moore’s words, the question we pose relates not to the individual or cosmic, but to the *col-*

*lective* fate of humanity and how that will manifest in contingent circumstances, *i.e.*, culture or society, in that time “looming immediately in the future” as the new Golden Age.

Mr. Moore asserts later in his article that such a “question is meaningless,” because men of the *Kaliyuga* could not possibly know this and have no need to know this. In other words, in Mr. Moore’s view, to ask questions about the fate of humanity is meaningless.<sup>2</sup> This view is, to be blunt, nonsense; one could hardly ask a question or speculate upon a topic *more* meaningful than the fate of humanity. And as to men of the *Kaliyuga* being unable to conceptualize or understand this and having no need to know this, let Mr. Moore speak for himself. Our preference is to agree with Martin Lings, who states in *The Eleventh Hour* (at page 94):

But man has the right to speculate about the future in humble awareness of his limitations in that respect, otherwise prophecies would not be forthcoming at all.

This is not to suggest that anything we have written is prophetic; rather to point out that Mr. Moore may stand alone as against other Traditionalist writers in his “meaninglessness” position on this subject, which he promulgates in apodictic fashion apparently to avoid coming to terms with these questions at all.

While most men—or the mass man—of the *Kaliyuga* may have little notion of the cataclysm or post-cataclysmic society, this is not true of students of the Tradition, traditional metaphysicists, or esotericists in general. Unless one believes that the first principles of Tradition will somehow be ineradicably altered by the impending cataclysm, those principles will survive whatever the cataclysm brings. Traditionalists may then legitimately speculate upon the application of these first principles to contingent circumstances in post-cataclysmic times, or in “the cycle looming immediately in the future,” to repeat Mr. Moore’s words, and furthermore *understand* the dynamics of this application. This would be so even if post-cataclysmic times, or the first days after the end of the *Kaliyuga*, were to manifest as contingent circumstances in a world other than “gross,” to borrow again Mr. Moore’s terms, such as in the “subtle” worlds. Moreover, in the likely event that the post-cataclysmic world of humanity manifests in materiality, then we will

2. This inquiry is not unrelated to that of the nature of the post-mortem states upon the death of the person. Given then that this latter is a rudimentary element of what may be referred to as *esoteric* subject matter, why should not the former be in light of the law correspondence?

have as we do now human beings living together in communities and polities with a need for governmental, economic, social, and religious institutions—in short, in *cultures*.

This last point leads us to a discussion of the third and last of the essential errors we wish to discuss made by Mr. Moore in his article about my own, and one that he repeats there which began in his critique of me and *The Only Tradition* (SUNY Press, 1997) published in volume 3, number 1 of *Sophia*. In the three years since the publication of the book and its condemnation by Mr. Moore, it has become clear that neither he nor those associated with him truly understood the point of the book or, for that matter, the point of the articles published in this journal.

The book that was published as *The Only Tradition* by the SUNY Press was a revision of a 1981 doctoral dissertation written at the University of Chicago entitled “The Only Tradition: *Philosophia Perennis* and Culture in the Writings of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and René Guénon.” Major emphasis should be placed on the word “culture.” This was a dissertation submitted in candidacy for the Ph.D. in a Standing Committee at the University of Chicago called “History of Culture.” Fully half the dissertation—and book—is devoted to examinations—in Part 3—of the primary elements of Traditional culture (wherein the first principles of Tradition or *philosophia perennis* are actually applied to and *inform* culture or “contingent circumstances”), and—in Part 4—of the primary elements of modern culture (as an absence or non-application of these first principles to culture), together with a comparison of Traditional and modern culture. The same can be said, in terms of emphasis on culture, of the two articles previously published in this journal. These writings collectively have never been treated by those represented by Mr. Moore as what they primarily are—treatises on culture. They have instead been regarded as something akin to doctrinal heresy, in part because they have been misconstrued as being primarily works on Traditional metaphysical doctrine, rather than works on the relationship between Traditional metaphysics and culture. This third and last error of Mr. Moore has two equivalent and interrelated parts, the first of which is described above as missing the actual objective of *The Only Tradition* and the articles in this journal. We ought to add in this regard that, to date, no one has criticized the treatment of Traditional and modern culture in the book, no doubt because it was little of my own doing except an organi-

zation for the purpose of facilitated assimilation of the morphology of these cultures based upon the written statements of Coomaraswamy and Guénon culled from their writings for the purpose.

This second part of the error is the more insidious syndrome of what we have elsewhere referred to as “Traditional fundamentalism.” One is typically unable to perceive the actual thesis of a work where one is essentially blinded in its reading by one’s own belief in one’s inerrancy as to the subject in question. Traditionalist fundamentalism is the view that there is but one truth (which *is* true), that there is but a small circle of elect expositors of this truth who were or are initiates in *tariqas* led by René Guénon and Frithjof Schuon and/or their devotees, and that the only route to self-realization is by assiduous and exclusive adherence to their writings and to orthodox *praxis* and scripture of revealed religions (however necrotic and divorced from Traditional culture these religions may now be). It is further characterized by something not unlike a spiritually intellectual xenophobia that leads to an exclusivity not of the best but of the worst type, that either ignores or avoids a larger Traditional discourse that attempts to engage all who seek truth and make inquiry beyond the narrow confines of this element which may also be identified by a relatively uncritical perspective of orthodoxy.<sup>3</sup>

In this *weltanschauung* of Traditional fundamentalism there are certain other metaphysicists and spiritually aware persons who do not be-

3. The whole issue of orthodoxy is too little examined or understood by the Traditional fundamentalists, and accepted unquestioned as a matter of dogma. Readers are referred to “On Revelation, Initiation, and Culture” in *Sacred Web 1* (July 1998) for our views on the subject. While we do not disagree with Martin Lings, quoting René Guénon, in “Frithjof Schuon: An Autobiographical Approach” (*Sophia*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1998), that orthodoxy and orthodox rites can at their best produce a harmonization of different elements of the being, one must never forget that the vibrations and repercussions produced thereby partake of the *entirety* of the orthodoxy from which they derive and in which they inhere. This is directly related to the question of the difference between (1) a religious orthodoxy that informs a living Traditional culture and by its *fusion* with that culture cannot be extricated from it, and (2) a religious orthodoxy that is an isolated remnant, a spiritually lifeless ecclesiastical form, of a once vibrant Traditional culture—of which there are no longer any on the earth at this stage of the *Kalīyuga*. This necessarily means, for example, that the Roman Catholic rite of the Eucharist partakes not only of the higher states of being to which it was traditionally linked, but after centuries also to those facts of its former practitioners and the church historic record related to secular avarice and the quest for temporal authority, and for which Pope John Paul II publicly apologized in March of 2000.

long in this small circle but whose works or lives place them in a sort of liminal or ambiguous status among Traditional fundamentalists, such as Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Henry Corbin, Thomas Merton, and the like. Then, there are all the rest—all other persons who write on metaphysics, esotericism, and spiritual development—who are simply outside this elect circle, and who would likely fit into the category described by Mr. Moore as doormen of the Antichrist: Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, H.P. Blavatsky, Aurobindo Ghose, William Butler Yeats, Rudolf Steiner, G.R.S. Mead, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Lama Govinda, to name but a few—this list could be extended indefinitely. Into this last category have we also been placed by Mr. Moore.<sup>4</sup>

This Part I concludes by posing a question about the future. Mr. Moore admits that the “crux” of the criticisms he advances on my article is that I seek to have it both ways: either to have my “notions” taken seriously or, failing that, to escape responsibility for them as mere speculations. One does not speculate where one simply states the Truth consistent with an “obligation to affirm Truth whenever the opportunity occurs.” However, as a student of Tradition, a scholar and historian of culture, and consistent with Martin Lings’ support of man’s legitimate “right to speculate,” I do in fact speculate. Moreover, my preference is that my *speculations* be taken seriously. To make inquiry into and speculate about the fate of humanity and the post-cataclysmic culture of humanity, in my view, are not meaningless activities as they are for Mr. Moore.

The question, to repeat here the wording *supra*, is this: What will be (1) the exact nature of Guénon’s “cataclysm,” (2) the nexus (if any) between the pre- and post-cataclysmic worlds, and (3) the exact nature of what culturally lies just on the other side of the cataclysm in the “first days after the end of the *Kaliyuga*,” assuming humanity survives physi-

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4. The two principal heresies for which I have been indicted by Traditional fundamentalists are (1) my objective treatment in *The Only Tradition* of modern theosophy and publishing the factually accurate historical links of esotericism from H.P. Blavatsky to Coomaraswamy through Annie Besant and to René Guénon through Gerard Encausse and Abdul Hadi, a.k.a. John-Gustav Agueli, a Swedish theosophist (which reaction was predicted in the book, p. 151, n. 97), and (2) a *speculation* about the new Golden Age “looming immediately in the future” as one that is planetary or global in terms of its being a Traditional culture based upon the first principles from a new revelation via the *parousia*. Because of the unfortunate intellectual predilections of Traditional fundamentalists, these indictments have now been transformed into convictions.



cally? Some persons in this world may be able to provide authoritative and detailed answers to this important question, but I am not among them.<sup>5</sup> I must speculate, and do not accept that such speculation is meaningless. Truly responsive answers to this question are not further descriptions of additional “signs of the times” and ever greater crises of modernity, about which we all agree. Neither are they disquisitions on Traditional eschatology and listings of scriptural citations on the apocalypse, which we may all use as keys for intuitive insight. Responsive answers are, to the extent possible or available, authoritative and detailed. In the absence of such answers, then the best and most thoughtful speculations must do, based upon a synthesis of reason and intuition. And the answer to *why* ask the question, which is the question posed by Mr. Moore, can be answered by the same reply that would answer the question “Why seek knowledge?”

## **Part II: Prospect and Respect**

*Mitosis* (or karyokinesis) is a term used in the science of biology to describe the division of the nucleus of a cell that initiates the process known as “cell division.” Consistent with the principle of correspondence, the division of a single or unitary nucleus—and then cell—into two parts has its analogues in the realm of human institutions. A fact so obvious — it needs no corroborative authority—is that revelations brought by lightbringers, pure and unitary religions at the beginning, often later split in two. One need only refer to Mahayana and Hinayana (or Theraveda) in Buddhism, Sunni and Shia’ in Islam, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholicism in Christianity, and Orthodox and Reform in Judaism to make the point. Furthermore, several of these have their own further “cell division” or bifurcation, such as occurred in Roman Catholicism at the Reformation of Martin Luther that began Christian Protestantism. We hasten to add that, admittedly, there are more complexities and less exactitude in patterns involved in this process than we have space to discuss here, plus the existence of collateral streams of religious expression to each of these (for example, Zen Buddhism, Coptic Christianity, Hassidism, to name but a few). Nonetheless, to identify these basic bifurcations is suf-

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5. One would hope that the editors of *Sophia* decide to devote an issue to the question as posed, and invite those who regularly contribute to that journal to submit articles in response.

ficient for our purpose in describing the pattern of division of the pristine and integrated revelation at some point after it is brought for the benefit of humanity.

This pattern of division raises interesting and profound questions. This is so especially in light of two inherent epiphenomena to the divisions that are virtually ubiquitous: First, each such division typically asserts its direct and unadulterated descendancy from the pure source of the religion and that it is therefore the only *true* expression of that religion, being another component of orthodoxy, as against the other (or all others). Second, overt competition and antipathy between the adherents and ecclesiastical bureaucracies of these divisions, who equally refer to themselves as orthodox, are frequently occasioned by suspicion, hatred, and even violence. The sheer irrationality of any one group, claiming to be the sole and true institutional exegetes of the once-unitary revelation, often despising those who profess the identical faith and rely on essentially the same revelation, seems ever to escape the respective devotees of these divisions. To the extent that such revelation contains prescriptions to proffer its message to others through service or communication or by example, the two divisions—where their relations are characterized by hatred and violence—have a relationship that can be described as *internecine*.

What we have described up to this point is a general pattern of division that occurs in the major world religions in their exoteric forms, which pattern we employ simply as a heuristic device. Occasionally one sees attempts at intra-faith—and even inter-faith—reconciliation known as ecumenism. But because the chief executives of most ecclesiastical bureaucracies are men who, as we have stated elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> tend to preserve privilege and so protect their positions by serving secular ends, such ecumenical efforts have met with little success. What is more remarkable, and less understandable for a variety of reasons, is the similar divisiveness and internecine behavior among *esotericists*—those who readily subscribe to the awareness that there is a core of first principles—the *philosophia perennis*—underlying the world's religions that can only be seen and understood from an esoteric perspec-

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6. See *Sacred Web 1*, July 1998, *On Revelation, Initiation and Culture*, page 117: “[O]ver time, established ecclesiastical doctrine and dogma frequently came to serve and preserve the exclusively secular ends of established churches and church leaders. Simply put, in this usage orthodoxy and dogma further the goals of the Outer Man among ecclesiastical bureaucrats, and not the Inner Man among the genuine spiritual aspirants of the established church.”

tive, as has been masterfully explicated by Frithjof Schuon in *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*.

Though one has a wide choice from history in the last two centuries of esoteric organizations that have been subject to this pattern of division, factionalism, and splintering *ad infinitum*,<sup>7</sup> the one we choose as our example is exclusively within the Traditional milieu as seen in the recent attacks and condemnation of Frithjof Schuon by a group of European followers of René Guénon. Our own view of the matter, and the view of most reasonable esotericists with understanding, is summed up succinctly by Martin Lings in his recent article entitled “Frithjof Schuon and René Guénon,” (*Sophia* Vo. 5, No. 2, pp. 9 & 10): “But in principle their message is one and the same,” and “Both writers are in agreement about essentials, but very different in their manner of expression.” Yet, notwithstanding the plain and undeniable truth of this assertion, an entire movement in Europe and to some extent North America exists to discredit Frithjof Schuon as a depraved cultist. This movement has gone as far as creating the “Dossier Frithjof Schuon” website on the Internet, publishing literature about the bases of the supposed schism between Schuon and Guénon, and making in both allegations of the type that one normally sees between mortal enemies. Reaction to these attacks has been somewhat more restrained, but still reciprocal.

This behavior exhibits the elements of the pattern of division as described above: (1) each claims direct access to esoteric truth (from the same source), and (2) overt competition and antipathy exists between them—exacerbated in this case by allegiance to two different Sufi *tariqas*. Each side believes the other is wrong. Each side believes it is the true and correct one, with an obligation to affirm truth whenever the opportunity occurs. Within the world of Traditionalist writers and students of Tradition—a world that ought to be unitary if any be—this is internecine. Assuming the probity of Martin Lings’ observation that “their message is

7. The classic and certainly most well-documented division of an esoteric institution is that of the Theosophical Society, which began in earnest with the death of H.P. Blavatsky in 1891 and continued throughout the twentieth century. Though the principal “Adyar” group is dominant, the divisions, spin-offs, and splinter groups can be counted in the dozens. As is typical in such phenomena, virtually all of them profess an absolute allegiance to the basic corpus of Blavatsky’s writings and the ancient texts and scripture upon which she relied. What is said of the causes and detriments of internecine behavior *infra* can be said equally of the Theosophical Society.

one and the same,” this schism is the Traditional version of *mitosis*, and is but one of many such recent divisions among esotericists that could be cited, but for one reason among the worst. This division is not based in sacred metaphysics; it is based on considerations of the Outer Man and the pursuit of secular ends.

The reason that this Traditionalist division is among the worst of such divisions, and the reason that its participants and epigones share equally a heightened culpability for missed opportunity and internecine behavior, is directly proportional to the value of the twentieth—and now twenty-first—century Traditional expression, as a whole, in identifying the crisis of the modern world. No other school or movement or collective expression has so clearly targeted the festering decomposition of modernity and its quantitative, secular bases. That the Traditional movement should now be in the process of division and of tearing at itself in public is both irrational and tragic. The internecine tragedy is all the greater in the context of the overwhelming need for clarity and truth in the modern world.

Instead of the Guénon proponents attacking the Schuon proponents, and vice versa, all those who study and affirm the writings of Guénon, Schuon, Coomaraswamy, and the circle of writers and Traditionalists associated with them should expend their energies in a joint effort to promulgate the works of the great Traditionalist writers and engage the forces of opposition directly, as Huston Smith has done with Steven T. Katz. Instead of attacking each other by internecine *ad hominem* diatribes that dissipate the limited resources available, those of us who study and affirm these Traditionalists writers and the first principles of metaphysics should jointly target the *real* enemy: the forces that collectively comprise the integrated complex of the empirical, material, quantitative, secular, sensate, and unambiguously anti-Traditional that constitutes life and thought in twenty-first-century modernity<sup>8</sup>. That world is

8. It may be argued here, as Mr. Moore has done, that the greater danger is the “wolf in sheep’s clothing,” as the folktale goes; that is, someone who cleverly dresses up an evil message in the clothes of Traditional metaphysics to fool and beguile readers and to “form sensibilities that might make an acceptance of the Antichrist more probable.” Other than to deny it as flatly wrong, we have no affirmative defense for such an extreme accusation, and must therefore rely on the careful discernment and intuition of the readers to conclude that such accusations are predictable outgrowths of a form of fundamentalism that, when taken to extremes, manifests as a form of paranoia.

so large, and the Traditional world so small in contrast, that any other course of action—such as we see in the schisms—can be regarded as nothing other than irrational. And, ironically enough, irrationality—as against nonrationality or arationality—is truly a method of the Antichrist.

Moreover, what can be said of the esotericists of the Traditional school goes equally for all true esotericists everywhere, no matter their institutional allegiances. The real enemy is too large and too pervasive to be battling each other over what, *in the larger context*, amounts to doctrinal trivia, like the controversy over the Christic mysteries. Though their numbers have grown considerably in the last quarter of the twentieth century, those who espouse the first principles of metaphysics still comprise a decided minority in the world compared to those who either (1) do not espouse them or (2) who espouse views directly antithetical to them. While we stipulate to the existence of valid doctrinal differences among esotericists, like so many colors of the same spectrum, we nonetheless assert that the internecine battling between esotericists in such circumstances, and with so much at stake, is wasteful and stupid. It is a manifestation of the Outer, not the Inner man. We are neither so naive nor so sanguine to believe that what *should* characterize symbiotic relations among esotericists, Traditional or otherwise, will ever come to be realized. But this cannot be allowed to prevent what needs to be said, which was expressed very well by Huston Smith in “Is There a Perennial Philosophy?”:

Red is not green, but the difference pales before the fact that both are light. No two waves are identical, but their differences are inconsequential when measured against the water that informs them all.

If indeed there be an obligation to affirm truth whenever the opportunity occurs, then the truth is that mutual respect and unity, transcendent or immanent, are more positive and productive forces than disunity and internecine behavior.

**Editor’s Note:**

Alvin Moore Jr’s response to this article appears at page 147.