

## *The Texts of the Convivium*

### **MY TRUE “SELF” IS “US”**

“Who” am I, and “what” am I?

In all spontaneity I feel like asking myself if this “I” is not actually “we”.

As a matter of fact nobody can become fully accomplished without the cooperation of other people.

I need these other people, also to better help them, be helped by them and follow their example.

To live is to tread the boards of one’s life in a show that requires an audience.

Shortly before his death Emperor Augustus addressed the following question to his friends gathered around his bed: “Did you like how I acted my part?”

“Yes, yes!” they all replied unanimously.

“Well, then applaud”.

It is a custom practiced by all actors at the end of a performance.

In taking one’s leave from life, it was good for everyone to be able to say they had played their part well in the play.

In this theatre one cannot speak of success without the audience approval.

Try to imagine an actor acting without an audience, a preacher speaking obscurely in the darkness of a Church without believers, a teacher teaching no-one, a lover addressing his sweetest and most poetic words unable to recall even the haziest idea of a lover, a prisoner marooned in a dungeon where he can’t even hear the voices and steps of his jailers.

Elsewhere I told the (true) story of two wretched old women who lived together. The older was renting a basement flat with two small beds, one of which she sublet to the other. Unlike the sublessee, the lessee was not a bad woman, but extremely rough and uncouth. It was natural to refer to her as a “coarse peasant woman”.

The other – a former showgirl - was a sort of remnant of the Belle Époque. She must have been a beautiful and refined woman in her day. Rumour had it that a Roman prince had fallen madly in love with her. Unlike her friend she expressed herself in an extremely refined, slightly Dannunzian language.

As they had to cut their expenses to the bone they were compelled to live together, but the two women hated each other deeply.

In that year of grace the “coarse peasant woman” was the first one to die. And a few days after I met the other and I found her overwhelmed by sadness. She was left utterly alone. And she summed up the notion in a wonderful hendecasyllabic line, which even D’Annunzio would not hesitate to utter: “I haven’t got anything left – not even hate!”

It would not be inaccurate to say that a human relationship may develop between the persecutor and the persecuted, between the torturer and his victim. At least one has got company, while loneliness is the worst of misfortunes.”

Basically I am a “We”. I split myself into a “me” and an “alter ego”. Moreover I split myself into a strictly personal “me” and an “external world”. I split myself into a “me” and the whole of my interlocutors, with whom I forge some kind of relationship that can be based on fondness, friendship, love, competition and rivalry and, in the worst of cases, a conflictual relationship.

Deep in my heart there is a split between my empirical self and my absolute self. This absolute self is the common Root of all possible empirical selves, that is all the

individual souls of all individual people. This absolute Self is my true and deep Self. I am truly myself in this absolute Subjectivity.

And here I am also all the others.

This is where the "We" comes about, which is at once the divine Being and the great community of human beings.

This is where the "We" comes about which is my true Self, the profound Self of each one of us.

I asked myself who I am, what I am. It is a question not just about my essence, but about my destination.

That there is a destination in things, and what it is – is a question that arises for those who see a generalised and continuous dynamism in things. Everything changes they say. Every being tends to become fulfilled according to his own intrinsic logic.

This is especially true of living beings. Here in the womb of animals, seed and egg unite and develop, they become a fetus, giving rise to the birth and growth of a new being. And in its turn the seed of a plant sprouts and grows and blossoms and bears fruit.

This is how new and ever more mature and adult individuals are produced. The development of these individuals is accompanied by the development of what goes to form nature in its entirety - creation in its highest forms.

Before us is the picture of total evolution, to which each partial evolution is supposed to make its contribution. Now, would it truly be amiss to assign each individual being their own mission according to their own specific nature?

In this perspective I think it is absolutely legitimate and logical to reason along two different lines at the same time. It is a double discourse which at one time and without contradiction, can state the mission of each individual being and the global mission of the Being in its entirety.

Thus each individual being and the total Being are derived from the Absolute and go towards the Absolute.

Similarly here they find their prime Cause and their final Purpose.

Here the Absolute donates itself and gives us everything.

Here each one of us becomes fully accomplished to the extent that our infinite possibilities allow us to.