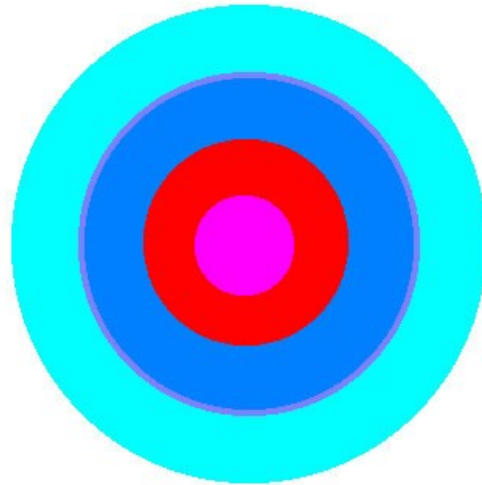


THE SOUL OF BEING

A volume of aphoristic philosophy by
JOHN O'LOUGHLIN



Virtuous Circle.12
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PREFACE

Conceived in chronologically continuous aphoristic vein, this 1998 project is nevertheless divided into twelve sections, each of which bears a headed title in quasi-essayistic vein. Examples of such titles include 'Fair to Life', 'Collective and Individual', 'Self vis-à-vis Not-Self', 'Form and Content(ment)', and 'Metaphysical Salvation'. There is also, at the end, a fairly long appendix which has the merit, not uncharacteristic of my appendices, of both summing up the text and, in this particular case, illustrating the *reculer pour mieux sauter*, or stepping back in order to leap further forward, attitude which underlines much of the foregoing philosophy. Certainly this text goes deeper than the previous one, *Ultranotes from Beyond* (1997-8), in terms of its understanding of the Self and the methodology of self-actualization, or self-realization, by which the bridge from ego to soul is crossed.

John O'Loughlin, London 1998 (Revised 2008)

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Summational Appendix & Philosophical Apotheosis

FAIR TO LIFE

01. The elemental comprehensiveness of the philosopher who admits of fire, water, vegetation (earth), and air in the overall composition of life is such that he cannot regard life as one thing or another but, rather, as a combination of factors which exist in a variety of ratios, depending on the life or life form that is experiencing them.
02. Thus if we equate fire with evil, water with good, vegetation with folly, and air with wisdom, as this philosopher would in fact be inclined to do, then we have no option but to conclude that life is no more evil than good, no more foolish than wise, and simply because, regarded in elemental terms, it is a combination, in varying degrees, of evil, good, folly and wisdom.
03. How, exactly, life is a combination of evil, good, folly, and wisdom would depend on the individual, as on the individual's circumstances, ethnicity, gender, background, class, age, race, environment, etc., since experience of life varies from person to person, with no two persons sharing exactly the same experiences.
04. For some people there is more evil than good to life, and for others more good than evil, and I fancy, as a philosopher, that this would apply more to women than to men, since women generally experience the elements primarily in terms of fire and water, and only secondarily in terms of vegetation and air.
05. For some people there is more folly than wisdom to life, and for others more wisdom than folly, and again I fancy, writing as a self-taught philosopher, that this would more apply to men than to women, since men generally experience the elements primarily in terms of vegetation and air, and only secondarily in terms of fire and water.
06. Thus, on a gender basis alone, I fancy that women will experience life primarily in terms of evil and/or good, and only secondarily in terms of folly and/or wisdom, while men, by contrast, will experience life primarily in terms of folly and/or wisdom, and only secondarily in terms of evil and/or good.

07. Neither gender, however, would have the right to claim that life was only evil or good or foolish or wise, since such a claim would be less representative of life than of each of the elements of which it is composed taken separately and treated independently.
08. But if life is neither solely evil nor good even for women, and neither foolish nor wise even for men, how much less is it one thing or another in general terms, considered in relation to people generally. Life, to repeat, is a composite of all these elemental factors existing to greater or lesser extents, depending on a variety of circumstances. It is certainly not evil, good, foolish, or wise, but evil, good, foolish, *and* wise.
09. So all we can do, if we are honest with life and philosophically perceptive enough to understand it, is to take the basic elements and mould them into some sort of pattern or hierarchy that will grant us more of some and less of others, or most of the one and least of the other, as the case may be.
10. We cannot eliminate any particular element from the overall equation, since that would prove impossible as well, ultimately, as detrimental to life, but we can select, as far as possible, from the available elements those to which we wish to grant prominence, and then set them up against or over those which we deem less or least desirable.
11. Obviously, the 'we' has to take into account the gender divide, since men and women have different priorities, but society can be fashioned in such a way that the prevailing elements to which it subscribes are either on the female side of the gender fence, so to speak, or on its male side, rather than simply aiming at a balance between the two.
12. For a balance tends to marginalize the noumenal elements of fire and air as it concentrates, with amoral consequences, upon water and vegetation, while the fashioning of society in terms of either a female bias towards fire or a male bias towards air will make for immoral or moral consequences.
13. In general terms, one may say that whereas balanced societies tend to favour men and women in roughly equal degrees, the biased societies tend to favour either men or women, whether in phenomenal terms or with respect to the noumenal extremes of

fire and air, wherein the bias is less worldly than netherworldly in the one case, and otherworldly in the other case.

14. Thus societies come to reflect the elements and to sustain life either in terms of amoral, immoral, or moral criteria overall, the amoral being a combination of nonconformist and humanist, the immoral predominantly characterized by fundamentalism, and the moral disposed to a preponderating transcendentalism.
15. Neither fundamentalist nor transcendentalist societies are of the world but, on the contrary, of world-rejecting fieriness or airiness, as the case may be. In fact, they are rather less political and/or economic than either scientific or religious, with a corresponding distinction between cosmic Netherworldliness and karmic Otherworldliness.