

Jack The Giant Killer or The End of The World

(Written the day after the 2012 Mayan Calendar event silliness)

“The mortal makes
the measure work”

Charles Olson wrote
on the back of the envelope
of the one note
I had from him.

To have an end
is to have a form.

That’s one thing..

Olson did say somewhere that “The End of The World is known.”
Which just shows how long ago 1965 was . . . because both the world itself
as an unexceptionable reference
and that you could mean something by
its having a terminus . . .

The earth will be consumed
by the explosion of a burnt-out sun
five billion earth years
down the cosmic pike.

But our world is no single
star system
merely

for interpretable information streaks in from the end
of the observable cosmos
itself no longer a uni-verse at all
but posed ever-more (speculatively)
against other possible material zones and spaces --

that what it is materially we are imagined to be
vacillates more radically with each advance of theoretical coherency.

But also that the socio-political context
in which we cognize our ken
both expands and contracts as fast as ...

We no longer have a "world"
except in the sense coincident with the situation
that we can be apprehensive
about the end of it.

You live inside a projection
and that projection is such
only by virtue of its being exterior to your own mortality --

that it is in and from the world that you think you die, say;

that the world you project is that from which
you depart

and that projection is concrete --
you actually perform it--
in your head, if you are alive there,
but in your acts, your commitments,
and you share it

if you do
with what for each of us
is a specifiable and variable community --

the people you care about and talk about how things are with,

the texts you read and propagate,
and the virtual communities to which they attach you,

the images you imbibe, suppress, process,

the collectivities, in other words,
that are concretely distributed around you --
the images
and utterances
and thought forms

you project --
adrift in the multiphasic forces
of the socius --

their flickeringly (in)determinate
transiencies:

by “the end of the world is known”

Olson must have meant
that it is the nature of a world
for it to have one;
that it has a terminus, a boundary
not only in time

but in whatever topology you conjure with which to dispose it;

and that we project ourselves into a world that we make the form of
but whose exteriority
is anterior
to the form
it allows us
to make for it

and by so doing
take it to have an end

but that, Olson aside, its allowance now
has somehow withdrawn itself

and that that withdrawal, occultation, or simple evaporation
is the uniqueness of our eschatological anxiety

our obsession (if we have one)
with
The End of The World.

The ancient calendars spelled out forms of emergence,

and there were inter-calendrical gaps
where the absence of time-forms
were like seas of darkness,
temporal lacunae,

but across such seas
time took up its determinacies
again

the wheel come round
again

the beginning of a cycle
to welcome new dawn.

We have done away with all such determinacies

and the gap that yawns
does not portend a farther shore.

We have no idea what comes after
“the end of the world” --

that it is some sort of an entity
even a congeries of activities,
a living mass
of intersecting networks
as the current mathematics
pictures it

as if it were one multiphasic giant
as if our various communities
and not our private selves only
communed and communicated
in a single fog of cognitivity --
a mottled, discontinuous-continuous
spasm on the crust of geology --

and though we are closed,

each one of these communities,
in that we close in on ourselves
so that we can
among ourselves
bespeak ourselves

there is a space, a meta- or mega- geology –
an earth, as it were, where these communities
swarm and face each other

each one of us variously defining our own space as projected on this mega-space
with various visions of closure.

Last night
we passed through the membrane
of one complicitous projection of such --

promoted

as a screen to concretize other grim
eschatologies -- geophysical, economic, bio-cognitive, unlucky.

The End of the World means

that there are no ontologies left

that *to think things are*
at all
in any determinate,
binding,
or absolute configuration
is to participate in a fundamentalism
inalienable to being itself

functionally no different than the brash stupidities we all condemn
and that affirm themselves with ever-more rigidly constructed and constricted blinders
to the world realms, crumbling outside them,
but struggling to articulate

an equally rigid
view.

What's left
at the end
of the worlds

is the repressive (regressive?) competition among ontologies

whose material form is competition for institutional space --

what corporation do YOU believe in

not that Goldman Sachs gives a fuck what you really think –
they hire their OWN ontologist – I'm told they actually do --

and yet what and how you think
conditions the energy
of your efficacious participation
in their ontological pretension: how high you rise
on the corporate ladder,
how creatively you perform
in the no longer Faustian ascension
to the infinite if fantasmal volatility
of abstract value
as such --

That the overarching Ontological Provenance
of the only EVERYTHING
within the collective Horizon
is MONEY
but that means we all are sitting
under
the Provenance of NUMBER

The *salutary* end of the world
would mean the end of
the Reign of Quantity, as one Rene Guenon, once noticed

when not only London Bridge
that is a Kingdom falls (Robert Duncan)

but the hyper-dimensional grid of measurable concepts
chopped down

from The Giant's
Tree

A note on *The Incurive Moment* (for Jack Clarke); or: the “Poet’s Wallet”

The incurive moment changes it all; and yet, unless properly stored in its poetic “wallet,” the intuition, the gnosis, the flash and continuing state it occasions lives within its advent only. When the event of incursion passes, even the most exacting formulation of it is but its trace, a testimony to a passing spasm of illumination, recuperation from an unanticipated orgasm of disruption. I know this from my own experience: again and again it returns, ever the same, ever the angel of catastrophe, the incendiary of startled release and surprise. The registry in which its intervention is a permanent acquisition is not that of its registration by consciousness.

Symbolism is spawned by incursion, and an event of incurive “spirituality” nestles at the poignant or the trenchant symbol’s core. But the contemplation of or the celebration through the symbolic is another spiritual domain, oblique to incurive illumination itself. Unless prepared in the poet’s wallet.

Because the symbol may englobe and embody an incurive event and bespeak the same truth that incursion proper delivers, it is a pressing task, in the wake of Jung’s and Corbin’s efforts to theorize the symbolic process, to articulate the appropriate relation between these two modalities of concrete spiritual experience. Their laws are of a contrasting order. The symbol propagates itself. The incursion erases itself. Reflection enhances symbolism while it often annihilates even the incurive trace. (Unless...the poet’s...wallet . . .)

The problem is that in spite of the extraordinary work of Henry Corbin in limning the space of the spiritual imagination—the symbolic reality of the “mundus imaginalis,” the “mesocosm” of “the olam al mithal”—the proper relationship between the products of this reality in literature or dream life and the direct advent of symbol-producing but essentially non-discursive awakening has never been carefully explored. One reason is that within Corbin’s work, the latter suffers a differend: it is effectively rendered invisible because it is either absorbed into the hagiographic concreta of the symbolic experience, or conflated with the “higher” Neoplatonic hypostases in the conceptual schemata that are assumed to operate in the margins of the symbolic context. The realm of “the spirit” that is the symbol’s burning center might be glossed as pure intellection in the Plotinian sense, but in Jung’s and Corbin’s interpreter, James Hillman, and to some extent in Jung and Corbin themselves, the intellect is reduced to mundane intellectuality, and the direct experience of spiritual incursion is kicked upstairs and ignored. That which blasts through all intellect is side-stepped in the name of the very discursivity exploded by it. But it is at best problematic whether the Neoplatonistic schemata as such are capable of evaluating or assigning place to what incurive spirituality portends. So, a task: to re-examine the mesocosm, and to speak of its relation to the intuitional awakening that occurs in instantaneously present gnosis as undergone by Dzogchen, Mahamudra, Vipassana, and Zen practitioners, to mention its Buddhist contexts, by Christians infected with various salutary heresies and enthusiasms, by Nathists and Shaktiists, by Thelamites and Kabbalists and Qabbalists, by, indeed, Corbin’s Sufis and Shiites, by Taoists and shamanists or

shamans, but also by beings of all walks of life or ontic conditionality: physicians, healers, bodyworkers, artists, poets, musicians, corrections officers, prisoners, firemen, emergency service unit police officers, aerialists, yachtsmen, dying children, hunters, cats, raptors, elephants, roaches, social and asocial insects, anaerobes, eukaryotes and prokaryotes, miltonias, odontoglossoms, living stones: by all and any beings stricken in open pursuit of or unconscious readiness for onto-gnosis whenever and wherever and however and whyever it incurs.

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*The Fool's Money
falls from the air.*

*In the mind
one goes on arguing.*

*I pick it up
and lose my mortality.*

*All of what I hide
you are.*

*The dark bird flies
to the dark north sky.*

(Poem presented, by me, to Stephen Jonas
one "Magic Evening,"
summer, 1969)

Charles Stein
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