



Cycling Round Existence: Discovering Aspects of the Psychopathology of Western Civilisation

Gordon Ellis

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The period from Petrarch to Bruno saw the rediscovery of Classical Rome and Greece, and the emergence of Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Kabbalah, and the Magic tradition, which were used in attempts to reform the Western church from within. They failed. Protestants rejected the unreformable church and turned to the bible as the sole authority, with unfortunate consequences. Their attempts at reform also failed. This book looks at the figures of Petrarch, Ficino, Pico, Reuchlin, Trithemius, Agrippa, Paracelsus, Dee, Fludd, the Rosicrucians, Montaigne and Bruno within the context of their times. Apart from Montaigne, who sought an accommodation with the status quo, they each sought to achieve radical reform. Their influences and reasons for their failure are considered. Western history can be seen as a series of attempts to deal with the chronic problems posed by the Christian church or reactions to the resultant failures. This essay is one of a series that looks at the foundations of Western Civilisation, and facets of its development, as if it were an individual who manifests dysfunctionality and psychopathic tendencies. It proposes that only by revealing formative issues from 'infancy' and 'childhood', and their subsequent elaboration, together with an acceptance of these, is it possible to effect the profound changes that are required to ensure not only a healthy individual and culture, but our very survival as a species on this planet. We have a crisis of values that requires a cultural revolution, a paradigm shift of major proportions. This book seeks to make a contribution to effecting the kinds of changes that we need, based upon an understanding of our past. Other volumes will be forthcoming.

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