

"Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists." Review.

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Death is not only an issue of Christians et.al, it is an issue of Greeks too. However, the Greeks in the basis of their culture, art, and philosophy they faced and this issue with dignity and bravery, and in accordance with the natural phenomena. Always, in greek tragedies and myths, there is a redemption and a victory for the human against to what provokes to him pain, fear, and confusion. And of course this is evidenced by Epicurean philosophy too.

Here is an excerpt from the book "Gemma" by Dimitris Liantinis that is explained those myths in the bible, and on how the natural became unnatural.

"The fourth chapter of Genesis is the story of Death. It is the tragedy of Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus. It is the fratricide of Cain and Abel. It is the fratricide of Polyneikes and Eteokles. Man was warned that if he tasted the fruit of knowledge, he would know death : "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."- Genesis 2, 17 . And the threat, that was erstwhile issued by god to the splendidly naked creatures, soon materialized. They ate on Friday and died on Saturday. Since the subject of the third chapter of Genesis was knowledge, by necessity the subject of the fourth would be death. The two brothers, agricultural farmers, offer the first produce of their toils to mother nature as a grateful sacrifice. Abel presents a white lamb while Cain brings some fruits of the soil. Nature turns an attentive ear and listens to Abel's song but silently disregards Cain's plight. Abel's flock grows larger while Cain's fields grow parched. The hapless brother grows jealous of the prosperous one. "Let's go out to the field", he tells him. While there, he lifts a large rock and brings it down forcefully on his brother's head. The head cracks in two. Blood and brains spill to the ground. The body collapses like a tree and falls flat in a single movement. Abel's eyesight is quickly fading. He turns to address his brother for the last time: - "Why did you slay me brother? I will never see the birds and the sun again. Never again will a maiden pour water over my hands at the spring. My child and my sheep will never know my caring touch again. Never again! You hear me? Nevermore!"

The writer of Genesis then says that lightning struck Cain's forehead and forever marked him as a murderer. But it was not lightning. It was that Nevermore! It was the last words uttered by Abel that became a wrinkle of death and marked his brother's brow. It is the same wrinkle we all carry on our brow from Cain's time and forever after. It is the knowledge of death. Among all things that live, animals, birds, plants, reptiles, stars, the knowledge of death is unique to humans. It is the heavy ransom with which we bought our intelligent consciousness. Our

cognitive understanding.

Millions of humans had perished before Abel but did not know that they were dying. Just like the fish, birds, plants, reptiles, stars, die without such knowledge. They did not know that they were dying because they lived in the paradise of ignorance of the animal. Death arrived on this world with Cain. And the knowledge of death is a most costly comprehension. The billowing cloud brings rain to the thirsty plains and snow to the mountaintops. The cloud of Cain summoned and unleashed the lightning of terror in human existence. Its unworldly radiance that engulfed the land of our story became a vast cloak of blood. I mean that this Nevermore! It was the last words uttered by a dying Abel, was to become for humans the locus of the most savage terror concerning their dialectical relationship with death. The physical knowledge that by dying, man is lost forever, never to live again, sowed in his existence a horrible fear.

Forever! and Nevermore! Two phrases whose volume displacement has an absolute value. Their predetermined destiny is to be used by man solely for the definitive fact of death. Man could not bear this horrible fear in the face of death. He could not find the presence of mind to conquer it. To admit it and acknowledge it. To submit gracefully and with dignity to this relentless rightful force of nature. He wavered. And he wavered exactly at this crucial moment. So, the trophy was seized by death. Man started to flee and death took up the chase. And the poor sod is still running to escape. Distraught, blind and light-footed. He seeks, having lost his way, a safe place to hide. The only safety he finds is in caves and earthly habitations. These are muddy holes and rocky ravines, avalanches and landslides that bring him tumbling down to the unkempt basements of his sentiments and feverish imagination. These are lands hidden away in the darkness of existence, thousands of miles deep and far from the blazing troposphere of our logic. So that we can no longer hear Abel's lightning. The deafening sound of that Nevermore!

To conceal and escape from the horrible terror of death, **man invented the gods and religions. And life after death.** This first and foremost. Belief in the afterlife is the suspension system, the backbone of all religions. Find me a single religion whose founder did not construct its edifice upon the foundation stone of belief in the afterlife and I will gladly demonstrate how this religion doesn't have a single follower, not even its own founder. I am not talking about Buddha here because nirvana is abandonment, not virtuous pride.

Through gods and religions, all the dirty laundry of human history came into being and found their way into the light. Clergies, synagogues and catechism. Opium for the masses, dementia and fanaticism. Congealing theological hatred, odium theologicum. And alongside the unsightly shape and rotting flesh of all related offices. **Like a malignant carcinoma and a parasite.** The alleged holy visions, demonic possessions and exorcisms. And at its highest echelons you'll find the institutes of ignorance and the brilliant academies of darkness. The theological colleges and the holy Synod. It was through gods and religions that all the dirty laundry of human history found their way into the light.

From Aeschylus and “ἐλευθεροῦτε θεῶν τε πατρῶων ἔδη”[*] to the crosses of the Crusaders, to Hitler's Swastika and the recent Jihads against the American “infidels” during the Gulf Wars. In this mutation of human nature, the mark of Cain is much worse than the mark of Onan. Because here the derailing of the natural to the unnatural has to do with a perversion of the mind, of the spirit, and of core values. It is the counterfeiting of the entire history of civilization. Both are evils, but the venom of the viper is much more dangerous than the sting of a bee! For when all is said and done, Onan's brand set man off on a hunt for endurance and pleasure. But with Cain's mark man became the prey of fear and his own cowardice. With Onan, man casts himself off the rock while singing. With Cain, he sinks wailing in the mire". (Dimitris Liantinis “Gemma”)

[*] Paean as sung by the Greeks in the battle of Salamina (Aeschylus Persians 402-5).

Oh sons of the greeks,

Free your fatherland,

free your children, your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods,

and the tombs of your ancestors,

Now the struggle is for all the things.

The essence of Aeschylus's Paean lies in protecting family, and cult and in keeping the country, the land of the fathers, free by taking up arms in defense, and not in a war of ambition. The classical battle cry makes the defense of Greek territory a legitimate ground for “just war”, which has been key to the understanding of patriotism to the present day. The just defenders of hearth and home, of the ancestral soil that had produced and raised them, deserved victory. Such a motivation in its modern version aided in the territorial reconfiguration of Greece. Because the Greek military action was a reaction to defend Greek territory, Aeschylus's lines also conveyed that war could have been avoided, if only the enemy had chosen to do so. Thus, the celebrated passage held the seeds to develop a public discourse on patriotic revenge, but also one on war and peace.

“Aeschylus describes the paean as a “holy cry uttered in a loud voice, a shout offered in sacrifice, emboldening to friends, and dissolving fear of the foe”. When an army marched into the battle of a navy left the harbor to wage war at sea, the men sang the paean. It was a combination of prayer, cheer, and rebel yell ...Aeschylus is blunt about the paean's terrifying effect on the Persian audience aboard ship.