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[Ong, The Barbarian Within, 1962 - suite]

Auteur : Foucault, Michel

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literature is now full of reproductions of this sort of mandala-figure elicited under more or less clinical conditions.¹³

The psychological implications of the mandalas are extremely rich and complicated, and only certain special applications of the figures can be touched on here. The circle which mandalas commonly feature as a basis of their structure is often a clock, bowl, ball, round table, or the like, and the square a four-walled room, public square, prison cell, college quad, four chairs around a table, and like arrangements. The presence of this kind of imagery in thought concerned with the perfection of self can be detected everywhere, once one is alerted to it: the Greek four-square man, the related Greek notion of encyclopedia which complements the four-square imagery with a "circle" of education, modern "Four-Square Gospels," the four cardinal virtues (with the hinge imagery suggesting circular movement again), St. Teresa of Avila's "mansions" and "interior castle" (images repeated time without number among spiritual writers), and thus on indefinitely. Imagery of a similar type is, of course, utilized also by Christ Himself, who knew of what psychological stuff man was made, as when He says: "In my Father's house there are many mansions" (for the interior orientation of both house and mansions, cf. "The kingdom of God is within you"), or when He speaks of the "house" which is swept and garnished, from which the devils are expelled and to which they return. A more elaborate exploitation of the house imagery is found in Hebrews 1-5, where the house which Christ inhabits so much more confidently than Moses had—"which house are we" (3:6)—focuses the ensuing discussion concerning both the seventh-day rest of faith and Christ's priesthood itself. Passages such as this in the Scriptures may well have directly inspired some medieval Christ-mandalas.

The specialization of this symbolism in circles and four-sided figures (obviously related to the bilateral symmetry of the human body, and thus bearing a heavy material charge), and its tendency to avoid triangles (which, by contrast, carry a kind of spiritual charge),¹⁴ is not a law imputed to mandalas by some sort of extrapolation of an overheated Pythagorean imagination, but a simple fact observable in the figures which actually occur. The reasons for such facts go deep into the structure of the personal consciousness and cannot, of course, be elaborated here. They have been and are being elaborated in dismaying detail in works such as those earlier referred to, for those interested in

studying them. Neither the four-sidedness nor the circularity appears overtly in St. Ignatius' prison-cage, which is a primitive or residual mandala figure as compared with the elaborate mandalas worked out in the Orient. This fact is perhaps connected with St. Ignatius' way of easing intense concentration on the self alone by merging it with a concentration on Christ, who is a person and hence other, but at the same time, as God, inhabits the interior castle of my soul as effectively as I do myself.

But, despite its rudimentary character, St. Ignatius' prison is, beyond any reasonable doubt, related to the mandala-type constructs in its way of picturing the self in a kind of enclosure, isolated from an exteriority around it. St. Ignatius' prison is an embarrassing phenomenon because the walls of the self are ambiguous in implication: they are the walls of a prison, but a prison which is also a kind of house and protection, and a prison which, because it helps constitute the self, is also portable as the self is portable, and thus, in a way, seems not to be a prison at all, but something which I have tried to catch in the expression "prison-cage." Thus the "confusion" in St. Ignatius' picture has a *real* reason for existing: his image simply picks up, like a television set, a pattern which exists independently of it. Here we are up against a certain quality in St. Ignatius' thought which makes it particularly susceptible to a phenomenological or descriptive approach and which arises less out of any particular philosophy—attempts to "systematize" St. Ignatius philosophically are singularly unconvincing—than out of an intensely personal, real, "existential" awareness of the self and of the problems of existence, and out of a complementary, real, non-abstractive approach to God, allied to what Newman calls real as against notional assent to religious truth.

The present study, which has taken as a point of departure what appears to be a real difficulty in St. Ignatius' thought, does not at all want to pretend that St. Ignatius' thought is everywhere dominated by mandala-type constructs, or that the elements here discussed explain everything that has to be explained, but only to suggest some of the reasons why St. Ignatius' remarks on the soul-and-body in exile can legitimately and understandably take the form they do. The remarks cannot be written off as defying rational explanation, for the reason that careful study shows more and more that there is no completely private way of picturing the self to the self, or even of erring in

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