

Correspondence

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THE ANCIENT WISDOM IN AFRICA

Sir,

Not being a "specialist" in African questions, I would like to make some marginal comments on the letter signed F.S., who made some just statements on the different confusions in the article by Patrick Bowen, albeit not exact to speak of animism, in the same breath appreciating the "profound metaphysical ideas of the Negroes". To apply the term animism to the African tradition may be correct for the cosmological doctrines which are a part of the latter, but surely this term animism cannot refer to the complete tradition.

There are some problems about the presence of mysterious White Men in South Africa which have not yet been clarified. The first mention of a White Men's tribe is in a paper in *The Theosophist*, a Californian review, of which I cannot check the exact date, my library not being near at hand, but it appeared about 1910. However, it need not be said that the many superficial details lack seriousness. For there is no smoke without a fire, and perhaps someone may trace the origin of this information. The other reference to a White Men's tribe is made by Attilio Gatti, (*Tom-Toms in the Night*, London 1932) an explorer who, describing his expedition in Mozambique, speaks of the rumors he heard from the Negroes about White Men living in the mountainous region near the Gorongosa-Valley. The Negro tribe of the Tarote's had been charged by them to ward off intruders and they are the only Negroes who should have a regular contact with the White Men, exchanging food and weapons. Gatti tells us of the curiosity of a Tarote chief, who tried to spy on the White Men, but, being caught, had his eyes cut out and was sent back to his tribe as a warning. The White Men seemed to live on a rocky plateau, had cattle and corn fields and dwelt in cave dwellings. They were large of stature, blond, with long beards and were apparently governed by a queen. Then Gatti tells of an attempt to go near to them, but many circumstances obliged him to retrace his steps. His vast experience in Africa made him conclude that these circumstances must be certain signs, certain warnings. In fact, he never had the occasion to return to this region.

Rome, 25.4.70

YUSSIF ABDULHAYY.

IN DEFENCE OF TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

Sir,

The current issue of *S.C.R.* inspires me to try again.

Considering Martin Lings' deeply moving "Signs of the Times" (as well as his review

of *The Transformist Illusion*) in the clarifying light offered by Frithjof Schuon's article, "Dharmakara's Vow", I arrived at the following tentative inferences:

Outwardly, the principles and techniques of evolution (as outlined, with numerous flaws and omissions, by Teilhard) are utilized by God for (*inter alla*) the incarnation, development, and testing of mankind created in His image.

Inwardly, God enabled man to fall away from Him and implanted in him (through the religions) a childlike longing to be re-united and at rest in Him.

Esoterically, (1) could be said to manifest the masculine, and (2) the feminine aspect of God.

I can't help thinking it must be something like that, *sub specie aeternitatis*.

London, 22.5.70

H. F. RUBINSTEIN