

Fernando Pessoa

But the real meaning of initiation...

Oc.

But the real meaning of initiation is that this visible world we live in is a symbol and a shadow, that this life we know through the senses is a death and a sleep, or, in other words, that what we see is an illusion. Initiation is the dispelling — a gradual, partial dispelling — of that illusion. The reason for its secret is that most men are not adapted to understand it and will therefore misunderstand and confuse it if it be made public. The reason for its being symbolic is that initiation is not a knowledge but a life, and that man must therefore think out for himself what the symbols show, for thus he will live their life and not only learn the words in which they are shown.

To say that Xt. is a symbol of the sun is to put the initiatory process the wrong way about. It is the sun that is the symbol of Xt. In other words, Xt. is the reality and the sun the illusion, Xt. the light and the sun the shadow. (The Ineffable is light, the GA body, the world shadow —the shadow cast by the dense when lit by the subtle. The light is in the circumference (?) and the shadow cast into the centre (?) — Has this anything to do with the pt. within the c.?) (Cf. the kabbalistic idea of En Soph drawing inwards, manifesting in and not out).

To initiate a man by a complicated and more or less impressive ritual and then confide to him, under pledges of secrecy and oaths more or less terrible, that spring comes after winter—this could never have been the device of any initiatory body or system. Rather will it have been to teach him the contrary — that spring following winter is a symbol of greater things, that the natural is a figurement of the supernatural.

This, carried to more or less detail, in symbol, then in doctrine, then in revelation, is the essence of all real initiations, from Eleusis to Kilwinning.

Orders of init: (1) through symbols and (later) explanations in themselves symbolic — cf. Pike; (2) through symbolic doctrine, true on its level, and explanations no longer symbolic; (3) through direct though not necessarily spoken or uttered communication.

I do not say that these things represent a truth and I do not say that they do not. I say that this is the meaning of initiation, that it is thus that initiation exists and that it is for those purposes that it exists.

s. d.

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