

Operative Traditions II - Introduction

by [Miguel A. Fernandez](#)



Introduction: *The Meaning of the Earth*

“Inexorably, hesitantly, terrible as fate, the great task and question is approaching: how shall the earth as a whole be governed? And to what end shall “man” as a whole—and no longer as a people, a race—be raised and trained?”

Friedrich Nietzsche¹

“I entreat you, my brothers, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of superterrestrial hopes! They are poisoners, whether they know it or not”

Friedrich Nietzsche²

"I am a Stranger on Earth"

Psalm 119:19

The main goal of *Operative Traditions II – Nigredo* is to present new alternatives for revolutionizing a more harmonic relation to the earth.

In times of resource depletion, natural exploitation, pollution, global warming and social distress, this 2nd volume of *Operative Traditions* aims to serve as the intellectual foundation that allows restoring a vision of the cosmos in which the human condition artistically recovers a traditional and archaic dialogue with nature.

Like in the former volume, *Operative Traditions II – Nigredo* also aims to introduce to the general public the heroic ideas of Ernst Jünger, Julius Evola and many other relatively unknown authors. Building upon the ideas of these extraordinary thinkers does not aim to reinforce the senility of a dying past that is not completely dead, but rather such ideas are incorporated to provide the seeds of a new future which has not yet been delivered.

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¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Will To Power* Vintage Books Edition, September, 1968, 957 (1885)

² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Penguin Books. Copyright © R. J. Hollingdale, 1969, Prologue

There are many approaches to what are considered the most important problems of our time, ranging from political issues to socio-economic and cultural changes. Most of these perspectives are linked essentially to the human context, which often radically dismisses whatever forces or dynamics transcend that of human societies.

Domains such as the animal kingdom and the natural environments are those which are mostly ignored, marginalized or exploited by the monopolization of human activities at a planetary scale. And yet by relying on an elevated approach that perceives the human realm as almost insignificant when faced with much more powerful macrocosmic forces, in *Operative Traditions II - Nigredo* is considered a “fast-forward” and universal view of the human plight in which the most important fact of our times is considered *the profound modification taking place in the earth’s biosphere*. This modification has been extremely rapid during the last decades, but as humans we have adapted relatively well to it and our senses can’t perceive the rate of change in a significant way. Hence urban-industrial civilization has mitigated to a large extent the effects that pollution, resource depletion, global warming and deforestation have on human life, to such degree that human life expectancy and demographics have even increased at a global scale. However, this powerful human preponderance is taking place at the expense of destroying native and traditional cultures, by unbalancing and impoverishing countless natural ecosystems, by causing unprecedented levels of global debt, and by causing around two hundred species to extinguish every single day.³

Humanity appears, amidst this whole scheme of rapid planetary developments, as merely subservient to the unpredictable consequences caused by the constant unleash of the most varied forms of material and technological power. No human generation can change the planetary past, and yet the powerful momentum of the earth’s past decisively conditions the situation of the present, and the question that then emerges is to what extent can human power alter the course of the future, which is equivalent to that of pondering which is exactly the human role amidst such overall dynamics. Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), the German writer who was awarded with the Iron Cross 1st Class and Pour le Mérit medals due to his heroic efforts in World War I, constitutes in *Operative Traditions II - Nigredo* the most important historical host to present us with the core powers of our age, providing us important ideas for overcoming their negative influence... Well acknowledging the momentum that the historical process impelled in human consciousness, Jünger writes: “*We must concede that we were born in a landscape of ice and fire. The past is created in such a way that one cannot cling to it, and*

³ In the 2010 UN Environment Program report it is stated that: “150-200 species of plant, insect, bird and mammal become extinct every 24 hours. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/aug/16/nature-economic-security>

the future, that one cannot establish himself in it. What can be seen is not the final order, rather the change of disorder, under which a great law is to be discovered”⁴. By resorting to the powerful heritage left to us by Ernst Jünger, the discovery of such law or *lex animata in terris*⁵ is the key goal of Operative Traditions.

This is not the first time that the human condition has faced such crossroads, since in countless times in the past, territorial modifications, State developments, war, and the menaces of nature have obliged the human species to either learn to adapt to the changes, or rather master them by creating a culture or civilization that provides meaning to human life amidst the novel conditions. In this latter case of accomplishment of human mastery, knowledge emerges as the key factor that allows men to unveil the higher signification of the new processes. This high signification appears as a set of symbols, rituals and language that perfectly correlate to the novel dynamics. And by discovering these symbols and linguistic forms, humans become capable of attaining freedom, which is essentially the capacity to set goals that can be effectively accomplished by configuring artistically the new set of territorial dynamics, and as a side-effect, by conjuring up all menaces. Such is the action of *creating values*.

One of the most damaging prejudices of modern culture is to believe that human and sociopolitical values can be ideally separated from the values expressed by the cosmos at large in all its most diverse beings. Seyyed Hossein Nasr once wrote: “*The total salvation of man is possible when not only man himself but all creatures are redeemed*”⁶, and therefore Nasr encourages to realize that the symbolic expression of such values correspond to a sanctification of life at all levels, which is in correspondence with healing and salvation of the human highest virtues... Yet the plight of our times is that the human species at large no longer aims to reveal the values of the cosmos –to essentially *create* values- but has accepted even from a scientific viewpoint the position of being naively “separated” from the cosmic dynamics, believing that all resources, energy and workforce present in nature can be ideally “used” in order to fulfill individual interest. The latter is not but one of the most devastating beliefs ever existed, which like a virus, has been progressively inoculated in modern culture causing the human species to become the worst parasite ever appeared on earth. Operative Traditions is not intended to propagate this viral mind-set nor to speculate on “technological or mainstream political solutions” for the human species to reinforce a blind behavior of cutting the selfsame branch that sustains life; a type of insane behavior one can’t even find in wild ani-

⁴ Jünger, Ernst. *The Worker. Collected Works*. Second Edition. Klett-Cotta. 1981, 100

⁵ *Lex animata in terris* is a mediaeval Latin term for the law embodied in a living form,

⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Man and Nature. The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1990, 34

mals. Rather, in this book is intended to liberate the symbolic power of the cosmos at all levels, whatever it takes and whatever are the sacrifices required, a problem that demands to restore the fundamental notions of the human being as a *symbolic* being.

Recovering the Magical Power of Symbolization

“The service of the poet counts among the highest of this world. When he transforms the word, the spirits surround him; they sniff the blood that is given. There, the future is not only seen; it is conjured and also banished”⁷

Ernst Jünger

Operative Traditions assumes that humans are not beings defined by rationality (*animale rationale*), neither defined by intelligence (*animale sapiens*), but rather that humans are defined by the capacity to create symbols that are intimately linked with the convergence of means and meanings; in other words, Operative Traditions assumes that men are *animal symbolicum*⁸ or *homo symbolicum*. Dante himself referred to this symbolic capacity as an analogical sense (Αν-αλογική) that allows consciousness to attain higher and more synthetic views of the cosmos.⁹ Such is also the crucial thesis of these books. Hence, the power of *symbolization* emerges as the absolute assistance concerning the problem initially posed; symbolization is what allows men to perceive stability amidst the most chaotic dynamics, to perceive a central point of decision that permits mastery, and in this sense, the symbol of the *tree* and polar symbols such as the *sun* appear as the most appealing, introductory and timeless symbols for pointing to this key issue.

The communion between men and nature has always been mediated by symbols. And yet in order to live and adapt to modern urban-industrial environments, the modern urbanite has been forced to toss away the old symbolic and mythical ties with wilderness and has established completely new mediations with a complex configuration of infrastructures, technolo-

⁷ Junger, Ernst, *Strahlungen. Samtliche Werke, vol. 1*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981, 16

⁸ Bernard Kaplan stated in 1961: “During the last fifty years it has been progressively recognized that the symbolic activity is one of the most characteristic traits of human existence, and that all the development of human culture is based in the capacity of men to transform the most simple sensible material into a portray of symbols, into a portray of the highest intellectual and emotional distinctions” (An approach to the problem of symbolic representation: nonverbal and verbal “*Journal of communications*” 11, 52-62, 1961) In addition to the latter, Ernst Cassirer wrote: “Instead of defining man as an animal rationale we should define men as animal symbolicum. By doing this we can designate his specific difference” Ernst Cassirer. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*. Univ of Pennsylvania Pr (1972)

⁹ Pietro Negri. *Knowledge of the Symbol* UR Group & Julius Evola. *Introduction to Magic*. Inner Traditions, 2001, 84

gies and system of objects that have powerfully encroached and assimilated all the former natural landscapes, rendering them all into what can be accurately referred to as a planetary *techno-scape*¹⁰. Without realizing this key phenomenon it is extremely challenging to understand in essence the social, political and economic dynamics that are sheltered by it, or as Jacques Ellul wrote: “*Mediatization by technology is fundamental to understanding modern society*”¹¹. In this regard, it can’t be emphasized enough that the concept of “nature” is extremely idealistic or romanticized in our times, as it is extremely difficult to relate empirically to any element that has not been one way or another already influenced or mediated by modern techno-industrial processes... As we expose in Operative Traditions by resorting very often to Gilbert Simondon’s (1924-1989) key notions, it shall become clear that anywhere technique establishes power, in that domain technique defines and categorizes what are “natural facts”. So once assuming that as humans we perceive the world through our symbolic attachments or mediations¹² a corollary of the latter is that whenever our selfsame language emphasizes a rigid contrast between “nature” and “civilization” -or between the “organic” and “mechanic” realms- then the more such contrasts shall be reinforced externally. This is so because one of the characteristics of a symbolic being is that its optics not only perceives the world according to very specific configurations, but also directly and indirectly *creates* such configurations. Hence, these rigid linguistic contrasts impede gaining a more powerful vision of totality which embraces a deep interconnectedness of all vital processes. In this regard, Ernst Jünger wrote: “*This distinction of value between mechanical and organic world is one of the characteristics of a weakened existence that will surrender to the attacks of a life which feels connected to its means with the naive certainty as how the animal uses its organs*”¹³.

Hence, “Natural” could have been Mount Everest, when firstly conquered by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1953, but in our times Mount Everest is not the same Mount Everest as a century ago, even if it appears to our eyes, since a new layer of an invisible reality has conquered its highest position in the form of satellite telecommunication waves and technical complexes. Such modification induces our actions in such environment today to not be “natu-

¹⁰ Jacques Ellul writes: “*technology, in its modern mass society orientation, generates an artificial symbolic universe of its own that pre-empts the functions of its natural human counterpart and deprives modern man of the human symbolic resources upon which his ability to control his own destiny rest(...) exactly because he is held in that universe, man has ceased to know the real world where he effectively lives*” Jacques Ellul. Symbolic function, technology and society. J. Social Biol. Struct. 1978 1, 207-218

¹¹ Jacques Ellul writes: “*Mediatization by technology is fundamental to understanding modern society. Not only does technology mediate between man and the natural environment and, to a second degree, between man and the technological environment; but it also mediates between men*” Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological System*. Continuum Press. 1980, 37

¹² Among the factors that have an influence on the formation of our opinions and beliefs we have not yet mentioned one of the most important: that of the mediation of experience [tra i fattori che esercitano un influsso sulla formazione delle nostre opinioni e convinzioni non abbiamo ancora menzionato uno dei più importanti: che è la mediazione dell'esperienza] Gehlen, Arnold. *L'uomo nell'era della tecnica. Problemi socio-psicologici della civiltà industriale*. Armando Editore (2003), 125

¹³ *Es ist diese wertmäßige Unterscheidung von mechanischer und organischer Welt eines der Kennzeichen der geschwächten Existenz, die den Angriffen eines Lebens unterliegen wird, das sich seinen Mitteln mit jener naiven Sicherheit verwachsen fühlt, mit der sich das Tier seiner Organe bedient.* Jünger, Ernst. *Der Arbeiter*. Klett-Cotta. 1981, 119

ral” but rather *mediated*. The same can be applied to all living organisms that are present in today’s world, to the point that Jacques Ellul remarks: “*Nature, now technicized, and society, now technological, are no longer what they have always been*” (...) *Nature is no longer an original, specific presence, in symbolic opposition to the culture, but a model of simulation, a digest of signs of nature put back into circulation*”¹⁴.

So this basic assumption renders the concept of “nature” that emerged in modern natural sciences after the Middle-Ages as antiquate; in practice, a pure anachronism and too often an abstraction. Such idea of nature is no longer a *concrete* reality perceived by our senses, and the more we delve into the wilderness (like climbing a mountain or penetrating a forest...) the more we realize how extremely challenging it would be to live autonomously in such natural conditions without external assistances and mediations. Such assistances and mediations constitute both culture and civilization, which are deeply embedded with symbolic meanings. To state that nature is an ally or enemy of men depends ultimately in the character of the mediations we establish with her, just like the fact that when facing a wolf, snake or wild boar in the wilderness, the fact of the animal attacking us or not depends decisively on our own psychological and emotional reaction to the animal, which to a large extent is culturally conditioned, corroborating Lord Northbourne’s vision when asserting that “*nature is only terrible or squalid to those who do not understand her, and when misunderstanding has upset her balance*”¹⁵. And culture isn’t itself but *mediation*, and the healthier a culture, the better it assists as a framework to relate to the transcendent cosmic powers that “are there” –just like a high mountain- but that however human societies are no longer capable to harmonically relate too.

So in our times, it is not preposterous to consider that culture is suffering a severe process of extinction, as practically none of the contents present in the mass-media, or even in philosophical, historical, religious, artistic and scientific productions question whatsoever the type of mediation existent nowadays between men and the raw transcendent power of the cosmos, and this occurs to such degree that we can’t but agree with the great scholar on traditional art, Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998) when writing: “*Modern man collects keys without knowing how to open a door*”¹⁶. This cultural lack only triggers more violence and incomprehension in the key modes of communication between men and nature, which then affect the relations of men with women, and men with themselves.

¹⁴ Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological System*. Continuum Press, 1980, 70

¹⁵ Lord Northbourne. *Of the Land and the Spirit. The Essential Lord Northbourne on Ecology and Religion*. World Wisdom, 2008., 38

¹⁶ Schuon, Frithjof. *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*. World Wisdom Books, 2007, 6

Hence, due to modern society's proven incapacity to define a harmonic dialogue with the cosmos, the archaic natural conditions of existence are experiencing an intense extinction process. Today's life on planet earth is determined by the impositions of a technological cosmos that no longer distinguishes between economic classes nor political groups, to the point that billions of individuals from industrially developed and non-developed countries in the planet are connected to it, influenced by its impositions, and there is no feasible escape from it, a key notion that impelled Ernst Jünger to write *that "man, whatever his origin, comes into play as a son of the earth and as its messenger"*¹⁷. Our selfsame lives are sustained by these geological formations, infrastructures or technoscapes, and as symbolic beings we have developed relations with them that are invisible, latent and unconscious, yet extremely decisive.

Goethe once wrote: *"What is the hardest thing of all (...) What seems the easiest to you: to use your eyes to see what lies in front of them"*¹⁸... So by following the insightful words of the great German poet, it appears obvious that the first requirement for a pioneering spirit is to recognize such macrocosmic forces, and like in the case of cave Paleolithic paintings, symbolize them in order to have a chance of escaping the cave by mastering their dynamics. And yet it is still hard for our contemporaries to perceive directly these overall forces, mostly because *we have not yet recognized the power implicit in the mediation itself*. Worldviews, ideologies and the core human perceptive faculties have all been molded in the past by State configurations and by architectural dynamics that are radically different to today's. The molding of such faculties is largely stimulated by the typical technological phenomena of a given time, and yet human societies are to a large extent unable to perceive the significance of such "molding process" and rather interpret today's phenomena and facts with the eyes of yesterday, an *"obdurate traditionalism"* –in the words of Jacques Ellul- *"which causes us always to live in the past and explain the present without understanding it. Thereby, our grasp of social events lags by half a century. Or it may spring from an unconscious repression. We simply will not to see whatever is too difficult for us to bear or whatever bulks too large for our understanding"*¹⁹. And as a temporary remedy to the latter, in urban-industrial environments we are nonetheless provided with a vast set of social symbols, signs, images and languages that allow us to relate to such type of infrastructures and social dynamics, but like in the case of any cruiser or transatlantic, a rather unnoticed complex of technical config-

¹⁷ *"l'uomo, quale che sia la sua provenienza, entra in gioco in quanto figlio della terra e in quanto suo messaggero"* Jünger, Ernst. *Lo Stato Mondiale*, Ugo Guanda Editore, 1998, Sec 11

¹⁸ Goethe. *Sprüche in versen und prosa*. Vol I

¹⁹ Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. Knopf/Vintage, 1967.232, 233

urations has massively overlapped in a matter of two centuries those social symbolizations, and due to the fact that the former are much more powerful configurations, they protect the human and social experience from the abyssal sea of chaos and danger where the transcendent shockingly emerges, in deep connection to the closeness of death. And yet, like in the case of a cruiser or transatlantic, the outer sea will still “be there” one way or another, constantly menacing and constantly demanding fortification of the rigid mediations that exist between civilization and chaos.

Because our experience with nature is heavily mediated, in Operative Traditions the term *cosmos* is always preferred to the term “nature”; *cosmos* implies, in a first didactic approach, the specific way men configure the most diverse chaos of facts. Without this configuration, wilderness becomes pure chaos. Even the modern realm of natural sciences and physics are not free from the need to establish a criterion of selection of facts, which is embedded in the symbolic character of the designed experiments, where a given set of paradigms are always *at work*.²⁰

Following Ernst Jünger’s Way: *The Quest for Freedom*

“There are no flags except those you wear on the body. Is it possible today a faith without dogmas, a world without gods, a knowledge without maxims and a homeland that cannot be occupied by any worldly power?”

Ernst Jünger²¹

In Operative Traditions I, II, III and IV the ideas of German author Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) are absolutely pivotal, and also serve as the most heroic guiding thread in order to unveil all the potential alternatives of self-development and freedom amidst the aforementioned plight of our times. In the same line of thought as Julius Evola²², Jünger affirms that *“it is therefore worthwhile to address what behavior can be recommended in this pursuit. Interiori-*

²⁰ Not only this was observed by Kuhn, T. S. 1996. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3 ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, but also by Henri Bergson when writing that “what distinguishes modern science is not that it is experimental, but that it experiments and, more generally, works only with a view to measure” Bergson, Henry. *The Creative Evolution*. Random House. The Modern Library. New York, 1944, 363

²¹ “Es gibt keine Fahnen außer denen, die man auf dem Leibe trägt. Ist es möglich, einen Glauben ohne Dogma zu besitzen, eine Welt ohne Götter, ein Wissen ohne Maximen und ein Vaterland, das durch keine Macht der Welt besetzt werden kann?” Ernst Jünger. *Der Arbeiter*. Ernst Klett, Stuttgart 1981. Klett-Cotta, 46

²² Evola, Julius. *Ride the Tiger*. Inner Traditions, 2003

ty is in fact the real law court of this world; and the decisions taken before this court are more important than that of dictators and tyrants. It is the prerequisite"²³.

One of the great contributions of Jünger is to present us with key figures (the *Worker*, the *Forest-Fleer*, and the *Anarch*) who all aim to master technological processes, making evolutionary sense of them in a spiritual stage of freedom and dominion. These rebellious figures are the ones entitled to set new goals for the human condition; they deeply understand the requirements and demands of freedom, and all are therefore capable of challenging the titanic powers of the time, no matter how gigantic these powers might be. Both the *Forest-Fleer* and the *Anarch* call for these powers as powerful oppositions that put them in touch with the spirit of time. What's more, both Jünger's figures and the titanic worldwide powers compete for the same goal, and yet only differ in the means employed; both modes of power need each other, both can't exist without each other and both timelessly aim to defeat each other. Such spirit is well embodied in the *Anarch* figure, who as Jünger writes that he: "*is not concerned by the dimension of technique, he rather uses it and exploits it if it is useful for him, otherwise he ignores it and retires to his inner world, the world of his own books. The Anarch has mastery over technique*"²⁴. So in *Operative Traditions* the strategy is also to progressively gain a heroic-realist view on the material conditions of power, so that through symbolization, an effective liberation can be accomplished in regard to the most destructive aspects that are implicit in today's conditions of power. The progressive forging of this lifestyle under the high temperatures of today's titanic infrastructures of power corresponds to the *Anarch* ideal, who is in diametrical contrast to the anarchist, and even to the romantic man whose nostalgia according to Ernst Jünger: "*somehow flees from reality and builds up a poetic fantasy or dream of his own time and space. The Anarch, contrarily, knows and evaluates well the world in which he effectively lives and has the capacity to withdraw from it whenever he wants*"²⁵.

Hence, liberated from all romanticisms and nostalgias, the three of Jünger's figures realize that during modernity the earth began to distill a new set of international symbols and architectures that evade the jurisdiction and conjuring power of the old languages and State-nation politics, and that the cosmos is calling desperately for a new recognition of such symbols. Contrarily to animals, only humans are entitled with the capacity to effectuate this task, and yet this task itself appears to be as an old and ancient memory, no longer practiced in our

²³ "Vale dunque la pena di indagare quale comportamento gli si possa raccomandare in questo travaglio. La sua interiorità è infatti il vero e proprio tribunale di questo mondo; e la sua decisione è più importante di quella dei dittatori e dei tiranni. Ne è il presupposto" Jünger, Ernst - Martin Heidegger – *Oltre La Linea*. Franco Volpi. Adelphi Edizione, 1989, 57

²⁴ Jünger Ernst, Antonio Gnoli, Franco Volpi. *Los Titanes Venideros*. Página Indómita, 2016, 55

²⁵ *ibid*

times, to a large extent due to the progressive disappearance in modernity of purely *operative* type of technical disciplines. Traditionalist scholar, Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984), conceived that the symbolic task of unveiling cosmos is intimately linked to the practice of alchemy, in which what is required is to accomplish the “*realization of the center of the earthly state*”²⁶, assumed as the “gold” of the alchemists.

But before having a chance to address such alternative in the following volumes of *Operative Traditions III and IV (albedo and rubedo respectively)* it is crucial to undergo the strictly *nigredo* cultural standpoint that is presented in this book, this is, to courageously burn a set of false cultural assumptions on how the world operates, assumptions that blind our senses to perceive the mysterious and creative forces that express the true voice of the earth, which is more in demand to be listened than ever before.

By following Nietzsche’s crucial views on nihilism, it shall be shown in the first section of this book how the cultural crisis of modernity corresponds essentially to the incapacity of culture to provide a framework that allows men to commune and master the rapid developments taking place in the cosmos, at a planetary level. As these rapid developments are extremely novel, their knowledge as a whole demands an approach that impels us to establish a common criteria beyond the extreme specialization of all academic, scientific and technological domains, and this takes us, one way or another, to the issue of the possibility of *values* beyond human specialized sciences. But... *Are there actually any values beyond the human realm? Is there any power that co-operates in piloting the stability of means beyond human capacities?*... In traditional cultures, the answer would mostly resort to the idea of the State or Empire, conceived in sacred terms. But which can be the answer in high-tech urban-industrial societies?... *Is it possible to still conceive values that transcend individualism in an age of political decadence and worldwide cult of narcissism and individual selfies?*... In terms of the chances of pursuing this synthetic approach, one of Jünger’s characters affirms: “*Whenever a highly cultured man has harmonized with the Zeitgeist, it has always been a happy fluke, a rare exception*”²⁷... Today this basic problem is even more challenging than when Jünger wrote such words, since an extreme specialization in the most diverse realms of technology and science is imposed and rewarded by the specific socioeconomic conditions of our

²⁶ “The animal always remains true to the essential form of his species. In a passive way he participates in that ray of the Divine Intellect which reveals itself in him through his very existence. (The so-called ‘instinct’ of the animals pertains to this passive participation in the Intellect.) Man, on the other hand, is created for the purpose of participating actively in the Divine Intellect, of which he is the ‘central’ reflection. Only when he does so is he truly the centre of the earthly state, and even, in proportion to his identification with the Intellect, of the whole of formal manifestation or of the whole cosmos. The ‘realization’ of the centre of the earthly state is the real goal of alchemy, and also the deepest meaning of gold” Burckhardt, Titus. *Alchemy, Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*. London: Stuart and Watkins, 1967

²⁷ Ernst Jünger. Eumeswil. The Eridanos Library. 1980

time²⁸, rendering what Ernst Jünger refers to as a “high cultured man” in quite a useless luxury, whereas our times intensively stimulate the production of what Richard Foreman referred to as gullible “*pancake people*”²⁹. This extreme specialization is a clear sign of cultural decline, a decline that threatens the genesis of paradigmatic universal figures of culture such as Goethe, who as expressed by another great cultural figure –Oswald Spengler– would have loved and understood during modernity all “*the worldwide political realities, the great urban problems, capitalism, the future of the State, the relations between technique and the development of civilization, the Russians, science*”³⁰.

Yet well aware of this nihilistic social disease that was severely contagioning the West after WW I, Ernst Jünger did not propose at that time the same subterranean psychoanalytical inquiries as recommended by Sigmund Freud and all his followers³¹, but rather conceived a more transparent diagnosis where nihilism could only be overcome by sacrificing all those individualistic prophylaxis, safeguards and secular worldviews that can easily crack whenever facing the abyssal issue of values, or as Friedrich Nietzsche stated: “*Men of fixed convictions do not count when it comes to determining what is fundamental in values and lack of values. Men of convictions are prisoners*”³². So the latter sacrifice is not aimed to a sacrifice to the old monotheistic Gods –that were already diagnosed as dead by Nietzsche– but as a sacrifice, as we shall see, to a new *type of figure*... However, the German war hero was aware that such was essentially a delicate operation, because it required stripping away very treasured Western cultural inheritances, more specifically the cultural standards promoted since the times of the Enlightenment³³. After WW I, Jünger clearly perceived that the powers that were quickly modifying the conditions of the earth’s biosphere could not be addressed in their *total character*³⁴ by the reductionist conceptions and ideologies inherited from the times of the Enlightenment. Digestion of this hard truth took place amidst dangerous war thresholds

²⁸ As Alan Drengson points out in *The Practice of Technology*: “we train people in specialized technical fields with scant attention to the ethical requirements such power, skill, and knowledge demand. Current training fails to educate the whole person. As a result, we have people with powerful knowledge and skills who sell their services to the highest bidder, with no concern for their responsibilities to the community, society, or to the natural world. This incomplete training and education also results in the design, development, and use of technology practices that are destructive of most values, such as human health, freedom, community, and culture” Drengson, A. 1995. *The Practice of Technology — Exploring Technology, Ecophilosophy, and Spiritual Disciplines for Vital Links*. State University of New York Press, 117

²⁹ Richard Foreman (playwriter): “I come from a tradition of Western culture in which the ideal (my ideal) was the complex, dense and ‘cathedral-like’ structure of the highly educated and articulate personality—a man or woman who carried inside themselves a personally constructed and unique version of the entire heritage of the West. But now, I see within us all (myself included) the replacement of complex inner density with a new kind of self—evolving under the pressure of information overload and the technology of the ‘instantly available (...)’ We risk turning into “pancake people—spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button.” Richard Foreman, “The Pancake People, or, ‘The Gods Are Pounding My Head,’” Edge, March 8, 2005

³⁰ Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. Alfred A Knopf. MCMXXVII. New York, 43

³¹ In 1995 Ernst Jünger stated: “I agree with Karl Kraus and his straight judgment: psychoanalysis is the illness which pretends to be therapy” Los titanes venideros, Página Indómita, 2016, 101

³² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Antichrist*. SoHo Books, 2013

³³ “Whoever really experienced that could no longer doubt that not this or that State, this or that system, rather a world-view, the moral tenor of an entire period of a culture, is breaking down.” Ernst Jünger. *Politische Publizistik 1919 bis 1933* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2001) 105

³⁴ “the total character of work breaks through collective boundaries as through individual boundaries, and such is the source all productions of our time are related to” [der totale Arbeitscharakter ebensowohl die kollektiven wie die individuellen Grenzen durchbricht und daß es diese Quelle ist, auf die jeder produktive Gehalt unserer Zeit sich bezieht] Jünger, Ernst. *Der Arbeiter*. Klett-Cotta. 1981

of life and death that demand awakening the attributes of a pure warrior type, who the mediocre bourgeois spirit -as Jünger writes- “*seldom tolerates and is always aiming to negotiate with*”³⁵. This task of liberation demands necessarily an extremely rebellious character, a pioneering spirit that aims for adventure and that challenges death in order to discover a new *cosmos*; that aims for an absolute and novel certainty amidst the sea of relativism and uncertainty.

So it was before and after the defeat of Germany in WW I, that Ernst Jünger perfectly fulfilled Julius Evola’s advice of adopting an “*attitude of one who knows how to choose the hardest life, to fight even when he knows that the battle is substantially lost, and to confirm the words of the ancient saga: ‘Loyalty is stronger than fire’*”³⁶. Not only did Jünger perfectly fulfill Evola’s noblest warrior ideals, but the experience of WW I also allowed Jünger to render substantial Nietzsche’s keenest notions on the *will to power* that is present at all levels in the cosmos. In this regard, Heidegger writes that Jünger actually “*sharpens, hardens and articulates*”³⁷ Nietzsche’s philosophical assumptions way ahead of his contemporaries, triggering a fiery vision of the world in which Jünger succeeded in devising a *novel cosmos characterized by the mobilization of technical magnitudes*. Ultimately Jünger perceived the certainty of technique in terms of *being* and presented in *Der Arbeiter* the seeds of a *new objectivity* in which the notion of what is “real” goes hand in hand with the notion of what is mastered³⁸.

However, Jünger’s acute perception on reality passed unnoticed even by the most brilliant scientific and philosophical minds of those times. The reason for this, based on the premises of an Operative Tradition, is quite simple... To heroically succeed in the blood and guts routines experienced by Jünger during warfare correspond strictly to a purely *initiatory* process, which as shown by the most sacred book of war, the Hindu Bhagavad-Ghita, can open the “third eye” towards the transcendent and metaphysical realm. Ultimately a spontaneous ethics of self-sacrifice and heroism both correspond here to key character ingredients required in order to trigger an effective mutation of being or *self-initiation*³⁹ whenever im-

³⁵ Jünger, Ernst. *Der Arbeiter*. Klett-Cotta. 1981, 9 [ihn hinweg der Krieger in Erscheinung treten würde, den er widerwillig und in ständiger Bereitschaft zu verhandeln gewähren läßt]

³⁶ Julius Evola. *A Traditionalist Confronts Fascism*. Arktos 2015

³⁷ Heidegger, Martin, *Zu Ernst Jünger*. Vittorio Klostermann, 2004, 204

³⁸ Julius Evola: “*something real that is not something real to me, from an immanent viewpoint can only be something thought, this is, a content*” [l’attualità che non è attualità mia, dal punto di vista immanente può esser solo qualcosa di pensato, cioè, un contenuto] Julius Evola. *Teoria dell’Individuo Assoluto*. Edizioni Mediterranee, 1988, 147

³⁹ Julius Evola (Ride The Tiger. Inner Traditions): “*The positive possibilities [in the postbourgeois world] can only apply to a small minority: to those beings in whom the transcendent dimension is preexistent or can be awakened. This brings us back, of course, to the one problem that concerns us. These are the only ones who can give new values to a soulless world of machines, of technology, of modern mega-cities, and of all that is sheer reality and objectivity, which appears cold, inhuman, menacing, devoid of intimacy, depersonalizing, and barbaric. By fully accepting this reality and these processes, the differentiated man can essentialize and form himself according to a valid personal equation, activating the transcendent dimension within, burning out the dregs of individuality, and thus revealing the absolute person*”

mersed in environments characterized by intense technical determinisms (military or civil) that deeply forge individual motivation and habit. Once these heroic principles are reenacted, all political, social, technological or economic solutions are assumed as secondary, this is, as all dependent on solving a much more important problem that is at the selfsame root of the reenacted principles. This crucial realization limits vastly the number of missions that ought to be dealt with in this regard, which all derive from *one and only problem*, affirmed by Ernst Jünger in 1951 when writing: “*The basic question in this vortex is whether man can be liberated from fear. This is far more important than arming or supplying him with medicines*”⁴⁰, and this premise was kept up by the German author still in 1995, at the age of 100 when affirming: “*Overcoming the fear of death is the duty of a devoted writer. His work must irradiate it*”⁴¹.

The sacrificial forces of war violently strip away all individualistic prophylaxis, and for better or worse, such forces can potentially ignite the emergence of a new *type* of man out of the flames, a new type of man that can no longer be conceived as in separation with the powerful means at reach, and rather accesses a new path towards technical mastery. Jünger writes: “*If a man is forged by the fire of battle; it is him who provides the fight and its means with a new and terrifying aspect*”⁴². Hence, the potential heroic outcome is a transparent, limpid and *diamantine* view on the world, where things are accepted in their hardness, in their shapes, forms and genesis, as a beautiful reflection of a light that transcends them.

Such is not exclusively an intellectual endeavor, but rather an existential and lived one in which heroic types must face directly the presence of chaotic forces that disturb all egotistic assumptions, mastering powers that can provoke not only the death of the ego, but also physical death. Surviving this challenge allows experiencing the existence or not of an inner sovereignty that can only be effectively built upon the effective powers that act on the world, like riding a wild horse at the highest speeds. Julius Evola referred to this accomplished spiritual state as a *Dionysian-Apollonism* state in which “*here one possesses the stability that is the result of the Dionysian experience not as a goal before oneself, but in a certain sense behind oneself*”⁴³. Such is also the spirit of the best military training methods, which aim to awaken and forge consciousness through transcendent potentials linked to the challenge of danger and chaos. Ernst Jünger conceived these potentials as “figures”, but in Operative Traditions II,

⁴⁰ Jünger, Ernst. *The Forest-Fleeer*. Telos Press Publishing, 2013, Sec 14

⁴¹ Jünger Ernst, Antonio Gnoli, Franco Volpi. *Los Titanes Venideros*. Página Indómita, 2016, 59

⁴² Jünger, Ernst. *Fuoco e Sangue*. Guanda Editore, 2016

⁴³ Evola, Julius. *Ride the Tiger*. Inner Traditions, 2003, 60

such figures are integrated in a wider architectural phenomenon that ultimately expresses the spirit of time.

So ultimately in this book Ernst Jünger's heroic accounts of war shall constitute the most excellent presentation of a transparent worldview that shall allow us progressively to perceive the long-range self-organizing dynamics that drive the *total mobilization*⁴⁴ of means, individuals, work, technique, science and resources in very specific directions. Such overall view can be well equated to a *cosmology* and what distinguishes this cosmology from all other modern cosmogonies is that whereas in the latter the human individual is alien to the vast powers present in the universe, which are conceived –like in Einstein's view⁴⁵– separated from human participation, in the case of the cosmology that survived in the eyes of Ernst Jünger, the objective forces of the world are effectively in technical relation to men, and the capacity to actively participate in such power relies ultimately in the potential for a given individual to become Ernst Jünger's notion of *type*, very much linked to the more traditional and strictly operative idea of *caste*, which is beyond all socioeconomic categories.

Realization of the latter demands the potential creator of values imagined by Nietzsche to survive a *nigredo* inner alchemical process of self-destruction in which all the cultural constructs inherited from the Enlightenment and all secular religious ideals are demonstrated absolutely powerless when faced with the effective time-dependent world dynamics and technical configurations of power developed intensively after the 20th century. All these ideals and ideologies –which were extremely propagated by the bourgeois classes– provide a false sense of security that can easily crack at any moment whenever faced with the novel roaring powers distilled by the earth. As Nietzsche says: “*All ideals are dangerous: because they debase and brand the actual; all are poisons, but indispensable as temporary cures*”⁴⁶.

Such is the *heroic realism* proposed by the German war hero who considers such ability as the “*real luxury of an extremely threatened species*”⁴⁷. Hence only the toughest of the toughest shall be capable of accepting that practically all modern culture, mainstream politics and State-nation political ideologies aren't but a disempowering phantasmagoria or Hindu

⁴⁴ These are some insightful ideas of Ernst Jünger, when referring to such idea: “*Total mobilization: It extends to the child in the cradle, who is threatened like everyone else—even more so. We could cite many such examples. It suffices simply to consider our daily life, with its inexorability and merciless discipline, its smoking, glowing districts, the physics and metaphysics of its commerce, its motors, airplanes, and burgeoning cities. With a pleasure-tinged horror, we sense that here, not a single atom is not in motion—that we are profoundly inscribed in this raging process. Total Mobilization is far less consummated than it consummates itself; in war and peace, it expresses the secret and inexorable claim to which our life in the age of masses and machines subjects us. It thus turns out that each individual life becomes, ever more unambiguously, the life of a worker; and that, following the wars of knights, kings, and citizens, we now have wars of workers*” Published in *The Heidegger Controversy*, 119-39. Translated by Joel Golb and Richard Wolin. Originally (“*Totale Mobilmachung*”) first appeared in *Krieg und Krieger*, edited by Ernst Jünger (Berlin: Junker und Dinnhaupt, 1930).

⁴⁵ For instance, in a conversation with Rabindranath Tagore [R. Tagore. “The Nature of Reality” Vol XLIX. Calcuta. 1931, 42], Albert Einstein defended the notion of a reality that is independent of the human spirit, and that science would be meaningless without such man-nature separation. In Einstein's view we can perceive traits of transcendental idealism, which were all demonstrated as futile by Julius Evola when addressing this cultural trait, and which were introduced to the reader in *Operative Traditions Vol I*

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, Walter Arnold Kaufmann, R. J. Hollingdale *The Will to Power* 1968, 130

⁴⁷ Jünger, Ernst. *The Worker. Collected Works*. Second Edition. Klett-Cotta. 1981, 43

Maya, which as Régis Debray wittily writes in the case of mainstream media: “*ensure maximum socialization of private ignorance*”⁴⁸. What’s more, in the last part of *Operative Traditions II - Nigredo* it shall be shown that almost the entirety of modern science and philosophy can be viewed as a pure mirage whenever it aims to address the creative powers of time. Beyond the assumptions that the popular minds have on science, it was precisely the most excellent scientists of the last century who were themselves well aware of the gross crevices implicit in the foundations of modern science. For instance, the great scientist responsible of developing breakthrough revelations in the field of quantum mechanics, Erwin Schrödinger, stated that the “*religiously consoling vision*” of scientific models are “*maya, albeit maya in a very interesting form, exhibiting laws of great regularity. It has little to do with my eternal inheritance (to express myself in a thoroughly medieval fashion)*”⁴⁹.

About the Style of *Operative Traditions II - Nigredo*

Operative Traditions II - Nigredo distills the peak ideas of Ernst Jünger in regard to his approach to freedom, active nihilism, heroic realism and the novel configurations of global power mediated by technique, and all these topics addressed by Jünger complement very well many views on the part of Friedrich Nietzsche. As already exposed in the 1st volume of *Operative Traditions*, in this 2nd volume is also presented to the readers a domain which permits direct application of Julius Evola’s extremely unknown philosophical framework (*Magic Idealism, Theory and Phenomenology of the Absolute Individual*) which is very likely the most optimal standpoint for grounding in this volume and the following ones the implicit potentials of human perceptive faculties to the work of another great, yet extremely unknown author: Gilbert Simondon... Simondon’s ideas on techno-science demand above all an excellent engineering and techno-scientific approach that not only ought to be multidisciplinary, but ought to merge with the best artistic craft traditions of the West. Above all, *Operative Traditions II - Nigredo* aims to inherit and expose the greatest artistic doctrines of the Western traditions, but –as in *Operative Traditions I*- this book not only aims to define a bridge between the West and East, but also between past, present and *future*.

Those readers who are familiar with *Operative Traditions I*, shall realize that the presentation of Julius Evola’s very much unknown philosophical works (*Theory and Phenomenology*

⁴⁸ *Le Pouvoir Intellectuel à France*, Ramsay, Paris, 1979

⁴⁹ Schrödinger, Erwin. *My View of the World*, Cambridge, 1964

gy of the *Absolute Individual & Magical Idealism*) were framed in such book upon the specific traditional context of Zen, in which the purely operative practice of archery (kyūdō) serves as a very paradigmatic case of the potentials of technical mastery that Evola pursues in his philosophy. But as the reader might also suspect, many things have radically changed in the conditions of existence of urban-industrial and high-tech modernity since the twilight of such Japanese Zen traditions, and today the imposition of a completely novel technological cosmos demands Evola's philosophical framework to challenge the irruption of absolutely new means, methods, systems, etc. that have extremely little resemblance to those means, weapons and instruments that allow developing an operative practice under a Zen living tradition.

However, it is an extreme editorial challenge to didactically present in single volumes all the latter ideas with the required inclusiveness... And in regard to this editorial difficulty, the stylistic scheme that was deemed as the most appropriate in these volumes was to present the ideas of these authors by often quoting the “peak” excerpts they present in their works, as a first contact the reader can acquire in regard to their core ideas. This standpoint aims to honor in one book the excellent spirit of those who are no longer with us, so the pages are heavily saturated with the quotes and excerpts of all those authors who have provided us with such precious cultural inheritance. Ultimately, this stance also follows some strict artistic premises derived from the Eastern traditions, thus fulfilling Keyserling's observation: “*Almost the whole Orient resorts to quotes when wishing to give expression to a direct personal experience, and this does not mean, as it would be in our [Western] case, neither powerlessness nor lack of taste: it means that the soul recognizes itself once and again in certain eternal manifestations, in the same way that Nature is continually renewed in identical forms, with an inexhaustible originality*”⁵⁰.

The adequate correlation of the excerpts and the original context of such bibliographical references have been very carefully treated, not only in order to honor the works of such referenced authors, but also in order to integrate their ideas into a novel intellectual endeavor. This editorial challenge is in essence that of merging basic artistic principles with the specific technological means available in our times. And in spite of this editorial difficulty we can congratulate ourselves that those individuals and organizations that are effectively applying the premises presented in this book are today coping satisfactorily with the planetary challenges of our time. Ultimately this essay book aims to synthesize such capitals of experience in a coherent *magisterium*.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *On the Traditional Doctrine of Art*, Golgonooza Press, 1977

Recovering the key ideas of Ernst Jünger, Julius Evola and many other so-called “traditionalists” is not intended in these volumes in order to fortify the walls of the “museum” that conserves the past, but intended to understand the plight of the very present and feasible alternatives for future challenges. The transmission of the principles that allow such project to be feasible is essentially “Tradition”, which is not “traditionalism” -in the sense that it is not a conservative and passive reinforcement of a particular branch of a Tradition- but rather corresponds to an inner attitude that challenges the effective problems of one’s time with a set of character standards that are timeless; standards that one ought to discover by oneself since they are not written down anywhere. Not only Ernst Jünger remarked that: *“To have a Tradition implies the duty of living it”*⁵¹ but also Julius Evola advised those very few who effectively embody such principles ought to *“measure themselves against what is most advanced in contemporary thought and lifestyle, while remaining inwardly determined and governed by a completely different spirit”*.⁵² This duty is that of “riding the tiger”, or in other words, that of challenging and assimilating all the destructive processes of one’s time in order to not be affected by such destruction, while cherishing at all moment the seeds of a new future.

Deathly powers at all levels can’t do anything to who has heroically overcome the self-same fear of death. Such is the key issue, which Ernst Jünger stated in the following way: *“Today those men who don’t fear death are infinitely superior to all temporary powers”*⁵³ and during the same critical years the German writer goes on by stating: *“Fear and danger are so closely correlated that it is hardly possible to say which of the two powers generates the other. Since fear is the more important, we must begin there if we are to loosen the knot (...) Terror is a fire that wants to consume the whole world. All the while the fears multiply and diversify. The ruler by calling proves himself such by ending the terror. It is the person who has first conquered his own fear”*⁵⁴.

Defining in this essay the operative foundations that bridge the Western and Eastern traditions is a very challenging pursuit that demands high doses of patience, reflection, discipline and complementary studies on the part of the reader of this book. But in order to favor the adequate assimilation of the most techno-scientific concepts that are presented, the style of Operative Traditions aims to maximize the optimal combination of synthesis and clarity to the widest segment of readers, aiming not to simplify excessively nor vulgarize important

⁵¹ Frontsoldat besitzt Tradition. Die Standarte (1925)

⁵² Evola, Julius. *Ride the Tiger*. Inner Traditions, 2003, 7

⁵³ *“oggi gli uomini che non temono la morte sono infinitamente superiori anche al più forte potere temporale”* Jünger, Ernst - Martin Heidegger – *Oltre La Linea*. Franco Volpi. Adelphi Edizione, 1989, 101

⁵⁴ Jünger, Ernst. *The Forest-Fleeer*. Telos Press Publishing, 2013, 27

scientific concepts, also providing all the required bibliographical references for those readers who aim to deepen their inquiries.

Hence, a potential pioneer adventure is still present in our times, as the human condition is faced again with elementary forces that not only have extinguished many other animal species, but that are also menacing the selfsame human species, in what influential scientific communities refer to as the 6th mass extinction. The pioneer spirit that aims to connect to the transcendent power of the cosmos is still a task accomplishable today by a very tiny minority in charge of an evolutionary task. Such pioneer spirit can be perfectly equated to a truly heroic spirit, which was enacted by German author, Ernst Jünger, whose visions and intuitions shall constitute in this book, above all, the guiding essayistic reference in order to further develop the core frameworks he established for overcoming modern nihilism. It must be pointed out that this task is only partially an intellectual endeavor, and is much more dependent on encouraging qualities of character and self-sacrifice. Hence, by transcending all the doom and gloom pessimist scenarios of our times, we can follow the advice of the so-called “Last Ghibelline”, Julius Evola, when stating that “*the real question is not whether one is free from events that may or may not occur in the future, but rather whether one is free from one's self, and if so, to what degree*”⁵⁵. And as Ernst Jünger says: “*so much for the theory of catastrophes. We are not at liberty to avoid them, yet there is freedom in them. They are one of our trials*”⁵⁶.

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⁵⁵ Evola, Julius & UR Group. *Introduction to Magic*. Inner Traditions, 2001, 310. Freedom, Precognition and the Relativity of Time.

⁵⁶ Jünger, Ernst. *The Forest-Fleeer*. Telos Press Publishing, 2013, 19