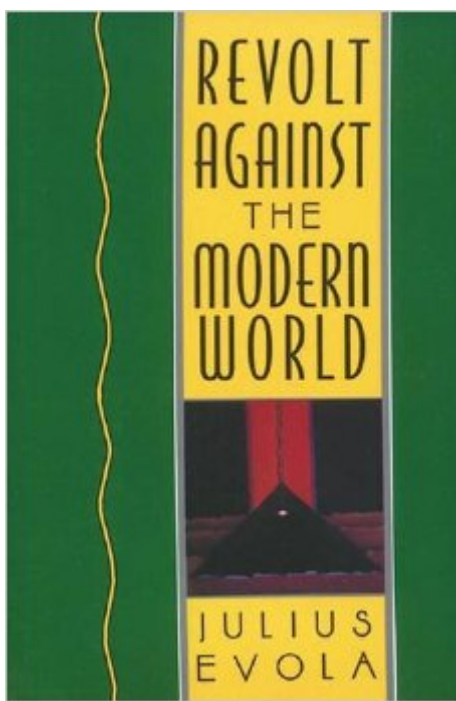


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Revolt Against The Modern World



Synopsis

In what many consider to be his masterwork, Evola contrasts the characteristics of the modern world with those of traditional societies, from politics and institutions to views on life and death.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Evola examines the different ages of society as spoken of in ancient sacred texts in religions like Hindu. The golden age is ruled by sacred kings, the silver age is ruled by the warrior aristocracy, the bronze age is ruled by merchants, and the iron age is ruled by the plebs or serfs. We are currently in the age of iron, according to Evola. Evola believes in the decline of society as it moves farther from the golden age. His erudition is both broad and deep, having read most of the important works of societies from different ages all over the world. He justifies the authoritarianism and hierarchies of the golden age and he criticizes the decadent philosophies of subsequent ages. The sacred texts and traditional society advocate a hierarchal order. He is extreme in his justifications of tradition. What about widow burning, isn't that wrong? --Well no, not really. In the traditional society, a woman is to sacrifice herself totally to her husband, so if he dies, she is to go out with him, otherwise the community would have contempt for her. What about harems, ten women for one man, doesn't he think this is wrong?-- Well no, not really. If a woman is in a harem, she is learning to overcome her jealousy and sacrifice herself to her man, whether he is good or not. Women are to be totally dedicated as lovers and mothers, and become completely feminine, getting rid of everything masculine within them. Men are to become completely masculine, getting rid of everything feminine.

This is how they perfect themselves as feminine and masculine spirits in traditional society. What about the caste system, doesn't he think this is awful? --Absolutely not.

The Modern Age is falling and the West is in an era of decadence. The darkest of all the dark ages, what the Hindus called the Kali Yuga, is before us and Ragnarok (Twilight of the Gods) is at hand. Tradition has been trampled upon by modern utilitarian, pragmatist, and collectivist thought and the once sacred has been made profane. Mass-man is so caught up in collectivist thought and meaningless activity that he cannot be saved. Only a select group of elite traditionalists preserving the traditional *Weltanschauung* can restore a transcendent order to the world after the fall of this era. An ascetic neoscholasticism is needed to preserve the tradition intact while this cycle comes to an end. This is the message of Julius Evola in *Revolt Against the Modern World*. In this book, Evola fully dispels the modern myth of progress and reveals it as nothing more than a cover for a decadent society. Evola spends the first part of this book and much of the second part expostulating a traditional world order based on the idea of immanence-transcendence, before its break-up at the end of the Middle Ages. He explains how an occult band of knights, members of the warrior caste, preserved tradition in the form of chivalry, during this period. However, with the advent of modern times, this tradition has largely been lost to us. Evola develops a myth of man's origins in a Golden Age, a Hyperborean race at the pole. A conflict developed between North and South, and between "solar" and "lunar" forms of religion. This conflict was at the heart of medieval Catholicism, and was reflected in the growing separation between priest and ruler. Originally, Evola argues, the Church sanctified the monarchy (the emperor) by a special rite.

The self-righteous comments of some previous reviewers aside, this is a good, but not a great book. Julius Evola was an Italian philosopher and esotericist who had a mild dalliance with the Fascist regime in Italy for some years. His support for Fascism was partial and conditional. It was Evola's conviction that the social order, as it exists in the modern West, was degenerate and dangerous because it militated against the values and practices needed to transcend the mundane conditions of human life and live a more profound and exalted existence. That none of this is exclusively Fascist is obvious - it echoes current critiques of 'consumerism' that can be found from all parts of the political spectrum in the West. Evola ran for a while with the Duce because he felt that that regime was a relatively better servant of the kind of culture he felt was necessary - one geared to transcendent realities. If you actually buy this book, and read his words, or even the introductory essay, which is a balanced examination of Evola in the light of our own times, you will see that he is

much more akin to the arch-conservative opponents of the French revolution, like Joseph de Maistre, in his ideas about how a society should be ordered, than any totalitarian ideology, Right or Left. This should not be surprising, since Evola was claiming to be in accord with a Tradition that undergirded all premodern civilizations. He has much to say that might appeal to an orthodox Hindu, for example, or to a traditionalist Roman Catholic; he was not an intellectual pimp for Mussolini. If you want to see what an alternative to modernity and its discontents looks like, read this book. These things being said, the book is not without its flaws, some of them really quite bad.

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