



Eucalyptus rubida

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The rare Basket Fungus (*Ileodictyon cibarium*) found just metres from our back door

Invited or not the God Arrives'

C G Jung had this quote from Erasmus (*Vocatus atque non vocatus deus aderit*) inscribed both over his doorway, and also on his tombstone. Some say they were also his last words. Jung wrote:

'It is a Delphic oracle though. It says: yes, the god will be on the spot, but in what form and to what purpose? I have put the inscription there to remind my patients and myself: Timor dei initium sapientie [“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”] Here another not less important road begins, not the approach to “Christianity” but to God himself and this seems to be the ultimate question.'

The prominence given to it by him is quite interesting. I also find it interesting but for different reasons, and this is not unusual, that two or more people find something very interesting in a famous quote. Everyone brings a present understanding to each encounter or event.

The title of a recent book *How (not) to Speak of God* by Peter Rollins, is only one occurrence of a growing desperation in trying to be faithful to the Mystery of life, and live compassionately, without buying into the language of shallow certainties, which only finish up for many in a cul de sac. The title of this essay *Expected or not God Arrives* gives me an introduction into an evolutionary perspective which I find more to my liking.

Given our understanding of the evolving, expanding Universe, we need a narrative of life which is commensurate with such grandeur, and which builds on and carries with us the best wisdom of the past. So, no more tea-cup talk about God, as though we knew what we were talking about.

What I am talking about is known as negative theology and it has been healthy and alive for centuries. I am not sure if this is what the 14th Century mystic Meister Eckhart was condemned for, but it has left people delightfully puzzled for centuries. We have all heard his:

'I pray God to rid me of God',

and can probably understand what he means: *I pray (the unnameable God) to rid*

me of (the idol I have named) God. However just when we think this is so negative, he comes out with

'The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me.'

This is a much more likely cause for papal disapproval. I am not sure I can rephrase this one as easily as the first.

Now, come back to the title of this essay



Invited or not, the God Arrives, and can you see what Jung might have been indicating? If our God-concept is impoverished, then expect impoverishment, but get yourself ready for the revelation of a totally surprising God-Emergence that is not 'invited'. In Meister Eckhart's language we might call this the 'Breakthrough'. You will need to read more into Eckhart's writing if this possibility excites you.

The distinguished author of deconstruction Jacques Derrida has something of the same dilemma of language when he said: (quoted by John Caputo)

The name of God (I do not say God, but how to avoid saying God here, from the moment when I say the name of God?) can only be said in the modality of denial: above all I do not want to say that.

From a cosmological perspective, and without too much theology-talk it might be said that the above discourse parallels science's dilemma with teleology. Teleology is a theory or understanding that evolution is moving towards some kind of fulfilment. While this kind of talk upsets one side of science, the other side asserts that the history of evolution presupposes an immense wisdom or coherence in the past, which theologians might be inclined to capitalise as God, Wisdom or Coherence, or even Origin.

The bind for us in the 21st Century is that while the human has had no influence on evolution in the past, the story is quite different now. The human (us) now has the power to alter much of what we have in the past called evolution e.g. climate, extinction, self-elimination, destruction of biomes, and the list goes on. At the same time what is to become of the immense and mysterious Wisdom that has brought us here? This is a good question and bears a lot of thought. It looks like we now need to be the bearers of this Wisdom.

Back to theology and Meister Eckhart. We need to look at the 'world' with the same eye with which we are seen. Call it *The Eye of God*, or *The Eye of Wisdom*. This is a new kind of understanding of God-relationship to the one most of us were brought up with. Corporate language might call this relationship a partnership, but this falls much short of the reality. Notions of duality just do not match up with the Mystery.

Theologian Anne Primavesi suggests that we can never use the term God in an objective or non-relational sense. The very notion of God is constitutive of who and what we are (last sentence mine). Even the word 'relational' does not seem to explain Eckhart's notion adequately.

Trevor Parton

Reading:

John Caputo: *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*

Matthew Fox: *Breakthrough* (Eckhart's Sermons)

Anne Primavesi: *Sacred Gaia*