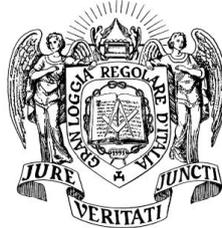


Regular Grand Lodge of Italy



Fabio Venzi

Science and the Initiatic Pathway

“...you are now permitted to extend your researches into the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science”

Introduction

At a first glance, to address the issue of 'Science and the Initiatic Pathway' might appear to be a contradiction in terms; indeed, the two topics are habitually included in the two completely diverse and opposite domains of 'physics' and 'metaphysics'. However, such radical dichotomies are frequently misleading.

On October 26th 2008 a conference entitled '*Freemasonry and Science*', organised by the *Canonbury Masonic Research Centre*, was held in London – I took part as one of the conference speakers with a talk entitled '*Between Scientific Rationalism and Noetic Intelligence. The Perception of Sacred in scientific inquiry: an Holistic Vision*'. The main focus of the present study is indeed along the lines of the above-cited work, delving deeper into the issue and, above all, by not confining it to Freemasonry alone, but rather extending the issue to the initiatic pathway and to esotericism *as a whole*. In addition to issues pertaining to Freemasonry, I will thus be able to relate to other initiatic experiences, including Hermeticism, Alchemy and the Rosicrucian school of thought.

Some of you may be asking yourselves what is the link between Science and Freemasonry? A reply to this question would be provided by reading (and understanding) our ritual.

The problem of interpreting the ritual has represented one of the more crucial issues of Freemasonry, both in the past, and increasingly so today. During the various *European Conferences of Grand Masters* I have taken part in, one of the major issues highlighted was the massive loss of members only a few years after initiation. In this context, I expressed my personal opinion as to how the main reason underlying this dynamic was constituted by the loss over time of the 'appeal' and 'mystery' of Freemasonry, which has unfailingly underlined the singularity and uniqueness of the same. The main cause of the loss of this fundamental characteristic is largely due to an excessive use of the internet by social media, and to a massive media "exposure". Thus, the Grand Masters have morphed into pundits who, with imposing self-assurance and arrogance, have contributed to a general discord; on this matter, Ortega Y Gasset wrote: "*To-day, on the other hand, the average man has the most mathematical "ideas" on all*

*that happens or ought to happen in the universe. Hence he has lost the use of his hearing. Why should he listen if he has within him all that is necessary? There is no reason now for listening, but rather for judging, pronouncing, deciding. There is no question concerning public life, in which he does not intervene, blind and deaf as he is, imposing his "opinions".*¹ There is a danger that Freemasonry, by accosting the profane dynamics and neglecting its "initiatic" significance, may fall prey to that which Max Weber defined as a "disenchantment".

As a general rule, this absurd publicity and media exposure is justified by an erroneous conviction that our critics, with their 'superior knowledge' of Freemasonry, have abnegated the offensives directed against Freemasonry from the outset. The facts clearly prove the misconception of this decision, resulting in a *vulgarization* of Freemasonry, a 'profanation'.

Nowadays, everything is on show, from the rituals to Masonic Temples, and at times even the ceremonies themselves. This degeneration first commenced as the dynamics relating to the "conveying" of the ritual, the initiatic tool underpinning the foundations of the Masonic "method" were modified, or rather when the Masonic rituals were no longer safeguarded (as the rituals themselves instruct us to do), but were (as they still are today) imparted without restraint, in contexts far removed from the Masonic Temples that represent the sole premises within which a ritual should be used. From that time onwards, Freemasonry started to lose what the philosopher Walter Benjamin in a renowned work focussed on the uniqueness of a work of art, defined as its "aura".² I should underline here that this loss of the "aura" by Freemasonry in no way indicates the loss of its "secrets". Indeed, the secret of initiatic organisations is merely symbolic, relating to the true inner initiatic secret, unique, concealed, inexpressible, and therefore uncommunicable. It may only be grasped through intuition, in line with the personal capacity of each individual. This inner secret constitutes the very essence of the initiatic secret that the Freemason strives to achieve. The term "aura" implies a "mystery", "allure", the "enchantment" that accompanies

¹ Ortega Y Gasset, *La ribellione delle masse*, TEA, 1998, page 37.

² Walter Benjamin, *L'opera d'arte nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità di massa*, Einaudi, Turin, 1966.

Freemasonry as a “*Form*” of *Tradition*.

The ‘commercialisation’ of the ritual, and consequent debasement, has heralded an unavoidable estrangement for a correct interpretation, ultimately resulting in the current ‘crisis’. It is indeed true that today, as in the past, the rituals are learnt ‘*by heart*’, the deambulations are appropriate, the stance assumed during the ‘signs’ impeccable; however, some are bent on attempting to *understand* the contents of the ritual and the intentions of those who created these initiatic masterpieces. On purveying the unwavering expression of those who mechanically recite the ritual as if it were a rosary, I get the impression that we are far removed from a true understanding of the same. Were this not the case, the initial question, i.e. what link might there be between Freemasonry and Science, could not even be formulated. Let’s examine why.

Starting with the “Initiation” ceremony, during the Exhortation the Worshipful Master reminds the candidate: “*To study more especially such of the Liberal Arts and Sciences as may lie within the compass of your attainment*”. Subsequently, during the “Opening” ceremony in the Second Degree the Worshipful Master utters: “*Before we open the Lodge in the Second Degree, let us supplicate the Grand Geometrician of the Universe, that the rays of Heaven may shed their influence to enlighten us in the paths of virtue and science*”.

During the ceremony for the Second Degree the Worshipful Master addresses the candidate by stating: “*You are expected to make the Liberal Arts and Sciences your future study..., and subsequently “...you are now permitted to extend your researches into the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. Explanation is given as to how the Masonic Order is based on the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. The Degree of Fellowcraft is characterised by the “Divine Science”, or rather by the relationship between man and his idea of the Divine. The Freemason is guided as follows in this Degree (Exhortation): “*Proceeding onwards, still guiding your progress by the principles of moral truth, you were led in the Second Degree to contemplate the intellectual faculty and to trace it from its development, through the paths of heavenly science...*”, and we subsequently read “*To your mind, thus modelled by virtue and science...*”, and in particular in the ‘Exhortation’ that follows, the Worshipful Master exhorts the candidate to “*...to listen to the voice of Nature...*”. Indeed, the Second*

Degree even makes a nod to ‘physics’ in the ceremony of ‘Passing’, and we read: *“The earth constantly revolving on its axis in its orbit round the sun and Freemasonry being universally spread over its surface, it necessarily follows that the sun must always be at its meridian with respect to Freemasonry”*.

We might therefore define the Second Degree as the Degree of *Metaphysics*, intellectualistically speaking. The Worshipful Master reminds the candidate that his studies should focus on the Liberal Arts and Sciences. In this Degree, although assuming a metaphysical stance, intellect with all its associated faculties is indeed present and should be further strengthened through research and study.

“To extend our research into the hidden mysteries of nature and science” is an excerpt taken from our ritual which regrettably, in the same way as numerous others, is frequently read, learnt by heart, but often not understood, and even less so applied.

As initiates, we therefore seek to fathom the sense and significance of the ritual, that imparts how scientific ‘knowledge’ is a fundamental part along the pathway to spiritual and consciential perfection. Conversely, it should be underlined how a ‘metaphysical’ approach is fundamental in granting scientists a better of the workings of the ‘cosmos’; to this regard, the anthropologist and palaeontologist Fiorenzo Facchini wrote: *“The world of science thus gives rise to a series of metascientific questions that for that very reason require answers that cannot be provided in an empirical context. To deny these would be to assume an ideological position that has nothing to do with science. This opens up to the field of philosophy and concepts of religion that postulate an explanation of the universe that reaches far beyond the universe. Wittgenstein remarked how the significance of the universe does not reside within the universe itself”*³.

To acquire a knowledge of science, to attempt to understand the same when lacking the skills of physicists, biologists, chemists and palaeontologists, is indeed possible if we shed our listlessness and apathy; to this regard, the ritual with its allegory of the ‘Chisel’, a tool encountered in the First Degree, reminds us how *“Among the ‘working tools’ of the First Degree the ‘Chisel’ points out to us the advantages of*

³ Fiorenzo Facchini, *Determinismo, Indeterminismo, Finalismo nella storia dell’uomo*, in AAVV, *Determinismo e Complessità*, Armando Editore, Rome, 2000, page 186.

education, by which means alone we are rendered fit members of regularly organised Society).

Chapter 1

The great contemporary scientific discoveries

The modern scientific paradigm, the offspring of Illuminism, is developed through the application of *instrumental-empirical* methods, in a context of intellectual speculation in which all that surrounds us becomes a mere projection of the human intellect rather than a process in itself. The outside world, and *Nature* in particular, becomes the substrate for the creation of all inventions of reason, thus losing its natural connotation and its role as a vehicle of knowledge bestowed on man for the *harmonic* and *empathetic* understanding of life; however, the situation is slowly evolving, as writes the palaeontologist Roberto Fondi: “*Today, as in the past and in the same way as all other branches of culture, the most authentic picture of science is depicted in this conflict between a materialistic and spiritualist mentality, between reductionism, micromerism, nominalism and naturalism on the one hand, and organicism, holism, universalism and supernaturalism on the other*”.⁴

Indeed, in the scientific world, there is an increasingly pressing need to overcome the Illuminist rationalism and scientism generated by the Cartesian view whereby *Nature* is a machine devoid of life, inert, that is explained beyond the context of man, devoid of any divine or spiritual significance, of vitality, intrinsic harmony. From this *de-divination* of the world, this counter-positioning between spirit and matter, the cult of modern science is said to have stemmed in the persuasion that technical progress would unerringly correspond to an inner evolution of man. Max Weber demonstrated how scientific rationalization had produced an irreversible “*disenchantment*” (*Entzauberung*), secularizing the ancient vision of the world of

⁴ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, *Dopo Darwin, Critica all'evoluzionismo*, Rusconi, Milan, 1980, page 318.

mythological-religious origin and replacing it with an *'objective'* vision. The latter was particularly evident following the birth of the Darwinian evolutionist theory, with regard to which the biologist Giuseppe Sermonti commented: *"As soon as evolution had been introduced into the scientific context, the soul was lost. It was lost because evolution is an attempt to explain things and their origin without referring to metaphysics; the soul, whilst representing a wind, a murmur, is the breath that falls from transcendent lips. However, to reject the debate relating to the soul implies revealing everything about evolution to the common man, with the exception of what truly appeals"*.⁵

In his interesting studies, the palaeontologist Roberto Fondi underlines the same concepts (it should be highlighted how in his works Fondi refers repeatedly to representatives of the 'Traditional' school of thought, ranging from Titus Burckhardt, to Ananda Coomaraswamy, Schuon, and Guénon), in relation to removal of modern science from the 'transcendent' and to the exclusion a priori of a 'divine guidance', writing on the topic of creation in favour of the Darwinian evolutionist theory: *"Theophobia, in other words. Idiosyncrasy versus all mention of supernatural domains, and thus of all views of the world the latter are shown to be associated with. On analysing the opinions of the majority of modern-day biologists, one realizes how they are as yet unable to free themselves from the Illuminist and revolutionist naturalism of the 18th century. Despite relativity and the quantum, Gödel's theorem, the von Bertalanffy general systems theory and the wall of unfavourable findings that contrast the same, the myth of evolution continues to occupy their minds, preventing biology therefore from finally identifying a way of adapting itself to the unexpected and extraordinary vision of reality that the natural sciences of this century are continually revealing: a vision which, in substance – it should be said – would appear to be in perfect harmony with the vision characterising all traditional forms of culture"*.⁶

⁵ Giuseppe Sermonti, *Dimenticare Darwin*, Il Cerchio, 2017, page 93.

⁶ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, *Dopo Darwin, Critica all'evoluzionismo*, Rusconi, Milan, 1980, pages 148-149.

It is beyond doubt however that we are today in the presence of a new phase of scientific exploration leading to a radical rethinking of the place of man in the great scheme of the Universe and, consequently, heralding a change in the relationship between *Science* and the *Divine*. The traditional science of Cartesian and Illuminist derivation, the limits of which are increasingly evident, is becoming widely and ever-increasingly criticised. The undeniable merit of Illuminism was to free the researcher from the chains of theology and religious dogma dominant at the time, although throughout the centuries it has degraded into a dry materialism, insufficient both in methodology and results to explain many aspects of our existence. Today there is a new frontier of science represented by scientists and scholars from all over the world, at times collocated beyond the confines of the orthodox scientific community (the same community that condemned Galileo and Copernicus) which supports a new, no longer fragmented but *unified* knowledge. A knowledge frequently substantiated by scientific discoveries that challenge the certainties of orthodox scholars.

Macrocosm and Microcosm

The *hermetic* principle of the “*as above so below*” reproduced in Masonic Lodges by the symbols of ‘two globes’ representing the heavens and the earth, is today represented in the so-called “*principle of isomorphism*” on the basis of which similarities between the *microcosm* and the *macrocosm* are sought. The application of the same conceptual models and corresponding abstractions is therefore deemed feasible today. Man is therefore seen as a holographic unit enclosing the matrix of total information pertaining to the system of which he is part and with which there is a continuous exchange of information and energy. The same relationship seems to exist between organs, cells, and atoms. Thus, each and every part of creation seems to contain the information of the whole, recalling the Platonic form of innate knowledge awaiting only to be returned to the light.

This revolution was likely commenced by Albert Einstein who confirmed that “*the cosmic religious sentiment is the strongest and noblest motivation of scientific research.*” He was the first to attempt to

propose, unsuccessfully, throughout his entire life, a *Theory of Whole* - a theory unifying all the laws of nature.

The indivisibility of science and conscience is indeed nowadays supported by contemporary scientists. To this regard the Nobel Prize winner, Eugene Wigner, reported that "*Consciousness is the primary reality...In the future physics will explain not only the phenomena observed, but also the process of observation*", whilst another Nobel Prize winner, Francis Crick, who discovered DNA, affirmed that: "*Consciousness is the legitimate field of science.*"

The *matter* observed and the *conscience* of the scientist who observes reality are thus united and are subsequently investigated in a single context. The subject is therefore seemingly closely linked to the object.

'Quantum' physics turns towards the 'transcendent'

In the field of physics, the "*Principle of Complementarity*" established by the Danish physicist Nils Bohr, explains how the elementary particles of matter, the *Quantum*, can be viewed both as particles and waves according to the way in which the phenomenon is observed, a theory reminiscent of *Alchemy*, in which the mercurial feminine principle explains the proteo-morphism of natural phenomena, their fluid adaptability. In line with this interpretation, the Universe might not be the materialistic Newtonian cosmos made up of specific objects, visible and in motion along a defined, substantially static, trajectory, but rather a dynamic universe made up of "*waves of possibility*" or mere potentiality which becomes material, a manifest world, thanks to the 'observer', who is represented in the laboratory by the scientist and, in everyday life, by ourselves. In this view, which science currently purveys, man represents the '*Centre*' and the sense of the Universe, as hypothesized by Pico della Mirandola in his '*Oration on the Dignity of Man*'. Following the discovery of *Quantum physics* and laboratory findings achieved in the early 1980s, it was first hypothesised that the existence of the Universe requires the presence of a conscious *sentient being* with a marked sense of awareness. Lacking an observer only the power of the Universe would exist, it would therefore seem that consciousness creates matter. The act of observation creates an interaction with the object being observed and

modifies the same. This relevance of the subjectivity of the observer was anticipated by the *Alchemists* who saw in natural phenomena a continual exchange between the internal and the external and vice versa. Such a discovery necessarily heralded a change to the scientific paradigm: from the materialistic in which all is matter, implied as elementary particles which interact according to a *cause-effect* relationship to which man is completely extraneous, to a more *idealistic* paradigm in which awareness is the foundation of existence and matter responds to spirit.

Another important theory is represented by the “*Principle of Nonlocality*” put forward by the Nobel prize physicist Wolfgang Pauli, who revealed how the elementary particles contained in an atom are in constant, instantaneous communication with each other, with each ascertaining its own position in relation to that of the others and on a global level without exchanging any form of signal whatsoever. In the view of scientists, the latter would tend to demonstrate how each particle is *connected* to the entire system and, therefore, how each part of the universe is *interconnected* by electromagnetic fields as though they were linked by a single form of intelligent energy.

For the first time, science has been forced to hypothesise the existence of a dimension that *transcends* the dimension we inhabit, and is today obliged to resort to the *transcendent* to explain the phenomena it observes. This is largely due to the fact that the *transcendent* dimension, previously excluded from scientific research, would appear to influence the behaviour of matter.

Likewise in the field of biology, with particular focus on criticism of the Darwinian and neo-Darwinian theories, the issue of the transcendent is once again reiterated. On recognising the impossibility of chance in evolution and the need for an ‘intelligent design, is this regulative intelligence immanent to nature or should it be considered transcendent? Fiorenzo Facchini replies: “*The first solution is scarcely plausible. The second, or rather an openness to the transcendent, for those who hold no ideological judgements, would appear the most reasonable, although not being demonstrable by means of an experimental science*”.⁷

⁷ Fiorenzo Facchini, *Determinismo, Indeterminismo, Finalismo nella storia dell'uomo*, in AAVV, *Determinismo e Complessità*, Armando Editore, Rome, 2000, page 186.

Chapter 2

The defeat of Darwin and Evolutionism

The ineluctability of a 'Great Architect of the Universe'

It is indeed largely in the field of biology that modern science has yielded findings which, up until only a few decades ago, would have been unthinkable. A series of scholars have addressed the new discoveries in an original and innovative fashion, with a key position being held by the previously cited Italian biologist, professor of genetics and essayist, Giuseppe Sermonti. One of the main focuses of the works of the recently deceased Sermonti, lay in the criticism of the Darwinian theory of natural selection and the associated current of neo-Darwinism. In an interesting study written in conjunction with the palaeontologist Roberto Fondi⁸, the two authors provided an interpretation presenting biological evolution as a myth, providing a documented demonstration of how biology cannot prove the spontaneous origin of life, indeed, how exactly the opposite had been established. Their criticism challenged the theory of the spontaneous generation of life, from elementary to more complex structures, which had been contradicted by a biochemical complexity and elementary biological mechanisms and functions, ranging from insects to humans, essentially similar, from the invisible to the gargantuan, from the microcosm to the macrocosm, to refer to the 'Hermetic' doctrine.

The palaeontologist Fondi maintained and demonstrated how, from the first manifestation of fossils to the current day, the diversity and abundance of forms of life had not increased – new groups have replaced the more ancient ones, but no *intermediate* forms, unfailingly sought after by evolutionists, have ever been identified. Essentially, different and diverse forms of life may be randomly manifested in the absence of any traceable ancestor, representing a variation of

⁸ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, *Dopo Darwin, Critica all'evoluzionismo*, Rusconi, Milan, 1980.

previously existing but remarkably harmonized roots, thus not constituting products generated 'by chance'.

The collapse of 'Evolutionism'

Sermonti embarked on his analysis starting from the "cliché" which, thanks to Darwin, has influenced scientific studies conducted from its inception up until the present day, i.e. that evolution developed through a struggle for existence. However, Sermonti remarked that it was Darwin himself who, only a few years following the publication of his '*On the Origin of Species*' admitted that he "*had attributed too much to the act of natural selection and to survival of the fittest*", acknowledging that it was "*one of the most significant oversights of his work*".⁹ However, his theory was one of the lynchpins of modern science, and is still today advocated with force and conviction by the so-called 'Neo-Darwinists'.

The Jesuit biologist and anthropologist Vittorio Marcuzzi defined 'evolutionism' as a theory that left innovation to chance and success to selection, with natural selection in this process proving fundamental as representing the sole means of achieving order from disorder, adaptation from improvisation, complexity from degeneration. In this dynamics, there can be *no* project, no intentions, no purpose, indeed, an *oriented evolution* would embody the negation of the true sense of Darwinism.¹⁰

Sermonti underlined how with his theory Darwin essentially denied form, models and ideas (platonically speaking), evolution has no need of God, it takes care of itself... According to the evolutionist theory therefore, God, whom the Freemasons refer to as the 'Great Architect of the Universe' and 'Architect and Regulator of the Universe, is actually not a god, and his role would need to be 'redesigned': "*The theory of natural evolution introduces God no longer under the semblance of the Creator, but as the Great Breeder of the species. As such, he is no longer God, but merely a cunning merchant who is sufficiently human to allow mankind to measure up and take on*

⁹ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op. cit., page 14.

¹⁰ Vittorio Marcozzi, *Caso e finalità*, Massimo, Milano, 1976. Cited in Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit. page 16.

singlehanded the management of the entire living universe, thus dispensing with him".¹¹

By accepting the evolutionist dynamics it is clear that the representation of God as the Great Architect of the Universe, with the additional attributes described in the ritual, would be nonsensical.

Sermonti perseveres in his criticism and justifies his theory: "*As a start, we need to separate the problem of the origins from the issue of the transformation of life. The problem of the origins is not within our reach. The laws of life assume life itself, and do not explain genesis from a non-life... With regard to the other issue relating to the transformation of life, we will reach a surprising conclusion. Life has been subjected to a series of upheavals and countless manifestations of life have been manifested on Earth; however, no transformation from the simple to the complex (the race against time) has taken place. This is the revelation of modern-day biology... the biochemical complexity of a microbe is no less than the complexity of a plant or an animal. The series of living creatures ranging from the primitive to the sophisticated, from the unsuitable to the adapted, do not stand up to molecular analysis and do not correspond to any palaeontological chronology*" and, Sermonti concludes: "*Life was first manifested on the Earth in a complex form, at the height of its dignity. It has not improved on ageing and has not gained maturity through living. It has expressed an astonishing variety of forms, which were already embodied within and in the eternal immaterial rules of mathematics*".¹²

In relation to the works of Darwin and his imitators, Sermonti explained how biology was subsequently able to shed light on an evident paradox, as evolution had been identified as the origin of the species thanks to a study that had effectively inaugurated evolutionism, *The origin of the species by means of natural selection*. However, it was subsequently established that the species originate in the absence of any involvement of a natural selection, or rather, their separation is not of an adaptive nature as it does not implicate the mechanisms that justify, inaugurate or depict evolution. Darwin and his successors maintained that an accumulation of diversifying adaptive variations might underlie the formation of the species,

¹¹ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 21.

¹² Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 26.

although it was actually the exact opposite that took place, as it is only following separation that independent variations capable of determining a structural differentiation are accumulated in newly isolated species.¹³

What dynamics therefore resulted in the development of living 'forms'? Sermonti describes how Darwin's theory is based on the fact that a living form gradually passes on into another form, or gradually emerges in a form that diverges on contact with a different environment. Sermonti however underlines how these events have never been witnessed. In addition, he highlights how the theory necessarily envisages a series of previous "intermediate forms" manifested over the millions of years since the purported evolution, whilst molecules would display alterations, i.e. adaptive mutations, that would justify these morphological differences. However, Sermonti opines, even the field of molecular biology has failed to provide a molecular justification for this diversity, implying, Sermonti continues, that we are morphologically diverse, cytologically similar, and biochemically identical, and writes: "*It is true that the more ancient these living forms are, the more molecular differences they will have accumulated, although these differences have nothing to do with the forms themselves. The molecules of a clam will be in no way more marine or mollusc in nature than the equivalent found in a horse....These alterations are the result of a neutral history that has consumed the messages without changing the sense ...*".¹⁴

The 'forms' appear!

But how do these simple or complex 'forms' of life appear? Sermonti replies: "*For millions of years life continued to be of a microscopic and unicellular nature. Over a geologically short period, out of thin air, these living forms appeared side by side in line with all morphological "types" – or phyla – that would have subsequently populated the earth. This is thought to have taken place five hundred thousand years ago. Since that*

¹³ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 33.

¹⁴ Giuseppe Sermonti, Dimenticare Darwin, Il Cerchio, 2017, page 125.

*dawn of time no “types” have been newly manifested and none have disappeared. Protozoa, poriferans (sponges), coelenterates (hydra and sea anemones), molluscs, annelids (worms), arthropods (insects, crustaceans), echinoderms (sea urchins and starfish) and, a little later, chordates (our phylum) and other lesser types at the start of the Cambrian period. There was no underlying fossil that could have generated these forms....The living world was formed through a series of “coordinated explosions” over vast areas through the “revealing” of unexpressed forms rather than through the geographical distribution of local inventions. The explosion of types was certainly not a small unresolved charade reported on the pages of the publication ‘La Sfinge’. It was the complete opposite of what the Gradualist Darwinian mechanism envisaged for the origin of animal forms.”*¹⁵ For billions of years the only life was of a microscopic and unicellular nature.

Sermonti described how the genetic mutations underpinning the evolutionist theory seem to be inaccessible or indifferent to selection, therefore, the genetic diversities between the species that is observed at a molecular level is not selective, or rather is not Darwinian. The amount of DNA is in no way linked to the number of genes, although for years the evolutionists have affirmed that the amount of DNA per nucleus increased progressively on ascending the biological scale, only to be subsequently contradicted. With the sole exception of the deviation between prokaryotes (bacteria) and the eukaryotes (animals and plants) the amount of DNA per nucleus does not vary significantly. To conclude, genes, which underpin the significant differentiation of living beings, the modification of which are purported to be implicated in natural selection, are essentially the same (not only is the number the same but also the functional properties) throughout the entire biosphere. The diversification of these genes took place solely in the functionally inconsequential sub-units (neutral mutations) or due to deterioration of those genes which had not been called upon to exert their function for lengthy periods of time. If any role at all were carried out by natural selection, it is indeed the exact opposite of that envisaged by Darwin, focused on maintaining the stability and functionality of genetic material during the possible mutations that took place over a period of thousands of

¹⁵ Giuseppe Sermonti, *Dimenticare Darwin*, Il Cerchio, 2017, page 124-125.

years. To conclude, molecular biology has demonstrated the essentially *ahistorical* Character of life.¹⁶

Palaeontology disproves gradual evolution

Palaeontology has lent further support to the evidence provided by biology with regard to the impossibility of an 'evolution' of life in line with the Darwinian and Neo-Darwinian theories. Indeed, the involvement of a 'gradual complexification' in the development of life has never been confirmed by the fossils unearthed; the notion of the great types of organisation stemming from the evolution of a 'simple' into a 'complex' matter is indemonstrable, as stated by Roberto Fondi: *"Over almost two centuries of intense studies, the results obtained by palaeontology have only yielded scarce and questionable pretexts relating to the evolutionist theory, although, conversely, they should have provided a wealth of unequivocal corroboration. To date, not one fossil of crucial relevance in the topic to hand has seen the light of day ...Whenever a specific class or organisms is investigated and the palaeontological history followed by vertically descending the stratigraphic column, sooner or later one invariably encounters an abrupt interruption in the precise place where – according to the evolutionist theory – we should have identified the geological link to a more primitive strain of progenitor. As this occurs systematically and unfailingly, the occurrence cannot be construed as a secondary issue due to a purported lack of fossils, but should rather be viewed as a primary phenomenon of nature"*.¹⁷

Indeed, it was Darwin himself who stated in his work *"To the question why we do not find a wealth of fossils from these vast primordial period antecedent the Cambrian period, I can give no satisfactory answer"*, and indeed the fact that palaeontological documentation recorded the sudden appearance at the start of the Cambrian period of a vast and heterogeneous marine life that included the majority of the known phyla remains an enigma – Fondi writes: *"This appears even more enigmatic, on taking into account the almost total lack of fossils in the*

¹⁶ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 76.

¹⁷ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., pages 150-158.

underlying rock formations having a depth corresponding to almost four fifths of the entire surface of the earth.....Indeed, if the Cambrian fauna had originated from a process of evolution, it should prove relatively simple to find the fossilized remains of its progenitor immediately beneath the sedimentary strata".¹⁸

Evolution or Involution. Does man truly descend from the apes? The myth of the 'fall'

Fondi underlined the untenability of the notion of evolution depicting the history of life as the sum of adaptations produced in line with an increasing divergence in the variability of characters through a continual accumulation of small mutations and clarified how in reality: *"Palaeontological findings point not to an "evolution", but rather to an apparent differentiation by descent of a defined number of readily distinguishable original types, or archetypes, arranged in a series of progressively less generalised and comprehensive sub-types: from phyla to classes, from classes to orders, from orders to families, from families to genus (and possibly from genus to species). However this may be interpreted, this remarkable phenomenon of progressive involution (stemming from the increasingly evident loss of potentiality implied in the original archetypes) is the exact opposite of what we would expect on the basis of the theory of evolution".¹⁹*

Man is the least specialised and least adapted form of all the so-called 'primates', thus giving rise to the hypothesis, upheld by an increasing number of experts, according to which man antedates apes; indeed, as early as the end of the 18th century Daubenton pondered: *"Is man an ape that has become erect, or are apes men who have started to walk on all fours?"*, was it man to bring the apes' DNA to the ground or, on the contrary, did the apes take a jump and convey man's DNA to the trees? Molecular biology has provided an indication as to the likely time that this took place (between 1 and 4 million years ago), but has failed to tell us in which direction .²⁰

¹⁸ Giuseppe Sermoni e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 191.

¹⁹ Giuseppe Sermoni e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 222.

²⁰ Giuseppe Sermoni, *Le delizie della biologia*, Il problema della forma e la retorica del DNA, Lindau, Torino, 2010, pages 78-79.

The classic theory of the evolution of man recounts how the common ascendant of both men and apes was indeed an ape that had remained essentially unchanged, whilst man had of course undergone a transformation. This however was not the case. By comparing the detailed chromosomic structure of apes and humans, biology has reached the disconcerting conclusion that the chromosomes of this mysterious 'common progenitor' were similar to those of humans, i.e. on reaching the crossroads, the molecules and chromosomes were those of a human being, implying that it was actually man who had stood still! Sermonti commented: *"It cannot be ruled out that the being concerned was more human than us, his impoverished grandchildren, and even more so, was more human than his degenerate descendants of the forest"*. Thus returned the myth of the 'fall' of man, present throughout all cultures and in all Traditions .

Sermonti wrote: *"Man displays a splendid repertoire of "primitive/infantile" conditions, whereas his tailless cousins exhibit in those same traits conditions that are unmistakably "derived/senile". The human cranium lacks crests and prominent brow arches; it lacks the exaggerated muzzle of the chimpanzee; it lacks protruding canines. All this "lack" – this geometrical rotundity (apart from the nose), is a primitive condition. We find it in the oldest fossil primates; we find it in the embryos and young of monkeys, which take on bestial aspects as they grow older, and older they quickly become ...And the hand, the hand! What a picture of fair play is the human hand, with its fine fanning configuration, an original/primitive architectural model. Compared with the human, all other mammalian "hands" are deformed and sacrificed to specialisation. ...Indeed, the human form is the most original, archetypal and primitive of all the mammals. It is the form of the child, the dawn, the exemplar. We could say that it is the most "primordial" of all mammalian forms, provided the term "primordial" is not used to denote the brutality of gnostic beginnings, or "primitive" to suggest coarseness and savagery...it is clear that man is distinguished from the apes, and – who knows – distinguished from all other, by having been exempted from evolution, by having remained what they were in times now lost beyond recall, castaways unscathed by the storms that have denied their fellow animals the erect posture, or have made them grow fur or fleece and arm themselves with fangs and claws. Man*

is an ancient being, a primordial"²¹, therefore, Sermonti concludes: "Heidegger affirmed that Man was born as a man rather than a brute, and was not born by degrees. Everything great is born great.

Beauty and Symmetry: "God always applies geometry..."

One the most incredible mysteries relating to human beings (although also observable in minerals) is without doubt the 'Law of symmetry' – Sermonti writes: "*The body form of living creatures is composed in line with a series of essential geometric models that may be classified by referring the same to coordinated systems of axes and planes used to establish the different types of symmetry: spherical, radial, biradial, bilateral, quasi-bilateral. Radial symmetry is predominant in the general structure of plants, whilst the bilateral form is more common in animals. The beauty of natural forms lies in their symmetry*".²²

Might we not rightly define these as those 'Mysteries of Nature' the ritual instructs us to investigate? What is the underlying cause of 'symmetry' in nature? Certainly not the DNA which, as a register of genetic instructions is a one-dimensional structure, leaving us therefore with the environment or the maternal body.

Sermonti mentions how although the minor inter-organism differences are coded in the DNA, the most macroscopic differences are almost never of a genetic nature, consequently, the extra-chromosomal heritage from the "maternal field" imprinted on the egg, on the hormones or other substances transferred to the egg and to the developing embryo by the mother, as well as in the case of a "symbiotic legacy", depict life as an 'open system in which the organisms are the outcome of forces that compete to determine the means of growth, however, Sermonti adds: "*the conformations imposed by the environment and perpetuated maternally, are by no means disordered and casual, but rather reflect the order, polarity and symmetry of the environment in the mirror of life. The living world encloses the harmonies of the Earth and of the Universe, with their*

²¹ Giuseppe Sermonti, *Dimenticare Darwin*, Il Cerchio, 2017, page 62.

²² Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 80.

eternal designs, and conveys these in the red stars of the sea beds to the white stars of the alpine peaks".²³

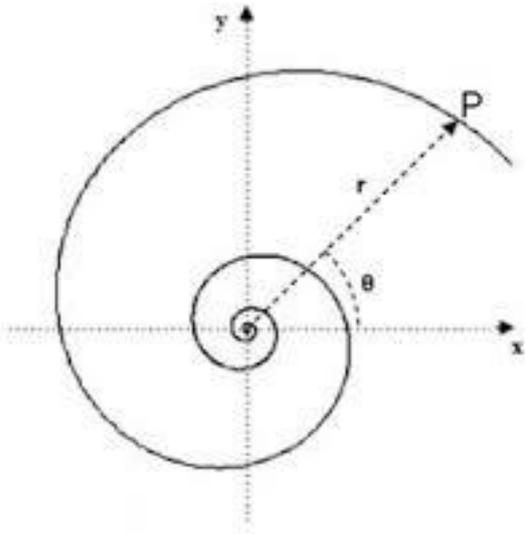
The renowned Scottish biologist Sir D'Arcy W. Thompson (1860-1948) interpreted organic forms as being the result of physical processes and forces, his interpretation of the structure of living beings may be condensed in one of his citations: "*Nature merely manifests a reflection of the forms contemplated by geometry*".²⁴ Thompson analysed the biological spirals present on the shells of molluscs and a few foraminifera, i.e. the Nautilus spiral, the spiral of the rams' horns and that contained in the inflorescence of the sunflower, in all of which the Scottish biologist identifies examples of curves known as equiangular or logarithmic spirals; indeed, in all structures examined each subsequent increment of growth is similar and is similarly located compared to the previous one.



Section of the Nautilus shell

²³ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 91.

²⁴ W. Thompson D'Arcy, *Crescita e forma, la geometria della natura*, Boringhieri, Turin, 1969, page.7



Logarithmic Spiral

Spirals are present in the disposition of leaves, bracts and inflorescences of numerous plants, frequently arranged in the same way as the renowned Fibonacci sequence, in which each number is the sum of the two preceding ones (1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21,34...).

In the light of this evidence, Sermonti underlines how biological forms cannot merely be accidental structures that occur by chance and are selected for their usefulness, but are rather limited and made up of a combination of the laws of physics and mathematics by which they are regulated; thus, the form of an organism resembles a *diagram of forces*, as confirmed by the biologist and mathematician D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson: "*Cell and tissue, shell and bone, leaf and flower, are so many portions of matter, and it is in obedience to the laws of physics that their particles have been moved, moulded and conformed... Their problems of form are in the first instance mathematical problems, their problems of growth are essentially physical problems, and the morphologist is, ipso facto, a student of physical science*"²⁵. Thompson's work, comments Sermonti, "*is an ode to a beauty with no ulterior purpose, to a harmony devoid of profit*"²⁶, and affirms that in a modern vision of pythagorism the figures "*Are no exception to the rule of Theo's aéi geometrie*". The splendid citation derived from the epilogue to his book is integrally reported by Sermonti: "*The harmony of the world is*

²⁵ W. Thompson D'Arcy, op. cit., page 11.

²⁶ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 115.

made manifest in Form and Number, and the heart and soul and all the poetry of Natural Philosophy are embodied in the concept of mathematical beauty. The perfection of mathematical beauty is such that whatsoever is most beautiful and regular is also found to be most useful and excellent. Not only the movements of the heavenly host must be determined by observations and elucidated by mathematics, but whoever else can be expressed by number and defined by the law of nature. These are the teachings of Plato and Pythagoras, and the message of Greek wisdom to humanity”.

‘Geometry’ is constantly present both throughout the ‘mythical’ history of Freemasonry, and in its rituals. On the question of its ‘mythical’ history, the Anderson Constitutions have traced back the origins of Freemasonry, identifying the same with the Geometry passed down by Adam, thanks to a lengthy and uninterrupted chain, to his successors and down to the present day. The rituals contain repeated reference to the importance of geometry, particularly with regard to the seven Liberal arts, with the Exhortation following the passing: *“The study of the liberal Arts, which tends so affectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration, especially the Science of Geometry, which is established as the basis of our Art”.*

Sermonti reiterates these concepts in a subsequent volume entitled ‘*Dimenticare Darwin*’ (2006), published in the United States under the explicatory title ‘*Why is a fly not a Horse?*’, which reads: *“The living form tends to express its own identity, or bear witness to its own nature. It does this by taking on configurations, exhibiting designs, uttering song or giving off perfume, none of these having much to do with survival, with utility, or with vital functions.....The problem as to why the species differ so markedly is not related to adaptation or utility. The differences far exceed any functional needs, seeming rather to be marks of belonging, surges of life...”*²⁷

‘Symbols’ in Nature. The need for a ‘structure’

²⁷ Giuseppe Sermonti, *Dimenticare Darwin*, Il Cerchio, 2017, pages 46-47.

The diminution by the Darwinian evolution of the 'adaptation' of all dynamics and natural forms appears even more ruinous on mere observation of the wonders of Nature.

Sermonti opined how some of the patterns present on butterfly wings held a semantic, symbolic value, stating how it was the symbol itself to oppose adaptation (in biology the same genetic code conveys a semantic rather than an adaptive value), and wrote: "*The erect stature of man, to move on to a more decisive sign, symbolizes more than the traditional man, but rather a singular vertical way of being linked with a series of other symbols (the tree of life, the axis mundi, the right angle), thus completing the significance. The sign is conveyed within a "symbolic structure". Interpretation of the design on the butterfly wings requires a plane geometry, a chromatic scale and an archetypal plan*".²⁸

To understand therefore a 'design' of Nature we must be capable first and foremost of grasping the symbols, the superiority of symbolism over discursive reason is clear, and it is indeed solely in symbolism that we find the most appropriate means to make use of and impart the Truth of a higher religious and metaphysical order. To this regard Cassirer wrote: "*The sign is no mere accidental cloak of the idea, but it's necessary and essential organ. It serves not merely to communicate a complete and given thought-content, but is an instrument by means of which this content develops and fully defines itself. The conceptual definition of content goes hand in hand with its stabilization in some characteristic sign*".²⁹

Symbolism therefore, a tool that has been rejected or ignored by the modern spirit, is perfectly poised to express the Truths belonging to the order of pure intellectuality steeped throughout the world around us. As human nature is by no means purely intellectual, it requires a sensitive substrate to allow it to raise itself to the higher spheres, with symbolism representing the most effective means of meeting the intellectual needs of man. If language is an analytical and discursive form, in the same way as human reasoning of which it is the tool, conversely, 'symbolism' is essentially synthetic, and for this reason, intuitive. These properties therefore render it more suitable than language to support '*intellectual intuition*', as symbols possess an

²⁸ Giuseppe Sermonti e Roberto Fondi, op., cit., page 74.

²⁹ Ernst Cassirer, *Filosofia delle forme simboliche*, La nuova Italia, Florence, 1996, page 20.

ontological truth that reaches far beyond any mental construct. As Seyyed Hossein Nars reminds us, “*man does not make symbols: he is transformed by them*”.³⁰

We should therefore strive to comprehend the symbology of the nature that surrounds us and the entire cosmos. Indeed, each symbolism represents a sort of *gnosis*, or rather a process of mediation achieved by means of a concrete and experimental knowledge.

³⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *op. cit.*, page 68.