

EVOLUTION



John O'Loughlin

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By

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CDM Poetry

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PREFACE

The sixteen prose poems gathered together here should be ideally suited to those who prefer their poetry prosy and mainly concerned with philosophical issues or, at any rate, with a philosophical treatment of issues and subjects that could be treated more frivolously or arbitrarily, if one lacked the intellectual machinery and moral insight with which to tackle them in this paradoxical but fundamentally logical way.

I suspect that my first attempt at prose poems, back in *Dosshouse Blues* (1973–5), when I included about five, was more poetically frivolous than anything to be found here, in this systematic project; though that would be in keeping with my work of that comparatively youthful period. Some ten years later and the results are far more interesting, with perhaps a hint of Baudelairean influence here and there, albeit without conscious intention on my part.

However that may be, these prose poems are not essays, whatever appearances might suggest to the contrary, but painstakingly contrived pieces which never part company with the context in which they were conceived.

John O'Loughlin, London 1983 (Revised 2022)

No Absolute Knowledge

Man can have a relative knowledge of God, but he cannot know or experience God personally. He can come to the conclusion, through careful logical reasonings, that God would be the ultimate spiritual globe when all separate globes of pure spirit, from whichever part of the Universe, had converged towards one another in the future Post-millennial Beyond, but he cannot know what it would actually *be* like to be a part of that ultimate globe himself – what the condition of supreme being would actually *be* like to the experiencing mind. In fact, there would be no 'part' of God, because one great indivisible transcendence. No man can get anywhere near fathoming exactly what the condition of such an ultimate globe of transcendent spirit would actually *be* like. Man has but a small, relatively humble spirit which, in any case, is polluted by the flesh and dependent on the flesh for its survival. He can only acquire, at the best of times, a vague intimation of what that supreme condition of being would actually *be* like.

Yet he has often mistaken his vague intimation for absolute knowledge of God in the past! Such exaggerations were perhaps a form of compensation for his earthly shortcomings.

Relative knowledge of God takes the form of logical reasonings concerning the outcome of evolution, and

should not be confused with those vague intimations of supreme being which saints and other exceptional human beings have occasionally experienced in the past. Such intimations appertain to a stronger influx of human spirit upon a person, and are at a considerable remove from what God would literally *be* like in the Post-millennial Beyond. The experience of infused contemplation would not have led the recipient to apperceive God, but, on the contrary, to apperceive his own quota of spirit more clearly and intensely than would ordinarily have been the case. One might define this experience as an indirect, rather partial glimpse of Heaven.

Is it possible, I wonder, that these spiritual globes already exist in the Heavenly Beyond? Relative knowledge of God, based on cogent reasoning, should enable one to answer this question affirmatively. Yes, I believe that such globes *could* exist in the Heavenly Beyond, which is to say in space considered as a setting for a more advanced absolute than the stars.... Though their existence there would not so much constitute God as globes of pure spirit *en route*, as it were, to the possibility of an ultimate spiritual globe, which could only come to pass with the fusion, following convergence, of *all* such globes into ultimate unity, the unity of what Teilhard de Chardin calls the Omega Point. Since we haven't got anywhere near transcendence yet, we can be confident that an ultimate spiritual globe, comprised of all spiritual contributions throughout the Universe, doesn't exist.

Nevertheless, we would be mistaken, I believe, to assume that such individual globes of transcendent spirit as *may* exist there, by dint of the possible spiritual contributions made by beings on more advanced planets than our own, elsewhere in the Universe, exert no beneficial influence upon ourselves. There is no reason why those nearest to us, which may yet be millions of miles away, shouldn't, to some extent, draw our spirit slightly towards them. For if they attract and converge towards one another in the Heavenly Beyond, they must surely have some tangential attractive influence on what is best in us – namely our spirit. This proposition doesn't, however, discount the part played by human struggle in the evolutionary journey. A pulling teleological argument would not have much credence on its own. We must bear in mind the pushing evolutionary one as well, though we may be excused, in this day and age, for turning against astrological determinism, which is really the opposite of teleological freedom.

Ladies and Gentlemen

A lady is both beautiful and discreet, cultured and intelligent. She doesn't desire to be kissed in public, nor does she object to one's disinclination, there. to hold her

hand or put an arm around her waist. One keeps one's hands in one's pockets, and the lady may place a hand on one's nearest arm if she so desires. This is perfectly logical, for it confirms the female's right to a more openly sensual stance.

A lady will usually wear dark clothes, though she may use bright colours in moderation, either occasionally or regularly, on top or underneath, on her clothing or as a part of it. Black underclothes are the least seductive of colours for a female to wear – yellow or red, by contrast, the most. A lady will generally prefer the former to the latter, spurning flagrant seductions.

Ladies occasionally wear make-up but they use it discreetly, never glaringly or with ostentatious intent. Before man made art partly transcendental, he painted his body, and the less-evolved women still do a variation on the same theme, with or without tattoos. No wonder ladies are careful not to draw attention to themselves in this way! They prefer to allow their natural beauty to speak for itself, and are glad when gentlemen admire them for other than purely sexual reasons.

As for their hair, ladies are careful not to let it grow too long, and therefore prefer to have it regularly cut. When their hair *is* long and fine, they will take especial pains to tie it up on or near the crown of their head, which makes for a more civilized appearance. Very often a lady's hair is dark, approximating more, in appearance,

to the essence of transcendent spirit than to the brightness of the sun. A gentleman, when of spiritual cast, will generally prefer a dark-haired lady to a blonde – contrary to popular myth or, at any rate, to those kinds of gentlemen are who rather more materialistic. He will also require of his lady that she remains slim, and doubtless most ladies, being of slender build, are perfectly able to do so. Slenderness is, after all, an indication of a spiritual predilection, a reflection of a more refined physical constitution.

A lady will never wear anything blatantly seductive, like a very short skirt or see-through blouse. She will dress discreetly, hiding her more obvious physical charms from the vulgar eye. No-one should be able to point at a gentleman in public and say: "You can see what it is about *her* that he likes!"

A gentleman is, above all things, gentle, not coarse, brutal, violent, or boorish. He never slams doors but shuts them quietly, with due presence of mind. He would never dream of using physical violence against an opponent in an argument, intellectual or otherwise, but will confine himself, at the worst of times, to mental violence – should a raised voice be unavoidable.

Gentlemen are occasionally subjected to physical violence by men but, if they survive it, can always sue for assault. A threat of suing an ungentlemanly potential assailant for assault may serve as a useful deterrent, and is, besides, a form of mental violence.

A gentleman rarely or never moves quickly or acts rashly, but takes his time, is *langsam*, to cite Nietzsche, for reasons of propriety, since he should more approximate, in his conduct, to being than to doing, not having to 'jump to it' at someone else's behest, to obey orders or otherwise rush around. Indeed, a gentleman will spend most of his time sitting still, whether at work or at play. And he certainly won't be one to engage in competitive sports!

As for clothing, a gentleman's clothes are mostly dark rather than ostentatious or trendy. He will generally prefer to keep most of his clothes on, even in hot weather, and will never venture out in winter without adequate protection against the elements. He doesn't like to be brought into too close a contact with rain, and will usually possess the means of protecting himself from direct contact with it. Men think that braving the rain bare-headed is a sign of manliness, and tend to regard umbrellas and hoods as unworthy of masculine vanity. They don't realize, as a rule, that a gentleman's reluctance to get his head wet stems from a transcendental bias, opposing its upholder to brute contact with the elements.

In sexual matters, gentlemen are usually moderate, preferring, of the two alternatives, to reduce their sexual commitments to a minimum than to increase them towards a maximum. Their ladies are generally resigned

to a less vigorous sex-life.

Ladies and gentlemen have existed for centuries and will doubtless continue to exist, so long as the human race survives. There is no reason to suppose that social progress will put an end to them, though it may oppose certain kinds of ladies and gentlemen whose lifestyles are insufficiently modern. What social progress would really like to do, over a period of decades or even centuries, is to transform as many people as possible into ladies and gentlemen by improving the quality of life on as equalitarian a basis as possible. It would be real progress if, instead of men and gentlemen or women and