

Three Stories by Jean-Marie Avril

MEDITATING ON THOMAS

The Gospel of Thomas was discovered in 1945 at NAG HAMMADI along with several others. This Gospel is said to be Gnostic, i.e. leading to Gnosis, but not necessary Gnostic in the sense of the early Church denouncing a so-called heretical competitor. Indeed, what we call Gnostics was like the New Age movement of the Roman Empire—a syncretistic conglomerate of various bits and pieces of Near Eastern religions. Yet, among the Gnostics were put also the real ones, e.g. the Christians who were more occult and esoteric than the more mainstream Church. But the occult character of the Gospel of Thomas and the other NAG HAMMADI lot don't make them necessarily heretical. Indeed, it looks like the early Church was more faith-based than knowledge-based. Who is Thomas? He is the doubter, the scientist one might say of the Apostles. Whereas Mary Magdalene synthesized knowledge and faith at once as she was the first to be revealed the resurrected Christ, and then come the other followers (Peter, John, etc.) who were the ones animated more by faith than knowledge. There remains Thomas, the one who wants to see the wounds of Christ in order to believe and gain faith. Now the Church's history has emphasized more faith than knowledge, and the Gospel of Thomas and the other Gnostic books were not included in the official collection that makes up the Bible. The Dark Ages were a time of faith before knowledge. Yet it doesn't mean it was darkness in the mind of the people. You can imagine faith as being like a laser beam piercing the clouds to reveal the permanent blue sky. In short, faith brings knowledge. It doesn't mean it brings about the ratiocination beloved of profane scientists. But now that we live at the end of the Christian cycle in Europe and the Near East, we inhabit a scientist mythology and cosmology. Our cosmos is post-Newtonian and we on the whole have to see before believing. So what happened? They discovered the NAG HAMMADI Gospels in 1945, the year of the first atomic explosions, the result of the sorcerer-apprentice meddling with forces far beyond the limited comprehensions of his ego. It's almost as if the 1945 explosions were the earthly, caricatural light exploding in the open, joining in unison, but in a reverse fashion, with the coming of the quiet and spiritual light of the Gnostic Gospels. God has somehow in His infinite Wisdom hidden the Gnostic Gospels

away in the desert as, first, they were not necessary for the spiritual economy of the Church until their re-discovery and, two, they are relevant now, especially the Gospel of Thomas. Indeed it seems logical to assume that's the Gospel that would be more in favor with a mind fashioned by scientists' discourse. The Gospel is also short, which points to a tantric character, as Tantra is the shortcut allowing realization in the period of the latter days, i.e. the transition from the Age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius. Both New Agers and the rest of the relatively educated population of Europe and the Americas used a jargon influenced by scientist terminology. That make us individuals that would relate with difficulty to the language used by Christian medieval cosmology. But now, we've got the Gospel of Thomas, the doubting apostle to rescue us out of trouble. The other thing that plays in favor of this Book is that it was not included in the Bible. The Bible, having been the sole book of the institutionalized churches, may not be looked on with favor by those outside the churches, who doubt the spiritual sincerity and efficiency of those dusty organizations. So these outsiders would feel more attracted by a book that has been outside the official churches. Yet the Gospel of Thomas belongs to the Church, but the noun in this case refers to the spiritual entity that is the Bride of Christ. As such this Church is eternal while her earthly counterpart is perishable. And how many of the spiritual Church are now navigating outside the official ones? We think the Bible is a valid symbolic writing. Indeed the Book contains many layers of interpretations that can speak for a poor person in South America or a Lesbian afraid of the dark in New York. The Bible can be applied spiritually and psychologically. Its endless potential for offering meanings and new interpretations prove that it is the Word of God, the Manuscript of the Eternal like any other religious scriptures (the Vedas, the Mahayana scriptures, the Book of the Law, etc.). But there are many who love Christ and dislike the church and they will shun the Bible due to the boringness of the "Bible-bashers" that it evokes. So God has preserved for them the Gospel of Thomas that is potentially more efficient for those doubting minds than the usual four Gospels. And there is also the other Gnostic Gospels and the figure of Mary Magdalene for the lovers of the Goddess and her consort. Christ and the Magdalene appear as the traditional occult couple that is an ever-recurring archetype, as in the case of the Buddhist missionaries, Padma Shambavah and his female companion and

devotee Yeshe Tsogyel who evangelized Tibet and converted this nation to the Buddhist good news. It may be that more and more the terrestrial manifestations of the spiritual Church will be found outside the framework of mainstream churches, as the latter following the inevitable law of old age and senility will end up like their pagan predecessors in the last days of the Roman Empire, i.e. empty shells mechanically repeating rituals devoid of Spirit. When the official churches will reach that stage, they will definitely belong to the Antichrist. In this age of spiritual and psychological confusion the discriminating and doubting attitude of Thomas will be all the more necessary to separate the genuine from the false. And that is why the Gospel of Thomas was discovered in 1945, to start its mission of rescuing the souls of the latter days.

THE BUDDHIST MONK AND THE LAME MAN

The Buddhist monk is a wandering man travelling the country roads of Europe and the lame man is a vagrant who has met the monk, and he has followed him since that encounter. The Buddhist monk speaks little while the lame man talks a lot. One is focussed and the other is dispersed and distracted.

The Buddhist monk and the lame man are eating in a café restaurant in Vannes, Brittany. The lame man says: "You know... I haven't told you what kind of man I am... I mean, it's bad enough to be lame but I've got that secret as well. I've suffered as a kid, both from lameness and from... the other stuff. Look! I'm gay! I'm homosexual and I love shagging men." The Buddhist monk replies: "Both heterosexual and homosexual people are in a state of suffering. What are we? We are like the leaves of the tree sprouting in the spring, blossoming in the summer, and falling and dying in the autumn before recycled into new life during the winter awaiting rebirth. The cycle of endless rebirth caused by suffering."

The wandering monk is seriously concerned as he's planning to murder the head of the French Atomic Research Society. The monk knows intuitively and by other means that Mister Dubois is suffering from a delusion of grandeur that is threatening Europe, as he has the means to detonate an atom bomb on Russia, which he reckons is controlled by evil cosmic forces. The monk doesn't hate Dubois. He pities the scientist administrator. He prays for the conversion

of Dubois's soul, but the psychosis is too deep to allow free rein to the deranged man. Dubois must be killed for the sake of the happiness of all sentient beings in Russia and Europe, and for preventing further bad karma from eating Dubois's soul. The wandering monk plans to kill Dubois in his second home in Nantes the City of the Dukes of Brittany, where he will be attending a conference on nuclear energy.

The lame man is not a gay person. He's only lying to get more compassion from the monk. He's lonely and has been so for too long. He is afraid the wandering monk might go his separate way. So the vagrant jumped onto the idea of confessing his made up homosexuality to the Buddhist monk so that the latter would be more compassionate towards his suffering. What the tramp doesn't know is that the holy man would have the same amount of compassion towards him whether or not he was gay and regardless of his lying for "all sentient beings are in a state of suffering."

The wandering monk is continuing his meditation on murdering with compassion the psychotic scientist, and the lame man is assessing the pros and cons of confessing to the monk that he was lying when he claimed to be gay. The two are lost in their thoughts when one hears a screamed warning outside on the street. A lorry is rushing to the café restaurant and crashes into it, killing both the monk and the lame man in one go.

So the two persons are dead, amidst the debris of broken glass, broken wood, broken plastic and twisted metal. The monk is given a funeral in the nearest monastery of his Buddhist order. The religious community has also decided to look after the dead body of the tramp, and he is also given a Buddhist funerary service. The followers of Lord Buddha reckon it must have been auspicious for the homeless man to have passed away with the monk. Both of them must have had karmic connections between them. As to the psychotic head of the French Atomic Research Society, the report of his subsequent life story is not included in this recounting.

THE END OF CLONING

It was nearing midnight and the Prime Minister was sitting alone in his office reading a long memo that was slipping through his brain without leaving the slightest trace of meaning. We will not go into the details of the memo but

suffice to say that it was recommending prohibiting public access to a cloning facility for the sake of humanity's integrity. And the official text was strolling in the politician's brain's pathways without any footprint of significance left, as the Prime Minister was himself a clone. We ought to say there was no democratic meaning left. Indeed he was one of the elite, the improved humanity that was going to be duplicating itself, as sexual reproduction was too hazardous and the best need to maintain themselves as such because they are the best (i.e., they are the ones entitled to lead humanity to its pinnacle: cosmic dominion). Therefore cloning would have to remain an neo-aristocratic prerogative.

The cloned elite could not afford the inferior elements of the masses to duplicate themselves as the quality would then drown into the lowest cloned denominator and extinction would as a result become inevitable. A similar process took place in Egypt during the long reign of pharaohs. First mummification and immortality were reserved for Pharaoh, the nobility and the priests. But later everyone who could afford it got mummified to enjoy their democratized right to the afterlife, and the masses' access to mummification killed the original significance of posthumous magic initially intended for the upper circles of Egypt, thus propelling the nation of pyramids into unredeemable decadence.

The earthly situation was presently critical. Under American domination, the United Nations Empire had prevented major warfare but was eaten from the inside by overpopulation, AIDS, local outbreak of civil disturbances and the now unavoidable exhaustion of planetary resources. Culture has degenerated to such an extent that the likes of Russell Brand and Jonathan Ross were now the norm and decency—or what was understood of the noun—was an anomaly. The masses did not want education but entertainment. The legalization of cloning and the profits it generated for the companies taking advantage of the new opportunities were threatening the silent revolution that occurred when the best were first cloned. The new paradigm had reinstated the principle of aristocracy (i.e., the rule of the best for the betterment of all). And what were the means to attain the goal? The aim in this case being identifying itself with the way: it was the conquest of the galaxy.

The Prime Minister thought: "We have no choice. We humans are the pinnacle of creation. But especially it's us Americans who are the best of what mankind has produced so far. We have succeeded where all the others have failed, e.g. the Romans, the Chinese, the Russians, the French, the Moslem and the English, although the English came the closest to success. Hence the best must duplicate themselves so that the American Rule dominates the stars. As to the rest of humans, parts of it will be selected for the provision of new genes when it is seen it can contribute to such an aim, as we need the supply of sound biological specimens of male and female gender to here and there renew the genetic pool of the American elite. The non-selected ones will serve."

While musing, lost in the contemplation of his thoughts, the Prime Minister did not hear his wife coming close to him.

She said: "Darling?"

He answered: "Yes my dear."

She explained: "I need a kiss."

He consented: "So let me satisfy your request."

And while his tongue penetrated her mouth, her tongue with agility left the poison pill to be transferred to his mouth. The stratagem worked and the Prime Minister knew something was wrong.

He yelled: "What's happening? I have difficulties breathing. My heart is accelerating its beat and my perspiration has gone out of control. You malicious bitch, you have poisoned me!"

The wife—her name was Pasadena—replied: "You are the evil one. Who are you to decide who's best and who's not? You are the embodiment of centuries of male arrogance. I had a visit from Sophia last night. She illuminated my heart and made me understand how your desire for space dominion would extend the Newtonian and Baconian disease to the stars. Sophia told me you cannot be allowed to live for the cosmos' sake."

"Aaarrggghhh..." was the last utterance of the Prime Minister. He was now dead. Meanwhile, the cloned elite's consorts who were attuned to the alarm bell of Sophia had taken similar measures to stop the self-believing neo-aristocrats. An end was effectively put to the self-duplicating elite and the first lady assumed the reins of power facilitated by the anti-cloning conspiracy members. Pasadena announced to the world the End of Cloning and the Reign of the New Virgin. She used to be called Isis, Mary and Fatima.

Pasadena said: "We will go to the stars, but not as conquerors as we will go there as friends. We will endeavor to reform ourselves, heal ourselves and become whole again, united with ourselves and loving ourselves in others and others in ourselves. Shalom to all."

Thus a new paradigm was born...