

Layman Pascal's

ONLY THE ATHENIANS EXIST

An Evocation of Integral Doves and Hawks

*(this phrase is from an oracular pronouncement
in the film 300: Rise of an Empire)*

The ancient oracle foretold that the terrible Persian army would burn and trample Athens into the dirt. All those proud and beautifully hewn stone temples of early democracy, theater & philosophy would be torn down into smouldering ruins. And once it had fallen only the free people of Athens will remain. They would have only their creative intelligence, political solidarity and stout wooden ships to drive back the invading hordes from the East. But what does all this have to do with us?

We are also citizens of a Wisdom-city (athens). We too are proud of our advanced philosophy, our humanist empathy and our voluntary submission to social rituals of enhanced collective intelligence. Like the noble Athenians we share a patriotism for the deep spirit of cultural life and a powerful wish to preserve it from primitivism and pathology.

And we too have no stable city to rely upon.

Integralites, post-pluralists and metatheorists are a free people. We are networked but decentralized, homeless. A diaspora without a source. To be an "integralite" does not mean to have membership in an online forum. It does not require that we are readers of Ken Wilber or any other progressive visionary thinker. We do not necessarily subscribe to any particular institution or political agenda. In a certain sense none of these things exist. Whatever we are, we are more than those things, free from all that -- *only the integralites exist*.

But this obvious claim only looks at our cultural spirit from the outside. As if we wanted merely to classify it, to distinguish it from what it is not. There is still another meaning of the oracle's evocative phrase. She offers us a more challenging implication. She incites us to a vision what it might feel like within the potency of the utterance itself...

Only the Athenians exist!

To say "only the Athenians exist" is a wager, a promise, a battle-cry. It seduces us into a tremendous valuation and waves a glorious flag of brilliant national colors. A lofty spirit is

hinted and some dangerous extremes as well. Those who are NOT Athenians -- not *the wisdom-people* -- do not exist! They will not be tolerated to exist if they jeopardize us. No one will be allowed to minimize or extinguish the beautiful dream of a more sensible, more sensitive, more sapient, deep and daring stage of cultural life.

Do we all know something of this feeling? I certainly do. My grandparents and great grandparents (and more) risked their lives in battle to protect the rising power of modern states against the deranged military mobilization of their simpler and more sickened international rivals. These brave ancestors, like the Athenians, were willing to kill or die in service to the triumphant survival of the highest value-system with which they could collectively and emotionally connect.

And that was mere modernism!

How much more important should be the enforcement and spreading security of pluralist and post-pluralistic society! But let us be honest... would we kill or die for these new cosmopolitan attitudes?

This is a hard question. Our ethical sentiments recoil from difficult choices. Let us pray that we are never forced to choose who lives and dies. Yet in war and crisis this is precisely the choice which must be faced.

The Great Kingdoms, past and present, fought righteously to overcome tribal barbarism within and dangerous national rivals without. Just as police today are willing to gamble their lives to suppress criminal gangs and terrorists. Have we integralites any comparable strength and recklessness?

It seems we can hardly take a step here without treading on a landmine of paradox. For to be willing to defend "integrative culture" means we must defend precisely its embrace of other value systems. We must not experience those as intolerable and incomprehensible rivals. But to defend that exquisite embrace -- of many values and perspectives -- means we absolutely need to protect and strengthen integral culture even in sometimes dangerous face-offs with its rivals.

We have thus far been so small and obscure and friendly as to pose no apparent rivalry to any but the flatland postmodernists. However, it will not be infinitely smooth sailing if we continue to grow in our repatterning of the world. Are there storms ahead in the distance?

An INTEGRAL DOVE is guided by an expansive ethical embrace that may be nourished by states of extraordinary feeling and knowing which lay open the intimate connective tissues of the world and expose the luminous radiance and profound value of each being.

An INTEGRAL HAWK understands that the higher ethical, social and spiritual realities of

this world can only exist and mature if, at times, (and as few as possible!) we are willing to be aggressive, destructive, partial and even dangerous in their defense.

A **dove** is a tolerator who is tempted to tolerate even the intolerable -- in order to increase the realm of non-violent tolerance.

A **hawk** is a tolerator who is tempted by intolerance in the face of the intolerant -- in order to increase the realm of non-violent tolerance.

Even with our technologies of grace, transpersonal rapture, loving intention and cunning adaptiveness we are unlikely to see the emergence of planetary wisdom-civilization without difficult dynamics of social upheaval upon our overpopulated Earth... currently groaning under massive population, starving in droves, dying, depressed, reactionary, murderous, toxic, and spilling over every border to exploit whatever it finds. Individuals we legitimately say, "I want no part of all that. Even to consider it lies in the opposite direction of my private attempt at deeper communion, autonomy & wisdom".

But it is not always so simple. How many times has a more benevolent future failed to manifest because the highest types refused to engage in the ugly fray? And wow many sacred sects and meditative monastics been swept up foolishly, uselessly, regretfully, in epochal events because they were not ready -- not prepared, not clear about what cause they should fight for if the tectonic plates of society began to rupture and explode beneath our feet?

I pray that in any apocalyptic times that all the friends of higher culture are ready to be more grounded, smarter, more judicious, more sane, more graceful, more efficient and healthier in our pathway to nonviolence than have been most of those admirable souls who preceded us.

And you?

Do you say we really have integrative or advanced or post-pluralistic consciousness if we would not save a fellow integralite at the expense of a non-integralite? If we would not defend the former, even dangerously, from the threat of the latter?

What a dangerous question! Take a real moment to consider it. We must not be naively for or against such things. Our sentiments, habits and hopes threaten us with imbalanced comprehension at the wild edges of possibility.

An **integral dove** supposes that to preserve the compassionate embrace of spiritual-developmental attitudes and altitudes means demonstrating this embrace by more deeply serving each and every being -- regardless of judgement.

An **integral hawk** supposes that to preserve the compassionate embrace of spiritual-developmental attitudes and altitudes means first preserving and privileging the very people who are inclined to such a deeper and wider embrace. Or: save the "Athenians" first.

Which of these ways leads most directly to an accelerated civilization of non-violence, growth, empowerment and well-being? Can we do without one of these paths?

And what would it really mean to be an integral soldier? Would you be willing to die or killing to defend Amber from Red, or Orange from Amber? Is that kind of "defense of the higher" something which could motivate you to sacrificial commitment?

Can you imagine defending a "teal city" from a "first tier" assault?

Perhaps you cannot even imagine what such attacks would look like -- let alone how they might require death! And if so, I hope that is a mark of your virtue and not your lack of serious imagination.

It seems rash, devilish and dangerous to remind people that their "higher vision" and "expanded consciousness & conscience" may require sacrificial deeds and aggressive allegiances in order to demand its survival in a chaotic world.

But at the same time, surely a value-system gives us a sort of family. Would we not do nearly anything to protect our real family against other agencies? Then again... the family consists also of those "not yet members", children, those who must be saved because they might someday grow and evolve into full members of the clan.

I mean to put before us a treacherous question. A spirit we have not yet needed but which may one day appear suddenly. A cry of destiny and allegiance that may or may not be necessary if integrative well-being is every to flourish on this planet -- beyond merely being the spiritual, meditative and philosophical pipedream of a privileged few.

Are we to be "new buddhists" colonizing a "savage Tibet" to build a "peaceful kingdom of beauty and internal developmental". How many unsavory and treacherous crusades were needed to accomplish that task in even a few regions of the remote Himalayas... let alone the whole world!

So let us not forget the mad force, alongside all graceful, subtle and transpersonal means, which exists wherever the world's patterns and politics and policies are being reconfigured.

What a mad risk! But let us have the courage not spare ourselves from the paradoxical thorns of this ultra-questionable sentiment:

Only the integralites exist.