

“ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL”

The Meanings of “Pretend”, and Why They Matter

<http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/head-vatican-court-describes-vatileaks-most-grave-crimes#comment-356190>

Let me say first why meanings matter. They matter because they tell us about the faith we inherit and how we own (or disown) it. What many of us own is fideism, not faith, both of which are “pretend”.

In interviewing the renowned and popular heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz, Krista Tippett* (“On Being”, NPR) wanted to know his take on some lines from William Blake:

“To see the world in a grain of sand

And a heaven in a wildflower,

Hold infinity in the palm of our hand.

And eternity in an hour.”

In responding Dr. Oz observed, “What he is really talking about is this concept of complementarity... (that) meant you could have two mutually exclusive answers to a problem and they could both be right”. And, how does this apply to two mutually exclusive meanings of pretend, one that is real and enduring, and one that is unreal and cannot endure?

Dr. Oz explains, “mutually exclusive possibilities challenge[s] your basic underlying understanding of what reality really is. And when you move past a physical understanding of reality and start to acknowledge a more spiritual foundation for what reality truly is, you begin to realize that we live in a world where 99 percent is pretend and 1 percent is real”.

So, how do *physical understanding* and *spiritual foundation* relate to the meaning of “pretend”? In place of “spiritual foundation”, we can substitute the word “faith”, the certitude of conscious belief and experienced memory that ground us in relationships. The “1 percent” reality, that we are individually, holds hidden the “99 percent” of personal and collective consciousness handed down in the “primary scripture” of DNA coding programmed and reprinted in our every body-cell, for our lifetime.

The root word of pretend is “tend”, and “pre” refers to all previous “tending” of evolving life which we inherit from [symbiotic ancestry](#). Then there is the meaning of pretend as “make-believe”, that is artifice, which may or may not have anything to do with reality, with the inherited certitude of deep intuitional faith. Much of the faith we own roots in medieval pretenses of make-believe, i.e., the enforced belief of institutional self-interest that presumes on the reality of the inherited grounds of faith in real life.

The word “tend” is really a family of words: attend, co-depend, contend, depend, extend; intend, pretend: we tend to our personal affairs; shepherds attend their flocks; as family, we co-depend on each other; we all depend on nature (mutually dependent - nature takes care of us if we take care of nature); we contend when others over-extend; we extend our hand in friendship; we intend sensitivity and fair-mindedness; by natural proclivities we pretend toward what is in self-interest and in common interest. Honest pre-tending is by way of moral imagination, by accountability to truth

Fideism is make-believe faith. All “pretend”, reality and fiction are exposed to and continue to be held accountable by communication ongoing between faith and reason. In our time the background-pretend of faith, religion and culture is being challenged, based on the common crises we’ve come to, religiously and culturally; “make-believe” is being sorted out from authentic faith-grounding.

***Krista Tippet, EINSTEIN’S GOD, pp. 91, 92, © Krista Tippet, 2010, Penguin Group (USA), Inc, 375 Hudson St., New York 10014, U.S.A.**

MORAL IMAGINATION and the Faculty of “Pretend”

In my childhood, I listened on the radio every Saturday morning (in the 1930s and 40s) to a program produced by the public station at Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, Iowa, “Let’s Pretend”. The program featured dramatic presentations of fairy tales, myths and fables; I recall even yet how stirred my imagination was and how I enjoyed them.

Pretend is a faculty of moral imagination that educates and challenges self-reflection to anticipate how to judge rightly; it is an exercise of judging values and forming conscience. Pretending moral behavior prepares for adult moral living in real life. Acting on informed consciousness is what adults do, what maturity expects and requires.

Time and place inform people in specifics of conscionable behavior. People of indigenous populations are cultured to know life specific to different cultural time and place, and how to live sustainably in culturally evolved preconditions of time and place. Make-believe in circumstances of time and place educates to the evolved wisdom of specific life. Invasion by non-indigenous cultures, as happened globally with colonialism, created shock waves to people and nature that are yet having destructive repercussions. The long local pretending of evolutionary experience is trashed by outside intrusions of imported cultures and values. In this overreach Christian cultures still act with unconscionable and violent disregard for people and ecologies of dominated colonies.

Except some sensitivity for bioregions is restored, global conditions for sustainable life are likely to be irretrievably trashed, leading to collapses of cultures and ecologies and the ultimate dying out of life as we know it, including human. Religions are fatally flawed by their continued ignorance and denial of complicity in this tragic wasting. The writing of nature’s [Primary Scripture](#) stands in stark contrast to the artifices of dominion culture and overreach. The conditions of nature demand awakening respect for nature’s limitations if human presence is to survive.

The Collapse of the Imperial Colossus

The picture is becoming all too clear; imperially centralized religion is a collapsing colossus. Gravity is the shared truth of faith/reason; truth is the shared gravity of faith/reason. Neither gravity nor truth is centrally owned, rather, both are distributive and owned in common. Past fixities cannot forever impose on the present; neither can faith or reason, or “gravity”, tolerate outdated, fictional impositions, distortions of open truth, in evolving divine/ human consciousness and conscience.

The great colossus of centrally institutionalized Roman Catholicism presently has one foot planted in absolutist fictions of the past (Vatican I) and the other foot tentatively put forward in the future (Vatican II); it is right to preserve and advance truths of cultural history, but not to pretend that perceptions of a past politic and dogma are adequate for every time and every place.

The global people of the present are future-directed by evolutionary compulsion; they insist on putting both feet forward into the future, not to be bodily cleaved, leaving half the body intractably entrenched in the past while the other half moves on into the future. Truth demands unity-preservation of soul/ body, wholly and holistically. The cleaved Colossus is coming apart in the middle. Hierarchy is holding back. The schism is happening; cult seeks to trump culture to the peril of culture, people and nature.

The People will move on; they will not be entombed in remnant structures immovably fixed in the past and relegated to the past. The cultic remnants of history become museum curiosities, sorry reminders for future generations. Pretend, fiction and truth, must move forward together, each purified and accountable to the mutual truth-test of faith and reason.

All is well that ends well; “truth is beauty, beauty is truth; that is all there is and all ye need to know.”
[“Ode on a Grecian Urn”, Thomas Keats]

<http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/schools-entrust-religious-mission-lay-boards-trustees>