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Rene Guenon

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Rene Guenon : East and West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised East and West:

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Modern West traditional East: insurmountable barriers?By A Customer Nowadays, when the East is mentioned, and more specifically, the traditional East, immediately rise almost insurmountable barriers, such the differences of mental physiognomy that characterizes the modern westerners and the orientals. Few know that, only six centuries ago, the Occident had much more points in common that divergences, in relation to the East, because both had ther respective civilizations developed from similar priciples, that is, both

respected the natural hierarchy that orders everything, from the highest, that is, the spiritual, until the lowest, the material. Ren Guon, in this exemplary book, written with extreme clarity, provides us a "radiography" of the modern Occident and its roots, as no other contemporary author had ever accomplished. In the first part of the work, Guon, shows the modern western civilization as truly monstrous, because it is the only one that grew exclusively in a material sense; he brings to the light the philosophical deformations, from Renaissance, that constituted the roots of this type of "development and progress", words so in fashion and at the same time, so insignificant. The author approaches the limits of the modern science and the most spread prejudices against the East. In the second part are examined the frustrated attempts of approach between the East and the West, as well as how such an objective could be reached through an agreement on certain principles. Guon approaches the role that the constitution of an elite would carry out in such agreement. The reading of this work provides us with a vision of the whole roots of the modern world, with a span and a depth rarely found in any other author in any time, turning possible a rigorous evaluation of what represents, in catastrophic terms, the growing global hegemony of the modern western mentality par excellence, that is, the North American mentality. The Institute Ren Guon of Traditional Studies ([...]) since many years gives a basic course "The Oriental Sight" entirely based in Ren Guon's masterly work, whose entrance door can be "East and West". It is also recommended, as a complementation to this reading, "The Crisis of the Modern World", of the same author. Luiz Pontual IRGET.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not the best topic for Guon

By AveryIn the 1920s when Guon composed this long treatise, the question of the duality of "East and West" was a common one in European intellectual circles. The divisions may be harder to see today, but at that time, the West -- Western Europe and America -- had discovered a number of "civilizations" in the East, and Orientalists had recognized the existence of complex societies in these civilizations, but with the exception of Japan, none of them rose to the challenge of European imperialism. The question as posed at the time was, why did Eastern civilizations form in a different way than the nation-states of Western and Eastern Europe? For a member of the Perennial School this question has an easy answer, and indeed Guon probably chose to discuss this topic because it was easy for him to answer. As an overview of metaphysics it is not terrible so I will not give it a low rating. However, this turns out to be not the best topic for Guon to demonstrate his expertise. Being tied up with the West's imperial ambitions, "East and West" necessarily includes some geopolitics, and the Metaphysician demonstrates a very poor grasp of this topic, including the infamous "puppets" passage (72-76) which Schuon harshly criticized in Rene Guon: Some Observations. Here the terms "Eastern" and "Western" are employed for a permanent symbolism, but Guon does not explain this anywhere, which leaves his image of the symbolic "true Easterner" open to being slandered as a gross generalization or even a prejudice. He does not seem to realize he is employing symbolic terms, and indeed he calumnies real Easterners (the Japanese are slandered as half-Malay and not truly "yellow", whatever that means). It is possible that when Guon wrote this essay he was not aware he was employing symbolic language, a topic he grasps to a remarkable extent in the far better book *The King of the World*. Devoted readers may find some enlightening perspectives in this treatise, but I strongly recommend that most readers look to *The Reign of Quantity* the Signs of the Times as a far, far better overview of his proposed opposition between traditional metaphysics and modernity.5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. - O que afasta e o que aproxima o Oriente e o Ocidente ?

By A CustomerHoje em dia, quando se fala de Oriente, e mais especificamente, do Oriente tradicional, imediatamente se erguem barreiras quase intransponíveis, tal a diferença da 'fisionomia mental' que caracteriza os ocidentais modernos e os orientais. Poucos sabem que, há apenas seis séculos, o Ocidente tinha muito mais pontos em comum que divergentes, em relação ao Oriente, pois um e outro tinham suas respectivas civilizações desenvolvidas a partir de princípios semelhantes, isto é, ambos respeitavam a hierarquia natural que ordena todas as coisas, desde o mais elevado, isto é, o espiritual, até o mais baixo, o material. Ren Guon, neste livro magistral, escrito com extrema clareza, nos proporciona uma 'radiografia' do Ocidente moderno e suas raízes, como jamais qualquer outro autor contemporâneo havia realizado. Na primeira parte da obra, Guon, mostra a civilização ocidental moderna como verdadeiramente monstruosa, pois a única que se desenvolveu num sentido exclusivamente material; traz luz às deformações filosóficas, desde a Renascença, que constituíram as raízes deste tipo de "desenvolvimento e progresso", termos to em moda e ao mesmo tempo, to insignificantes. O autor aborda os limites da ciência moderna e os preconceitos mais difundidos contra o Oriente. Na segunda parte, são examinadas as tentativas frustradas de aproximação entre o Oriente e Ocidente assim como em que termos tal objetivo poderia ser alcançado, isto é, através de um acordo sobre determinados princípios. Guon aborda o papel que a constituição de uma elite desempenharia em tal hipótese. A leitura desta obra nos proporciona uma visão de conjunto das raízes do mundo moderno cuja envergadura e profundidade raramente se encontra em qualquer outro autor em qualquer tempo, tornando possível uma avaliação rigorosa do que representa, em termos catastróficos, a crescente hegemonia mundial da mentalidade ocidental moderna por excelência, isto é, a mentalidade norte-americana. O Instituto Ren Guon de Estudos Tradicionais ([...]) há vários anos vem lecionando seu curso básico "Olhar Oriental" inteiramente fundamentado na obra magistral de Ren Guon, cuja porta de entrada pode muito bem ser "Oriente e Ocidente". recomendada também, como complementação a esta leitura, "A Crise do Mundo Moderno", do mesmo autor. Luiz Pontual IRGET.

East and West, first published in 1924, was the fourth of a series of books that cleared the ground for Gunon's later writings. His first book, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines* (1921), was an exposition of metaphysics as transmitted in the Hindu tradition, and served to establish his specific use of important terms such as 'esoterism', 'tradition', and 'orthodoxy'. He next set about writing two extensive volumes critiquing what he called 'pseudo-esoteric' groups. The first of these, *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion* (1921), is an exposé of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society; the second, *The Spiritist Fallacy* (1923), examines the current of nineteenth-century spiritism that set the stage for many occult movements that appeared toward the end of that century. Gunon's application of traditional metaphysics to the special case of pseudo-esoteric groups was then broadened in the present book to the general question of East and West as conservators and transmitters of traditional wisdom in the modern age. The titles of its two parts, 'Western Illusions' and 'How the Differences Might be Bridged', describe perfectly the book's intention. Later books, especially *The Crisis of the Modern World* and its magisterial sequel, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, further extended Gunon's penetrating critique of the modern world.

About the Author Ren Gunon (1886-1951) was one of the great luminaries of the twentieth century, whose critique of the modern world has stood fast against the shifting sands of intellectual fashion. His extensive writings, now finally available in English, are a providential treasure-trove for the modern seeker: while pointing ceaselessly to the perennial wisdom found in past cultures ranging from the Shamanistic to the Indian and Chinese, the Hellenic and Judaic, the Christian and Islamic, and including also Alchemy, Hermeticism, and other esoteric currents, they direct the reader also to the deepest level of religious praxis, emphasizing the need for affiliation with a revealed tradition even while acknowledging the final identity of all spiritual paths as they approach the summit of spiritual realization. Ren Gunon, of whom Jacob Needleman wrote in *The Sword of Gnosis* that no other modern writer has so effectively communicated the absoluteness of truth, is gradually being recognized by deeper thinkers as one of the few who have truly penetrated the seductive veil of the modern age. As an expositor of pure metaphysics and its application to the science of symbols, Gunon is without peer; and his extraordinarily prescient critique of the modern world is attracting more and more attention among cultural commentators. Little known in the English-speaking world till the recent appearance of his *Collected Works* in translation, Gunon has nevertheless long been recognized as a veritable criterion of truth by a vanguard of remarkable writers who evince that rare combination: intellectuality and spirituality. After a lonely childhood, often interrupted by ill health, Gunon navigated the seductive half-truths of occultism toward a deeper, unified vision offering a way out from the confusion and fragmentation of our time. Regarded by leading scholars as the first truly authentic interpreter of many Eastern doctrines in the West, Gunon never tired, in face of the seemingly inexorable process of dissolution in the twentieth century, of pointing to the transcendent unity of all religious faiths and the abiding Truth that contains them all.