

(131) WE IMITATE EACH OTHER

Introduction. This lesson gives the background of all the other ones. It tries, in a very short and comprehensive manner, to show the thinking which lies behind the other lessons. We include this “theoretical” lesson, because we hope and are even quite sure that an insight in this background makes it more easy and fruitful to use the other lesson in the practice of life.

1. We don't have being out of ourselves. We are not resting in ourselves, getting that possibility from inside of us. We get it, from our mother and our father and their ancestors. There is no way of creating ourselves in any manner. We are created, literally out of the nothing into being. That goes on, the whole of our life. Time and again we hope and we expect that we have being, that we are, and that we ourselves earned it for ourselves. And time and again we have to come to the conclusion that it is not true. That is only looked like that we got it ourselves. If we don't get it, receive it. We have nothing.

2. We don't have being out of ourselves. And we long for being. We desperately hope to have being, to BE. We don't have it and we expect that it must be somewhere. Otherwise we could not know about it. It simply must be somewhere. It must be in people we like, whom we honor, who seems to be BE more than we do. In people who seem to have more what belongs to really being than we have. More attractiveness, more courage, more happiness, more money, more power, a thing we desire, more of what we are missing...

3. So we imitate each other, in order to have, and, more fundamentally, in order to be. But generally it is not really imitation at all. Imitate we do consciously. Of course we often imitate because we hope to become, in some manner, better, if we succeed in the imitating. There are in any case good forms of imitating, the learning. But it is clear that we don't imitate from the very beginning. The new born baby, even the child still in the womb of the mother, learns from the mother, doing what it experiences that the mother is doing, is showing. So this whole “process”, this happening that we do what the other is doing and especially these others who are important for us, goes unconsciously.

4. We are, so we do call it, in the mimesis with each other. We desire what the other is desiring, because this very desiring shows us that it is important to have it. We desire what the other has, we desire what the other desires. And because of this desiring, everything which is scarce (and just because we desire them, they become scarce) becomes more precious. And again, because things, “things” become more precious, they are again more hotly desired. We “build up” against each other. We are constantly rivalling with each other. The end is that we come into a struggle, into havoc, into war.

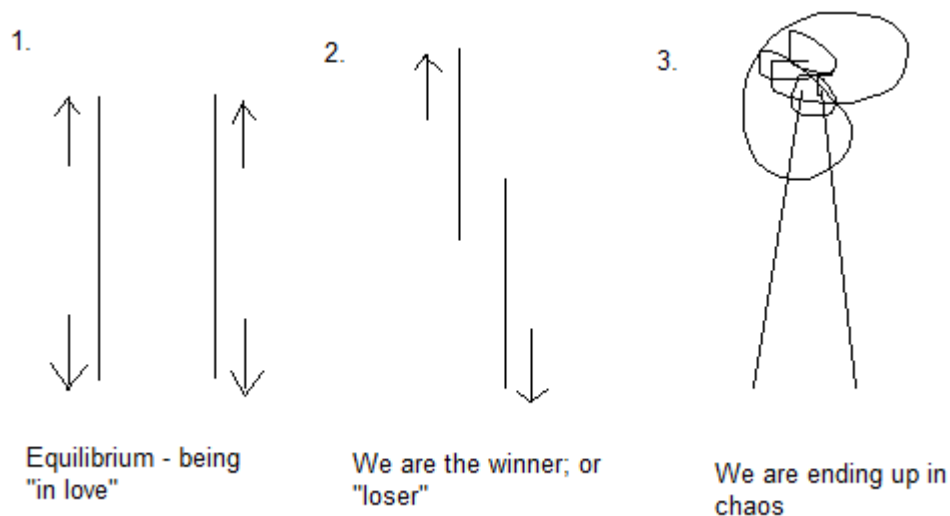
5. Maybe we make the remark, the criticism, that that certainly is not always true. As long as we are really learning, letting those who teach us their own place, we do something which is very important and it is not rivalling. This is true, but, in the same time, alas, this type of learning is disappearing. When somebody smiles, “automatically”, without thinking, without being aware of it, I smile back! I am in the mimesis, that, of course, too is true, and it certainly is not in order to have. It is not about desiring. There are in fact true “drives” in us,

which work against each other and which make life very often very complicated for us. We wish to have, to win over the other(s), AND, in the same time, we are afraid of the other, of the struggle. We want peace. Somebody smiles, and we smile back. Somebody stretches her/his hand out, wishes to kiss us and we do, without thinking, the same. It belongs very deeply to culture that we want peace. Cultural knowledge is, that war brings unhappiness.

6. Consequently we are constantly torn apart. We have to have being, otherwise we cannot live. In our culture we only can get it, that is our pre-conscious conviction, from each other, which means “war”, and we deeply wish peace. In fact we constantly catch ourselves, that we are already desiring, fighting again, although we long so deeply for peace. Our desiring constantly is stronger than our longing. The apostle Paul wrote moving sentences about just this (Rom.7, 14-25).

7. When we are desiring, we desire what the other is desiring and, because we are in the mimesis with this other, she/he desires again more. So we are constantly rivalling with each other. Our life is full of stress. Full of fascination, because we are fascinated by what we desire and by the person who possesses what we desire. And full of stress, because of the constant striving.

It might be, that we are constantly rivalling with somebody, fighting, now and then winning, now and then losing. In a nice, modern love-relation – in that situation there is a beautiful equilibrium between winning and losing and life remains exciting and interesting. But we do not always achieve. Very often we either lose or win. To put this in a diagram:

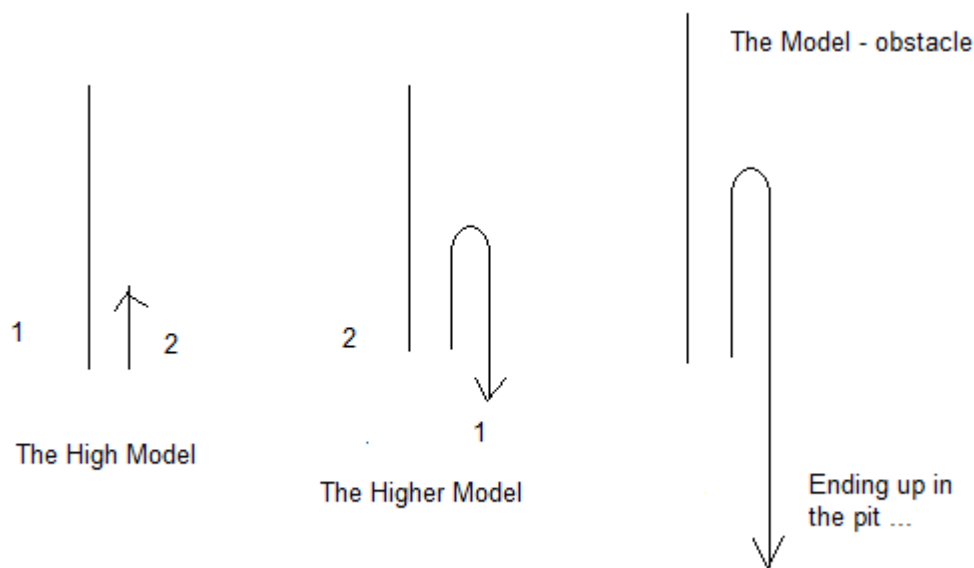


8. When we win, we come, time and again, to the conclusion, that the winning, after the often endless struggle, is not fun. Having won we come again and again to the conclusion, that in fact we sought something else than that what we acquired by winning... WE SOUGHT, IN FACT, BEING. And that, we did not get. We have at last this partner, or got rid of him/her. We got this job. This celebrity, this position. But it is not what we expected, because we were after something else, although we don't know, what exactly. Winning is in the end always frustrating. And thus we fight on, eventually with a little bit more desperation. Or we are always on the losing end and we become depressed, hopeless. Life is an endless

struggle, just for and about nothing. In the end, obviously, it is the same conclusion as the conclusion of the winner, but with a very deep sense of frustration, of hopelessness.

9. There still is another possibility. Very deep down we know that the issue of or striving is something very big. In a deep sense we wish to be god. We wish to be untouchable and eternal, our own god. But in order to win such a big prize, such an in fact unreachable prize, we have, really to earn it, to overcome impossible obstacles. We have to win over the invincible, in a sense over eternity, in order to get ourselves eternity. So we rival with an obstacle over which we impossible can win. An ideal. Somebody so high and distant, that we never can reach her/him, a god or goddess in her/his own right. The desire to better the whole world. Anyway, something impossible.

The dreadful consequence is, that we destroy ourselves utterly. Just because the goal is impossibly high, the obstacle has to be impossibly high as well. It is our model to win over, in order to be god. But in order to become god, we have to win over an obstacle, over which only a god can win... So any time we hope to win, we make the obstacle bigger, because winning means that the fight, the struggle was useless. To put this again in a diagram:



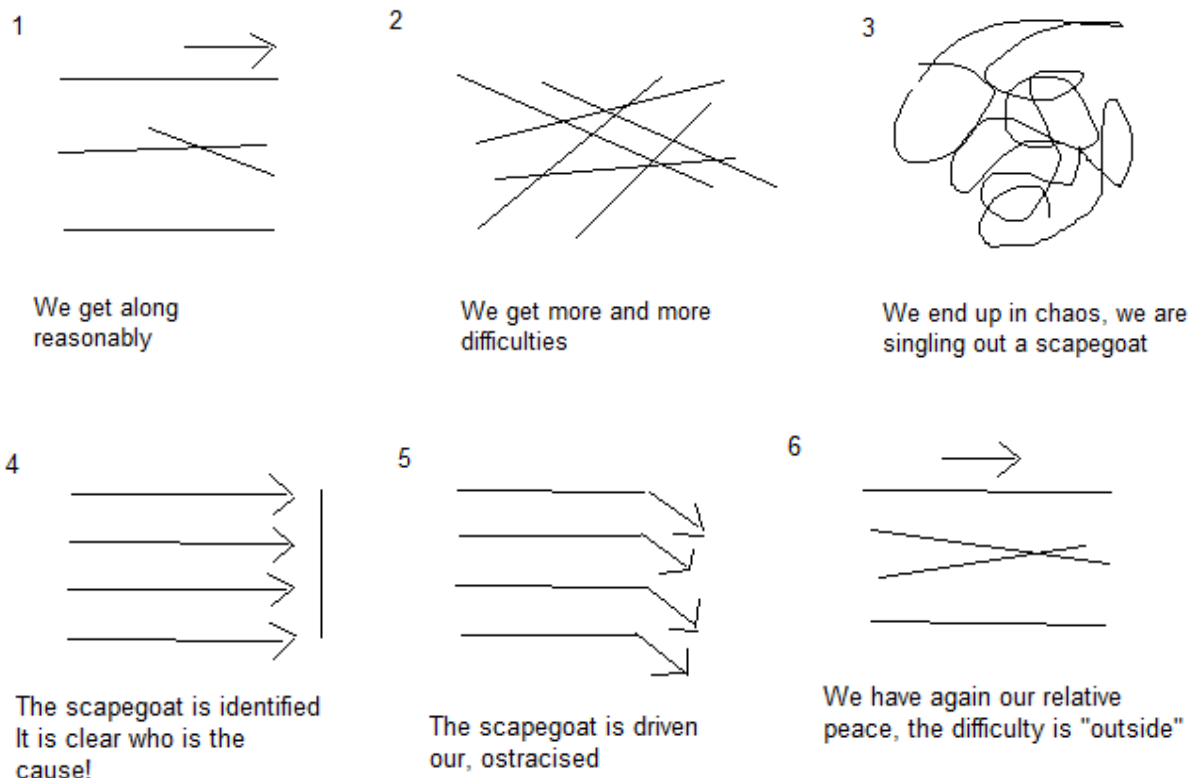
The end result, necessarily, is self-defeat, despondency, depression, madness, suicide, morally or totally.

10. Thus we are always fighting. Fighting with ourselves, against our desiring and eternal rivalling, a fight we constantly lose, because the mimesis, the rivalling always is there before we are conscious of it. And we are always rivalling with each other, to have the best chances, to have the fullness of life, life, being itself.

That again means that our life, in ourselves and amongst each other is full of violence. Often we are not really aware of it, although in Northern Ireland we mostly are! We can fight

like mad with each other, with our desires, words, meannesses, violence and nevertheless have a semblance of peace.

The reason that we can have that amongst of the havoc, the means with which we achieve that amidst of the constant upheaval, is as old as culture itself. It is scapegoating. Time and again we get rid of our responsibility, rid of our difficulties by agreeing, amidst of all the disagreeing, who is the cause of the havoc, of everything. We agree who we have to punish for the bad results of our own doing. Being madly disagreeing we still always can agree about our scapegoat. Again, in a diagram:



11. Those who we choose to be our scapegoat, to carry in fact our responsibility, our guilt for the situation we are in, are always weak ones, somebody, people who cannot defend her/himself/themselves. Here again is an origin of our anxieties and our eternal fighting and struggling. We wish to prevent at all costs to become weak and thus, in that manner, possibly the scapegoat. Seeking peace, looking weak, means to be in for being the scapegoat. And thus we are again torn: We wish to seek peace. And we hate it to be a scapegoat...

12. Was life always like this? No, it was not. Once culture did the job. Culture gave being. Out of scapegoatings-processes culture originally found peace, sacrificial peace, peace built on institutionalised scapegoats. To maintain that peace, there came several regulations into existence: Rites, which repeated the mechanisms, by which once peace came into existence, in which all were united against a ritual scapegoat. We still have many rites, small ones generally, which keep life going, but the overall rites, which gave peace to culture as a whole, have disappeared. Myths, stories about the origins of the culture of the group, in which the rites and the customs were explained, in which the members of the group found their identity as single persons and as a group. The history of our own country still is a rest

of that myth, but in Northern Ireland that myth(s), now in the plural, bring division and, again, strife. Nevertheless, we all still have our fragments of myth, our stories, personal ones and group-ones, in which we find our identity. Prohibitions, which prohibited the deeds which could endanger the unity of the group. In one manner or another they always were prohibitions of desires. The Ten Commandments are a good example. Of course there still are prohibitions, but mostly we consider them as prohibitions for others. They are not any longer valid for us ourselves. And there were structures, within which everybody found her/his own place.

In this manner culture gave being. This culture dwindled and dwindles away and we all do our utmost to accelerate this process by our constantly seeking another place than the place we in fact have.

13. We still have remnants of all this, which keep life going. And we have the original mechanism, which once made culture possible and which now destroys it and us: Mimesis and ***** The document stops here – no page 14 *****