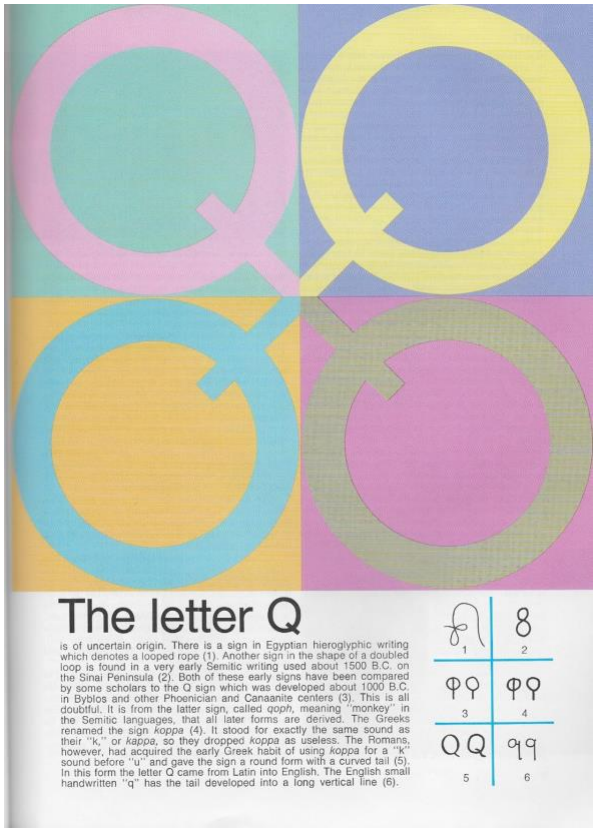
COMPASS

Oneness: Q and U

SEP 2, 2020 | PRAXIS CIRCLE

https://youtu.be/DS1YYtQ_LLY?list=TLGGlAzLOL1FP0syMzAzMjAyMg



As the clip demonstrates, two can find common ground, if there's the will and sufficient time. We all have our insecurities. We need our friends. The young woman commenting on Jackson Pollock's painting at the video's end is spot on: These are confusing, dark times.

From a manly perspective – and we're talking specifically about two men in this post – some of our greatest heroes are alternate personalities. Boomer heroes include Clark Kent as Superman, Bruce Wayne as Batman, Don Diego Vega has Zorro, and John Reid as the Lone Ranger.

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On the stage of real life, each of us sports a public face to mask the real "me," a somehow separate consciousness who holds our true thoughts, hopes, and fears, mostly in secret. This was the basis of live stage from Greek through Shakespearean tragedy and comedy, and it remains a foundation of cinema and stage.

Why such dualism manifests as a fundamental element of human character remains a mystery. It offers us trouble and salvation, continuously.

The scene above is from the movie, *Play It Again Sam* (1972), where Woody Allen, then a new rising star, plays the main character, Allan Felix, who identifies strongly from start-to-finish with Humphrey Bogart. Central to the plot, Felix develops an imaginary personal relationship with Bogart and desperately wants to live out an exciting and meaningful life just like Bogie playing Rick Blaine in the 1942 American romantic classic, *Casablanca*.

Not to ruin the movie for you, but at the climax Felix realizes his spectacular fantasy down to Bogart's exact same famous lines.

While the movie does have a happy ending, we all know we can't be Humphrey Bogart or Ingrid Bergman in real life, now can we?

https://youtu.be/au5XE48PEeU?list=TLGGh_4M0og2rVYyMzAzMjAyMg

"Let's not be so certain," says Q.

Well, the reckoning-time is here: Q has insisted for weeks now that I provide a proper introduction to you, our Praxis Circle friends. He has been getting testy.

After finally agreeing to it soon after his last post, I asked him how exactly he wants to be introduced. His response?

He mailed me "The letter Q" card shown above without any explanation. Typical.

Don't worry if you can't read the fine print; it's not helpful.

The card traces the derivation of the letter Q from ancient Egypt into the Sinai Peninsula, then into Phoenicia, Canaan, Greece, Rome, and Latin Europe all the way to modern English, highlighting that Q meant "monkey" in certain ancient Semitic contexts. No surprises there. At best, the color scheme is weak, though the four Q's turned toward each other in the drawing do form an X, like Musketeer's swords in the air. "On guard!" "All for one and one for all!"

Finally, as a Source document, the card self-admits to being "doubtful." As always, leave it to Continental skepticism.

Nonetheless, I will offer a few mostly unapproved remarks on Q's behalf.

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As you probably know, Q is short for the German word *quelle*, which actually does mean Source.

Q is the name given to the mysterious ancient document hypothesized since the early 1800's to have existed in the First Century that contained some of the most important Jesus stories and quotations. Scholars see common elements from Mark in Matthew and Luke, but also other significant near-verbatim commonalities not originating in Mark. Importantly for the Q theory, many OT scholars believe the authors of Matthew and Luke had no possibility of access to the other's document; i.e., they had no way to "plagiarize" each other, even if they wanted to.

As a result, on the theory that Mark was written before Matthew, such a "Q document" must have existed to provide the common language not found in Mark to write Matthew and Luke. In sum, Q is that imagined document that tied the Synoptics together, a prior "ghost document" not yet found or known to be referenced elsewhere.

And yet, the Q I know claims his name is his abbreviation for Question or, more specifically, *quaestione disputatae de veritate*. He says there is no more deepness or mystery than that.

As in the days of "The Ox," Thomas Aquinas (1224 – 1274), that would mean "The Question concerning the truth." I will explain this phrase more fully when I return to Aquinas' method near the end of this post.

Whatever name explanation one can manufacture for Q won't get me totally off the "proper introduction" hook, however. More background is needed to explain Q himself and his mission before giving him the talking stick again, God Help Us.

Q feels his mission will be to offer commentary as we move through *A Journey* for the rest of the year and beyond. Most certainly, Q will make his worldview points in direct, straight, common sensical, and easily understandable ways, where and when I know I'll often fall short or stumble. I hope he won't offend anyone, and he promises to try to avoid doing this, while still being honest.

Back in the 1990's and early 2000's, I used a pen name, Peter P. Monroe, III (P the initial for Paul), to write a book named *Daddy X* that was intended to show how Grace operates in the lives of everyday people. It brought a wealth of stories together in biographical form. It's the long story of a father telling his children how he met their Mom and how, together, they brought them into the world.

Of course, using pen names was once a common literary device to hide identity or suggest fiction; today it's still used over the Internet as a literary device, but also as protection for cowardly attacks.

Sadly, this practice has made major contributions to the Cancel Culture rampant now that's tearing down our freedoms. It's important to recognize that this never could have been my intent because the actual author behind *Daddy X* was never in doubt (maybe he should have been! :), and the same will be true of Q here.

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Nonetheless, sometimes authors do develop voices completely separate from their own, and often these voices can morph into wholly distinct alter egos. About ten years ago my writing started moving from Peter's voice to a new one.

So, this is what Peter and I think is necessary here: Q needs his own name and needs to be set free. Some of his already existing writing will be published in his blog housed here at PC. As embarrassing as this is, I think Q's voice will prove to be ahead of the postmodern curve that's achieving maximum impact now, 10 to 20 years after entering alter ego mainstream pioneered by David Bowie (Ziggy Stardust), Prince (the Artist), Beyonce (Sasha Fierce), Lady Gaga (Joe Calderone), etc.

Today, lots of people commonly rename themselves and even take on totally new genders, races, and identities. Society thinks nothing of it, and many people and institutions promote it as postmodernist mission-central. Here is just one example.

Yes, when Peter several years ago first announced his name change to Q among close private circles only, there were those who noted a certain juvenile fascination with James Bond, suggesting an association with his mentor Q (Quartermaster in the R and D division of the British Secret Service). Subsequently, much heat was taken as Q was also perceived to be following in 007's footsteps through one of America's then new and now legendary dual personalities: Austin Powers and Dr. Evil.

(To me, while exciting, to be associated with Powers would be even more delusional than Woody Allen becoming Humphrey Bogart. Now, admittedly, Mr. P and Dr. E have quite a lot going on in many directions. Yes, it's very, very complicated.)

In any case, none of this speculation hits the mark, as I will briefly explain soon. The truth is I tried to stay out of it, Q's continued drift was embarrassing, and there was certainly little I could do. Such is life, a mixture of will, culture, grace, and raw fortune.

I can say what motivates Q is a much bigger story that centers on the modern fate of Western Civilization. Some see the West since about 1500 B.C. progressing from various forms of communal patriarchy to an equally extreme, radical individualism today. Some see this as the solution, some as the problem, some as a false characterization, and some as a red herring created to enhance political power; you know, the takeover.

As you also know, the Renaissance and Reformation of the 1400's and 1500's sprouted green shoots now called modernity. In the narrow but important areas of theology and philosophy, many credit René Descartes in the 1600's with launching contemporary times into full bloom by succeeding in turning Western thinking away from the "Dark Ages" of Church-dominated Scholasticism toward humanity's liberation in naturalist secularism. Whether or not this is completely true, it's important to understand today's argument about how such a turn might have occurred in order to begin seeing our current issues clearly.

It's helpful to begin such an explanation with the common observation that philosophy today has a severe language fetish. Philosophical discourse and argument often center around claims

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about basic sentence structure as the only things we can know: “Jane hit the ball” would be “Subject-verb-object.” (As another example, “Jane hit Dick,” would be social justice.)

Well, throughout the Middle Ages, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and other early greats remained highly influential in Christian Europe. Their philosophy framed Scholasticism, the worldview of Christendom during the Middle Ages, by focusing on the subject philosopher out in nature observing how objects, including pagan gods or the One True God, operate in the world. This is still called natural law, and it informs the now highly suspect inquiry of metaphysics.

Compared to today, the Classical and Medieval philosophers placed comparatively little emphasis on the subject/observer, him- or herself, beyond discussions of body and soul.

The actual reason for this was probably not philosophical in the slightest: Most certainly, human beings sought control of their world out of necessity and survival during times when most were poor, and life was extremely dangerous and tenuous. In other words, there was little time for “going inward” while escaping other barbarians or latter-day, saber-toothed tigers.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see now that what Descartes accomplished was turning Christendom’s metaphysical focus in the natural world more onto the observer himself, the Subject – we individual men or women. What led him to this? Epistemology. His obsessive search for a rock-solid foundation for human knowledge, something we all crave now but are forbidden to possess.

Again, human inquiry had followed the pattern of Subject in the world seeking to control Objects for centuries – out of necessity – when Descartes said, “Wait a minute, what about me? What about applying some of reason’s light on Moi, the Cap S Subject? I think I can only be certain about knowledge from there on outward with lessening degrees of certainty.”

To summarize, again, Descartes’ radical skepticism in search of an unimpeachable foundation of knowledge turned him inward. How? What is the only thing I know I can be certain of?

“I think therefore I am.” It’s self-evident, like 2 + 2 = 4. If I know I’m thinking, I can be 100% certain that I exist. He believed even an evil God couldn’t create subjective thought in nothingness. That was his argument, though since attacked from every direction. (Too much certainty kills and prevents manipulation.)

Though an increasingly inward focus had been developing in theology and philosophy under Scholasticism’s Church-approved radar for some time, Descartes *Cogito* defined an Aha! Moment, and Descartes, a scientific genius and dedicated Christian himself, got the lion’s share of the philosophical credit.

And what would be next? Boom!

A whole host of pathologies for today.

The irony is that Descartes turned philosophy more inward just as the Age of Reason or “Enlightenment” was beginning. His contemporary Francis Bacon made the scientific method visible, Isaac Newton supplied “scientific” light with calculus and the breakthrough laws of mechanical physics, and John Locke, “America’s philosopher” and founding political scientist,

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advocated a human blank slate where experience and the environment arguably could be controlled.

Then the Enlightenment peaked with Immanuel Kant's division of human experience (the link provides an excellent explanation, BTW) into the phenomenal (subjective experience) and the noumenal (objective "things in themselves," including God), where never the two could meet again with certainty.

Our PC Contributor, Sir Roger Scruton, believed that philosophical modernity started more with Kant than Descartes.

https://youtu.be/cbWXE8eGuYA?list=TLGG-SqDyw-j4rUyMzAzMjAyMg

He is a fan of Kant and Hegel, and am I. But there is no doubt, Kant's division of human experience was a "Back to the Future" moment that reopened dangerous doors for the unwary or deceitful, eventually backsliding Western philosophy into Descartes' original problem: How to obtain objective knowledge?

After Kant, having baked-in the conditions of his Enlightenment's own downfall in true Hegelian fashion, modernity was off and running at break-neck speed toward today's unfolding destruction. (Before moving on, please note, however: It wasn't his fault because even philosophy requires wisdom.)

And it is for this, Q insists, that he and we must make amends, and do it now.

Following Kant in the early 1800's, while producing never before seen levels of material wealth, modernity morphed almost immediately into said pathologies now manifesting themselves today. I will touch on this briefly before ending.

Please note: Jean Jacques Rousseau's romanticism carried by Hegel to Marx, entailing the separateness of the General Will from individual consciousness and arguably, therefore, mankind; Karl Marx's atheism and Marxism's separation from the Spiritual in the death of God, as famously declared by Frederick Nietzsche; and, finally, Charles Darwin's scientific certainty followed by rote Scientism and Sigmund Freud's splitting a materialist man somehow into irreconcilable and unmanageable pieces. In ancient times we had a conscience, the Will, free will, fate, and fortune. In Freud's world still influential now in the popular thinking, today's human being has consciousness, an unconscious, an id, ego, and superego, perhaps an alter ego, and this is all just for starters.

And if the 19th century wasn't enough, the 20th century produced a full-fledged assault on Truth and God in Communist, fascist, cultural Marxist, and postmodernist attempts to annihilate personal differences on the altar of equality, while institutionalizing them now in inequality through Identity Politics. All to target and dethrone the White Protestant Male as the problem in Western Europe and America.

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Well, the problem is, we aren't worth the trouble and effort.

In sum, the entire modern effort developed from innocent Cartesian dualism into an attack of many incoherent dualisms into a wildly exponential atomization, where Truth doesn't exist, yet every person's truth is true, dictating we need all take note of idiocy. No Truth, Knowledge, or Reason.

It's pure nihilism, and it drives Q nuts. Truth cannot conflict with Itself. Need we say more?

No. Q will have much, much more to say, and I hope you are getting the point. Today, we're witnessing civil unrest everywhere that's the consequence of this nonsense.

Something has got to give.

What Q would like to do as I develop my blog, *A Journey*, is offer some complementary philosophical and even theological sanity through his own occasional commentary. In other words, he will insist on offering his own opinions concerning worldview. By allowing him a presence, I am admitting without shame that I can't do the job as well as he.

Now, to finish in full disclosure the Q story quickly as promised earlier, Peter Monroe, III in the 1990's, eventually self-renamed Q post Prince's Y2K Millennium celebration, became fascinated with Thomas Aquinas's effort to square Christianity with Aristotle, using the Scholastic tradition of disputation. For a period, Peter considered the Greek letter Phi as a name in honor of the Philosopher and the Ox, but soon discarded the idea as pretentious.

In essence, Q sees the West as proceeding in Genesis from Adam, a flawed though integrated human being, to Modern Man, who has in comparison way too much in his head: consciousness, a conscience, a blank slate with phenomenal experience only, an Impartial Spectator, noumenal contact with little certainty, a superego, an alter ego, a talk-to-the-hand attitude, and, finally, multiple personalities, choose-one-whenever: With the media's help, we're all Sybil now. What the hell, The Matrix demonstrates all of the above and is us now all located in a Pleasure Palace from sea to shining sea.

Within my own time, the Boomer "Me Generation" has matured and is heading to the exit, now realizing the world it largely created is in shambles, a totally screwed-up condition.

In his twilight years, what Q would like to do, therefore, is help rectify the situation. All of us need a real, meaningful identity connected to a group, cohort, community, as much as humanly possible. We need a connection to the world at large, to nature itself, in the same way. In other words, Q wants atonement with God, others, and me, while wanting to help you get there, too.

Bottom line: He doesn't want you to be that girl in the video at top, and he knows he must self-sacrifice to get there. That is the Way in the West. We need each other. Be kind and Be there. We need to be one with God, our fellow human beings, the world, and ourselves.

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“Q and U,” these two English letters most always go together. From many, one. All lives matter. This has been America’s mission since inception. Clearly, and we are gaining on it.

Well, there you have it, Q, your proper introduction. As agreed. Done. I hope you’re satisfied.

PS – After reading this post’s last draft, Q did want me to note that he really does like Burt Bacharach any way you can slice his music. It’s what the world needs now. But he thinks that he and Dionne Warwick were . . . and remain . . . the true once-in-a-lifetime One-Two Punch. (Pick anywhere on the clip, anywhere, and enjoy.)

Now let’s go out there and do likewise, he says.

https://youtu.be/Kv1kvJpoJdM?list=TLGGWEEs_3ji47QyMzAzMjAyMg

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