

Entertainer's Alchemy

August 15, 2015

A reader of these "Comments" forwarded to me in May a video-clip from the Internet (to be found [here](#)) which she said was then circulating widely on Facebook and was having "a massive influence on people." The clip presents a well-known black American entertainer, Will Smith, being interviewed on "Progressive Thought Patterns," which is a pompous title for a pile of nonsense. But then who ever resorted to Facebook or to icons of entertainment to hear sense? The interest lies for Catholics in seeing how the exact same Kantian nonsense that has overwhelmed the Church (see *Pascendi*, as the key to Vatican II) is also fermenting at street level amongst ordinary people without the least knowledge of Kant or of *Pascendi*. Here is what Will Smith says to his interviewer (with a few comments inserted in italics):-

"I don't wanna' (want to) be an icon (*which he certainly is, as having been highly successful in Hollywood*), I wanna' be an idea. You know, I wanna' represent an idea. I wanna' represent possibilities. I wanna' represent magic, right, that you're in a universe, and two plus two equals four. **Two plus two equals four only if you accept that two plus two equals four. Two plus two is gonna' be what I want it to be**, you know, and there's a redemptive (*note that word – so what is Redemption?*) power that making a choice has, you know, like feeling you're an effect (*perhaps he means "cause"*) to all things that are happening. Make a choice, like you just decide what is gonna' be, who you're gonna' be, how you're gonna' do it. Just decide, and then from that point the universe is gonna' get outa' your way. It's water, it wants to move and go around, and stuff, you know, so for me I wanna' represent possibilities. I wanna represent the idea that you really can make what you want.

"One of my favourite books is *The Alchemist* by Paul Coelho,

and I just believe that. **I believe that I can create whatever I wanna' create.** If I can put my head to it, study it and learn the patterns (. . .), I feel very strongly that we are who we choose to be. I consider myself an alchemist. An alchemist is basically a mystical chemist, right, and one of the great feats that alchemists used to do is that they would take lead, take a chunk of lead, and make it turn from lead into gold. So I connect it (*my idea, presumably*) symbolically to being able to turn lead into gold. My grandmother used to say, 'Life give you a lemon, you go ahead and make lemonade' (*that of course is good old-fashioned common sense, two generations back. But for Will Smith -*) To me that's alchemy. That's the same concept behind *The Alchemist*."

All the above is a close reproduction of Will Smith's own words, not in order to make fun of him, but in order to show Kant at work amongst ordinary people who are far from being readers of Kant.

Notice that Will Smith is not completely devoid of common sense. If the word "alchemy" really means making lemonade out of lemons, then it respects reality. But if the word stands for making gold out of lead, as it often does, then it stands for a dream which has been dreamt down the ages and represents escaping from reality, or, worse, the refusal of natural reality and even a resorting to devils for a preternatural bending of it.

Now Will Smith is an entertainer, and his video-clip is quite entertaining, so nothing obliges us to take too seriously anything he says. But just recently a professional mathematician, one who is at the top of his profession, told me what scorn for objective reality he observes amongst his colleagues. The real problem goes way beyond mere entertainment.

Kyrie eleison.