

trodden people would have real hope of a success undreamed of. Meantime, there is our own important part in this apostolate that we may not shirk.

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THE LESSON OF STANDARDISATION

THE same clothes, the same swing music, the same technological thinking, the same standardised responses, the same dances, the same transport communications: in other words, the same standardisation all the world over. 'This uniformity is quite another thing than a structure of civilisation properly speaking, it is of an order not specifically human.'¹ The Manichee, in his contradictory thinking, desired to attain to a univocal perfection, to be swallowed up in the principle of good like a Buddhist in his Nirvana, to negate his own body to the point of race-suicide, a Pharisee concerning matter and profoundly anti-social. Modern man is an inverted Manichee: again desiring a univocal perfection, in a dialectic not of spirit but of matter, regarding the spirit as nothing or hating it as evil, enslaving mind and responsibility to the evolution of technique, exalting his own blood in the interests of race purity, exploiting and commercialising intelligence, and profoundly anti-personal. How true that Marx is the obverse of Hegel. The outcome of such mass-education is anarchy of thinking and feeling, against which we childishly protect ourselves by the sameness of our clothes.

Let us isolate one noteworthy aspect of this situation. To much modern thinking, the intelligence is a dangerous faculty, an anti-vital machine that skims the cream off things, that divides person from person and class from class, like the cathode rays that disintegrate alpha particles: it

¹ J. Maritain, *Questions de Conscience*, p. 44.

is the very principle of disintegration. The sub-human Utopia of the Communists, on the other hand, is the achievement of a material integration, it may be a leisure state to which technological progress will tend or an economic collectivity of the masses achieved in a strictly political field. Even the more superior types of Communist thinking scarcely outstrip that mental horizon, that parody of the New Jerusalem, vision of material peace. The positivists of the Viennese school, of which Mr. A. J. Ayer is the Oxford representative, use the razor on intelligence not exactly by splitting it into intelligence and life, but by rationing it strictly to logic and physics and cutting it off from all metaphysical questions as unreal and meaningless: thus to say 'Man is a rational animal' is redundant, the mind has merely travelled a circle. In short, the path traced out by the functioning intelligence is a road to nowhere.

There is, of course, life that is not intelligence. A child, because it resembles a young animal, has a very vivid sensitive life: the light of the candles is ever so much more electric, and the colour of the flowers ever so much more solid and intense, than to the jaded eye of an adult. As it grows it begins to differentiate, not in order to put the candles and the flowers in watertight compartments, but differentiating in order to organise its sensitive knowledge; the sense is a kind of reason. Finally the adult, unless his intellectual development is arrested, is able to link up concrete things like candles and flowers with abstract things like grace and truth. The process is the same. The intellect multiplies distinctions to make itself more sensitive, not in order to erect dichotomies and bury itself in the sand. To *keep* things clear and distinct is to court chaos: and that is what those people do who deny the utility of intellectual organisation, in disputing the necessity of metaphysics.

What, then, is the principle of organisation? Obviously, being is not univocal or the Manichees are right. 'Be ye

perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect,' suggests that perfection and being are convertible, and that there are grades of being as there are grades of perfection. It must have been a cardinal point of St. Dominic's apologetic that everybody can realise this perfection diversely and can even attain mystical union with God; the grace (and the gifts) of God our Saviour have appeared to all men. There was to be no exclusive *élite* to receive this supernatural integration apart from the rest of the human vermin: the perfection was analogical, and came from above, not from below. The intellect could already organise things into *orders*, comprising ends and the means directed to those ends, in much the same way as modern science speaks of 'fields' where, for instance, mutually interacting causes or forces, electric and magnetic, are discovered together. These orders were the creation of that part of the intellect whose business is evaluation of what we have known and understood: value being simply the order of good. To this scale of values has been added a supernatural order which became at once the foundation and head of all orders of being. The Manichee had to negate his nature if he wished to be one with the divine: to the Christian descended the divine, at once to transcend and transform his nature.

Ex utero ante luciferum genui te. Away back in that light and origin, outside change and temporal duration, its perfection uncircumscribed by any material conditions, is the beginning of that charity that penetrates our souls. I could offer my body to be burned, and if I were not steeped in this infused perfection, it would not mean a thing. Charity is not proportioned to one's natural qualities: grace does more than perfect nature. There may be an analogy between divine love and human, there should be no confusion between them. It is true, too, that 'there is no separation nor cutting apart, there is vital cohesion between the natural virtues and the supernatural virtues.'²

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

It is true that there is an obediential potency in the nature that is so transformed. It would, however, be vain to offer God one's entire liberty in the delusion that it was not already under his empire. Nothing escapes that universal causality, although it would be mistaken to conceive of causes originating in that perfection outside of time as being necessitating causes as are causes originating in time. *Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit.* Those who ignore this 'leave the door open, without thinking, to conceptions from which all naturalistic tendency has not been eliminated, and which bring besides to nature a certain comfort which is not unpleasurable.'³

There is, then, in the words and actions of the Incarnation, a certain eternal *resonance*. They are not just history that awoke for thirty years and went off again to sleep. They look before and after: before to primordial beginnings in the mind of God, after to the bridal city to which we tend. For us the Incarnation bridges the gap between Alpha and Omega. *Haec terrena substantia quae confert quod divinum est.* We must be reborn in that birthday newness of the first eternal morning, we must die to, and bury, what is most temporal in our nature; we must rise in the light of grace, rather than in the shadow of material things. It is no use being what has been called a non-existential Christian, living a departmental wishy-wash, mealy-mouthed sacramental life; grace, that is most delicately interior to the soul's whole working, in its absolute efficacy will drive the soul to action. There are, nevertheless, diversities of degrees in the way in which this will take place; because the Incarnation is not merely a candle in the heart of the private individual to be set upon the candlestick of his nature—it is also the public city whose parts are united in one and which set upon a mountain cannot be hid.

It might be a temptation, nevertheless, in emphasising

³ Maritain, *Science et Sagesse*, p. 360.

the universality of the supernatural to neglect its transcendence, although, as has been indicated, the latter is the *raison d'être* of the former. How shall our advertisement of grace be prevented from becoming self-advertisement? Because the Cross besides being a victory in the divine order of things is a tragedy in the temporal order of things —i.e., in the eyes of the natural or 'old' man. In that sense it even fulfils the Aristotelian conditions of tragedy; for us it means: *hamartia*, that our judgments regarding our supernatural end on purely natural grounds are erroneous; *peripeteia*, that in the supernatural order natural values will be reversed; *anagnorisis*, that we recognise the bitter truth about the inadequacy of purely human efforts to attain that supernatural objective. 'My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world my disciples would certainly strive that I be not delivered over to the Jews.' The dynamism of the power of God is in the weak things of this world, revolutionising: almost like the electric charge that enters a tube of neon gas and produces the vivid neon light. 'As a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed.' Christian detachment detaches the things of the Kingdom of God from the fashions and formulations of historical development; changeless eternal values have a changing temporal embodiment. In that way their embodiment will be 'the fruit of the light' that originates outside time, and not of the inconstant flashes of temporal light: it will be an analagous embodiment, because history is a process and progress towards a reality and not a circular movement into meaninglessness.

There are many political myths, surrealist myths (cf. Raïssa Maritain, *Sens et Non-Sens et Poésie*, and Wyndham Lewis, *The Diabolical Principle*), even religious myths for evading the problems that Christianity raises. The Hitler Youth who wrote the following in a Youth Hostel visitors' book is an heir of Manichean ancestors: 'I am no heathen; I am no Christian; I believe in Hitler.' The

one shirt, the one set of slogans, the one leader, the one race, the one culture. Is there no way out from this sub-human standardisation? There is. One way. One way for those who believe, like the Hitler Youth, not so much in a thing as in a person—who wills a cosmic and not just a national salvation, both as individuals and as a collectivity respecting our diversity as well as our unity, our spirits as well as our bodies.

Emmanuel, that is, God with us.

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