

## ENDS AND MEANS<sup>1</sup>

THAT "to raise up hatred against hatred is to prepare the ruin of political life"; that violence is a boomerang, the attempt at violent repression of an evil merely causing it to spring up elsewhere with renewed virulence; that "Christianism will re-create itself by Christian means, or it will collapse completely"; in a word, that the "problem of means . . . it of absolutely central importance"; and that only the Christian means of patience, unity, love, can do anything to save the world; these are the leading ideas in M. Maritain's preface to Professor Mendizabel's *Aux Origines d'une Tragédie*. They also form, with certain obvious reservations, the leading lines of thought in Mr. Aldous Huxley's latest, and greatest, book; and one notes them here because of this sometimes startling similarity, extending almost to verbal parallelism.

About the goal of human endeavour, that we ought to be advancing towards an age of liberty, peace, justice and brotherly love, "there is and for long has been a very general agreement. Not so with regard to the roads which lead to that goal." And if we search for a definition of the ideal we ought all to be becoming, we shall find here too that; if "the enslaved have held up for admiration now this model of a man, now that," on the other hand, "at all times and in all places, the free have spoken with only one voice." "The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions . . . Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. Yes, non-attached even to these. For, like patriotism, in Nurse Cavell's phrase, 'they are not enough.' Non-attachment to self and to what are called 'the things of this world' has always been associated in the teachings of the philosophers and the founders of religions with attachment to an ultimate reality greater and

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<sup>1</sup> *Ends and Means*. An Enquiry into the Nature of Ideals and into the Methods Employed for their Realization. Aldous Huxley. (Chatto & Windus, pp. 335, 8/6.)

more significant than the self." "Non-attachment is negative only in name. The practice of non-attachment entails the practice of all the virtues. It entails the practice of charity, for example; for there are no more fatal impediments than anger (even 'righteous indignation') and cold-blooded malice to the identification of the self with the immanent and transcendent more-than-self. It entails . . . the adoption of an intensely positive attitude towards the world." " 'Real progress,' in the words of Dr. R. R. Marett, 'is progress in charity, all other advances being secondary thereto.' "

If we look from ideal to real, we find the world in fact regressing; what can we do to reverse this movement of regression? The discussion of what changes must be made involves us necessarily in a discussion of the relation of means to end, for good ends "can be achieved only by the employment of appropriate means."

A large part of this book, then, constitutes a "kind of practical cookery book of reform . . . political recipes, economic recipes, educational recipes, recipes for the organization of industry, of local communities, of groups of devoted individuals"; and, on the other hand, negative recipes "for not realizing the ends one professes to desire, recipes for stultifying idealism, recipes for paving hell with good intentions." But the positive recipes are not isolated and pragmatic. "It is impossible to live without a metaphysic." "Our metaphysical beliefs are the finally determining factor in all our actions." The practical chapters are determined by the discussion of fundamentals with which the book concludes.

Impossible to deal adequately with these fifteen chapters, in which the concentrated thinking, the straight philosophy, has not done violence to Mr. Huxley's wit and prose. As has been said, the discussion of violence parallels the thought of M. Maritain. " 'The defence of democracy against Fascism' entails inevitably the transformation of democracy into Fascism." "The long-drawn violence of Tsarist oppression and the acute, catastrophic violence of the World War produced the 'iron dictatorship' of the Bolsheviks. The

threat of world-wide revolutionary violence begot Fascism; Fascism produced rearmament; rearmament has entailed the progressive de-liberalization of the democratic countries." Violent methods of reform bring their own ruin with them; "dictatorial short-cuts cannot conceivably take us to our destination," which is "freedom, justice, and peaceful co-operation between non-attached, yet active and responsible individuals." What can take us there, in one aspect of the problem, is "de-centralization and responsible self-government;" the de-centralization of industry (possible through the ease with which electric power can be distributed), local self-government, the restoration of personal contacts. Of particular interest, in view of the comparison made above with the thought of Maritain, and of particular value, is the discussion of self-government in industry, and the possibilities for "associations of devoted individuals" of putting it into practice. There is much here that resembles Maritain's *sociétaire* principle. It may be noted, however, that while the first question is whether machine production is "to stay as an instrument of slavery or as a way to freedom," there is also the question, since restriction to certain uses is not abolition, how far and in what way machine production ought to be restricted for the achievement of greater freedom.

Again in regard to education, to take one other example: "Technical education is without a principle of integration; academic education makes use of a principle that integrates only on the cognitive plane, only in terms of a natural science preoccupied with the laws of the material universe. What is needed is another principle of integration . . . that will co-ordinate the scattered fragments, the island universes of specialized or merely professional knowledge; a principle that will supplement the scientifico-historical frame of reference at present used by intellectuals, that will help, perhaps, to transform them from mere spectators of the human scene into intelligent participants. What should be the nature of this new principle of integration? . . . It should be psychological and ethical. Within the new frame of reference, co-ordination of knowledge and experience would be made

in human terms; the network of significant relations would be, not material, but psychological; not indifferent to values, but moral; not merely cognitive, but affective and conative."

And how, in all the spheres in which reform is so necessary, is one to work for reform? Violence has led to the establishment, or the trend towards establishment, of rigid dictatorship and centralization in every country; we need not look, for initiative in restoring individual responsibility and freedom, to those who hold political power. Initiative must come, as it has often had to come in the past, from individuals, singly or in groups; and there is interesting discussion of the methods and principles which might govern this initiative.

There comes the deeper question of the metaphysic underlying this list of recipes, which is discussed in the last chapters of the book.

There is an interesting autobiographical section on the change from the "philosophy of meaninglessness"—"it was the manifestly poisonous nature of the fruits that forced me to reconsider the philosophical tree on which they had grown"; the new humility of science to-day is noted—"we are living now, not in the delicious intoxication induced by the early successes of science, but in a rather grisly morning-after;" the thirst for the discovery of unity is discussed, and the arguments for the existence of God, ending with the claim of the mystics. Mr. Huxley concludes to the existence of an impersonal transcendent principle, with which the achievement of union is possible; and it is this concept of unity which provides him in the last chapter with the basic principle of his ethic: "Good is that which makes for unity; Evil is that which makes for separateness"; and he links up unity (with God and other individuals) with non-attachment, separateness with attachment.

The discussion of divine personality is unsatisfying; one is left uncertain whether personality in its theological or in its everyday sense is meant; what is said applying to the abuses connected with anthropomorphism well enough, failing to apply to the doctrine of divine personality as

traditional theology understands the term. It would seem, indeed, that the conversational meaning is usually implied; in which case the author is, negatively at least, not as un-Christian as he sounds, and intends to be; and certainly, what is said of the ill effects of the emotional approach, associated with humanly-personalized deity, is true enough of possible abuses due to practical anthropomorphism. On the other hand, the exegesis of the "Dark Night" is fantastic; there is no advertence to the ill effects of "impersonal" mysticism with its inevitable acosmism; nor is it recognized that "*per humanitatem ad divinitatem*," only "*through* the humanity," is the traditional rule of Christian mysticism. But one feels that the issue here involved is one too large to be discussed on individual points merely; just as Mr. Huxley's view on the subject of the Old Testament cannot adequately be discussed except against the background of the mind and outlook of a Lagrange, so his views on Christianity cannot adequately be discussed except against the background of a *théologie vécue*, the assimilation of the profundities in the light of which alone particular tenets can be understood.

Unmannerly, perhaps, to embark upon these attempts at stricture of a book in which there is so much at which to rejoice. But it is precisely because of its startling similarity on so many points with much current Christian thought, because of its cogent argument for unity with God and men, for charity, for "non-attachment," and its equally cogent attack on the philosophy of violence and all the evils which flow therefrom, that one cannot but be anxious that what seems the logical direction of thought should be further pursued; for one cannot but feel that what prevents this being so is often a failure to arrive at a true estimate of the facts, and to distinguish, among the "fruits," the accidental, the abuse, from the essential, the logical consequence rather than a really existent incompatibility of principle.

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