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THE mind of man has an inborn bias towards unity. Hence the unity of ideas which even the anarchic self-realizer cannot escape. Hence, too, a critique of the history of ideas must always appear an angular if not arbitrary cross-section through the jungle of fact. If the mind of man was a machine we could take it to pieces, but because it is organic and even supratemporal, it is always more than a welter of faculties and even more than its history. So that if criticism is so specialized that it forgets that the whole mind is more than the sum of its parts it becomes geometrical and is an escape from the truth: geometry is a measure of matter and not of mind. Again, the reality the mind experiences is not a mere metaphor for something else that the mind in its otherness cannot reach, and not mind-stuff or a construction the mind has put on the real. The external world, and the whole of it, means everything to the mind: closing the mind to it is like closing the body to air; it is intellectual death. Unless we grow into the real, and the whole real too, we become unreal people: we not only stop seeing objectively, we stop being objective. The history of the ideas of unreal people is therefore a history of unrealities, and the critic who shows how they hang together in the unreal mind is proving again that there is method even in madness. If he forgets however that the mind is more than its history, he becomes a determinist who begs the question and equates mind and matter. In studying the contemporary mind we have to avoid these errors so widespread in modern psychology.

Unreal people are children who have not grown up. A child's aesthetic, for example, would borrow sparingly from reality. The child mind is rich in its very poverty: it creates its own world from the rags of reality because reality in all its brutality is still beyond it. The vice of aestheticism is the habit of becoming a child again and shutting one's eyes to the fact that one is an adult: a parallel is the adult who persists in singing falsetto after his voice breaks. If self-realization means that we can create our world, then it is

asking us to tell ourselves lies. The child sees the world as an earthly paradise because it is not the real world; perhaps because the child is closer to that Eden where the world that man wanted was the world he had. The real artist is adult; his art is not just the play of his mind as a child's art is. His starting-point is the real world or his art-work is the work of a moron. Reality is the basis of his self-realization. The tragic crisis must come when, to adapt a biblical figure, the golden thread must be broken, the pitcher crushed at the fountain, when the world of a child must come to an irrevocable end. From that time the child enters a world of new horizons and the terminus of his response to it is either heaven or hell: that world matters, it matters everything, to him.

A certain Cartesian spirituality explains evil by making man a number between infinity and nothing.¹ If man was only a mathematical measure, then of course his distance from nothing would be a measure. But the distance of something from nothing is infinite, and even death is impotent to annihilate that distance. The kernel of all art is the joy of the mind in things that are no longer nothing, whose being can never be quenched. Art is not a pattern of colours and words for pattern's sake: that is aestheticism sucking the reality out of colours and words so as to play with them as a geometer plays with figures. The artist who is not an aesthete has a hunger for more being; the lover who is not a birth-controller or a homosexual has a hunger for more being. The artist's words are a continuity of the reality they symbolize and which engenders them; the aesthete repudiates that continuity. In the same way the unreal lover is content to create a pattern apart from the realities of love and repudiates the continuity of events. It is the child's compromise between the world it wants and the world that is. The unreal artist and the unreal lover are creators of death.

Is reality then, mere brute fact? As D. H. Lawrence saw, the world is indeed an Eden and the person with a self-

¹ *Meditations*, p. 112 (Everyman).

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activated *ego* is the only evil thing in it. The self-activated *ego* is either living in the clouds or among horrors. "You're always begging things to love you," says Paul to Miriam. "Even the flowers, you have to fawn on them." This is Miriam: "She seemed to need things kindling in her imagination before she felt she had them. And she was cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise where sin and knowledge were not, or else a cruel, ugly thing." To unreal people their selves are the norms and everybody must confirm them, by believing, love or hero-worship. Their art is self; their philosophy is self; their very religion. They are aesthetes; they are solipsists or idealists; they are their own God. They may be "financial geniuses" exploiting other people in conscience: such people think in terms not of persons but masses. Their very love is exploitation and stops short at creation. The awakening of sex in young people can give their personality meaning upon meaning; their personal communion is not only self-expression or mutual self-realization. Unreal people sink shafts in others until they exhaust them and then leave them like disused coal-mines while they continue self-realization elsewhere. Christ asks men to love Him with their entire strength, not weakness: they may not sponge on Him or the Church as utilities. This emotional purity is a continual act of acceptance of the real and a continual awareness too that we cannot shift our responsibility on to environment or other men.

Unreal people make bad poets. The poet is not a spectator whose mind like a looking-glass catches the shadows of an extramental world. He does not go to dictionaries, other people's art or literary models, or even, as Wordsworth went, to talk. He finds words in things. Things are not even projected on to the mind from a set of cinematic projectors and screened from four angles to give the illusion of flesh and blood: that seems to be Gerard Hopkins' *inscape*. Such art is still the aesthete's portrait in a mirror. The work of Mr. Charles Morgan is corrupt and unreal. Words are not the game for the writing-study. Words enter the sense-life and the mind catches them up and plays because of its joy

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in them while they are still instinct with the sun and air of the world: the mind only dances vitally when it is being played to: it glories in the real. If the sense-life is censored because the artist does not want to be hurt by the cosmos, the sun is shut out, the artist lives in a twilight or perhaps he has only the electric bulb of his mind in the surrounding night of sense. One cause of obscurity in modern poetry is its birth in a twilight or night of the senses.

New horizons. Reality is subtle and mocks our cliché attitudes: it is a complex which sense must untiringly explore. Experience refines the sense-life and purifies its texture: it gives a wider context and an awareness of nuance. Art therefore ought not to be a picturesque surface. Oh, those R.A. pictures where the human bodies look like peeled eels, and the landscapes with paint looking as puritanical as paint can! Thomas Mann sums up so cleverly the medical elements of Buddenbrooks' death, as if death were only a physiological disaster. Commercial acting is dramatic academy elocution responding to a series of dramatic academy situations in good drawing-room behaviour. How refreshing in *Der Traumende Mund* to watch Elisabeth Bergner eating and talking together like a human being where most actresses would have been all teeth and tongue and fingers. Our souls are in our bodies like canaries in cages waiting for death to open the cage. Even our play is a funeral, although we have football jerseys of sepia and orange. The activist English mentality won't come to rest in things; it wants to soar above reality or postpone it to the future; for the present, compromise. It succumbs before the complexity of a concrete situation and allows itself to be betrayed by an emotional reason, by activist instinct. For emotional reason does not shy at the abstract so much as withdraw the concrete from the orbit of sense: it is not a reason but sentimental nervousness,

Voices under sleep, waking a dead world
So that the mind may not be whole in the present.

If the emotions desert the object they block out the sense-life from new horizons, the complex remains incoherent and the

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senses too begin their retreat from reality. They too want a surface, and depth begins to make them dizzy.

The senses seek the simple in the complex and when they are hot on the trail we have metaphor. If the senses are ill metaphor becomes insipid, but when healthy we have unity in multiplicity, synthesis and analysis. Penance refines the senses drunken with a partial contact with things: it emboldens them to a fuller contact: it objectifies them so that they leap athletically to brute fact. Integrity isn't afraid of contrasts, and compromise is an illusory solution, and the empty horizon for which one has so little stomach is really the road to all things. But this integrity is not a plot or a geometrical pattern which the mind imposes upon reality, nor a new world to which we can make a complete emotional reaction, either of which makes a subjective criterion. Facile emotion is as unreal as facile reason. An art-work is fragmentary, something isolated, a chain of interrelations integrated into a world, a wholeness in fragmentariness, eternity in time. It is because the mind is supratemporal that aesthetic activity is intellectual, and, unless intellectual, art is an escape from things. Again, the intellectual reaction must not be disproportionate or art becomes geometry, and the emotional reaction must be economical: the entire emotion and the entire reason must however react together.

There is slick reasoning and slick emotion. As the adult aesthetic must not be grounded on the arrested development of certain eccentrics, so the creative urge itself requires not only emotional economy but an adequate world-view in which all the desires of human nature have a place.

There are certain conceptions and beliefs that are natural to man, that satisfy his mind and heart better than any alternative ones, and without which he cannot live for long. The mark of such conceptions is their completeness; they close the circle. In a state of irremediable imperfection such as man's, the circle can be closed only by calling on something outside and beyond man; by postulating a transcendental reality. So the belief in eternity is natural to man. And all the arts, all the forms of literature, since they depend on that belief, are equally natural to man. When that belief partially fails imagination suffers an eclipse and art becomes a problem instead of a self-evident function. If that

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belief were to fail completely and for good, it is possible that it would mean the end of all imaginative literature and art. But it is inconceivable that it should fail, for it is native to man.²

This is true because the pattern in art is found in reality, and if the artist misses the pattern there, his art is inconsequent, and so only partial art. "My own personal conviction . . . is that all such conceptions postulate a transcendental reality and work out man's relation to that reality, and that human life must always stop short of meaning within itself" (p. 287). The mind of man is always more than the flow of experience and not something mechanically determined by an alien reality. The pathetic network of repressions and unreal wish-fulfilment that modern psychology leaves bare should not discourage us from making these desires real. Only out of time and teleologically can we give self-realization any meaning or even any starting-point. The Incarnation is a pattern to which alone we are justified in conforming the complete personal unit, and only for God's sake then to the material realities we transcend. If the junction of love and truth is beautiful and enlarges mind and heart, what an infinite enlargement for the Christian artist when he possesses a perfect pattern, a pattern not like a symbol which sweeps whole ranges of experience within the scope of a glance and is yet exclusive of others, but a pattern to which the mind is orientated as a horizon where the sun is ever rising and never setting, is all-inclusive and all-transcending, is the pattern of all patterns and the goal in which ourselves and our environment must find now and for ever the beginning and consummation of self-realization.

For the new mind is an aesthetic mind, and in reverting to self for the pattern of its self-realization, it finds none but its own history. Where, however, its history is intersected at every point by the society of histories into which it was born and in which it will die, where mind goes out against mind and reality against reality in the perpetual conquest and the perpetual frustration of the evolutionary urge, whose final

² Edwin Muir: *Decline of the Novel*, *Modern Scot*, pp. 289-290, 1934.

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issue no man living will ever realize, there is not even finite satisfaction for man's infinite desires, and no pattern but anarchy. The tragedy of our time is not that the marriage-relationship is reduced to an extension of self or at the least to the play of personality with no external reference, but that there is no effective birth-control when two persons have burnt themselves into the context of each, that in the womb of the spirit those children can never be delivered and can never be killed, a ghastly parallel to the Christ with which this post-Christian era is ever pregnant and cannot bring to birth. Because we cannot have a society of politics and science or even a society of art, no public but only private self-realization, if we have not one reality and are not one mind. No amount of political, scientific and aesthetic technique will reset the lines of communication between man and man until in private and in public we empty ourselves of unrealities and conform to that reality that can be everything to us because it is in and above everything, and until our society achieves unity of mind in that mind which was born into it and died in it, and in the eternal radiation of which it too was born and it too will die.

Self-realization has too long been equated to the unimpeded play of water from the well of an enclosed personality which may not stop but must flow to exhaustion in despair. Water flows because it must; it is never independent of its source or its goal; it is determined. The aesthete must always be returning to moments when the poetry of a transitory equilibrium was his, and must baptize his present in a lyrical memory from his past. Integration he has, but only snatched and never held, and even if it could be held for ever, we are not born to live for ever. The unrelieved tragedy of that fate is the cause of the bitterness of even our socialist humanitarians, for themselves and the workers are helpless before determinism, because in their spiritual pride they would rather be blind than have another mix mud and spittle for their eyes, and rather poisoned with dirt than have head and feet washed in the basin with all mankind. They want God to conform to an aesthetic pattern which is always their own, and they want a "spiritual" church outside geography and

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history and not a church that here and now, in the time and place of our need, can release us from the absolute determinism of mere aestheticism, can help us to realize our personalities both individually and collectively by continually purifying the wells of self and society with waters not determined but gratuitous, with the living water of that Incarnation which is not a moment to which we return but a moment here now, in real if mystical extension, not a past memory however lyrical, but a present reality.

But even aesthetic reality, if it does not make man pure soul, or tend to such a soul-emphasis or body-emphasis that man becomes an element and not a compound, and all the world all body or all soul, if it is neither materialist nor idealist, if it does not create reality to the mind's desire and yet does not exclude the mind's desire, if it permeates the totality of man's activity without excluding a higher reality, if in short it is an authentic aesthetic, then Christ will always transcend it without cancelling it, and will redeem it from determinism by being Himself the route to infinite horizons, and will sum up the impersonal in the personal, and the complex in the simple. For such a rhythm of positive and negative, such an interplay of contrasts, is at the heart of the temporal reality and is a key to the problem of tragedy, which is pain and catharsis together, because the beauty of the Incarnation is so intimate with the beauty of being, that the cross is the basis from which the whole universe of beauty has gone out into space and time, and it is only from the earthly roots of suffering that the unearthly flowers of human experience, if they are breathing and not stillborn, can ever come alive. Man cries when his baby is born, because his joy is knit always to his tears. The problem, too, of moral evil, of the dog beneath the skin, which a studio aesthetic naïvely ignores, has also a key if it has any key, in that Incarnation whose beauty shot through the mystery with a vertical ray, not escaping hell with a compensatory poem or a holy shrug, but gripping its night in the vice of an inexhaustible sunshine, in which all things were transparent before night was, and shall be again when space and time have no more meaning. A conquest of evil in history and

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geography, whose beauty is extended in the Mass for as long as evil itself shall extend:

Ce jeune assassin, avenue Mozart, traîné sur le trottoir, en milieu d'une foule hurlante, pour la reconstitution de son crime, une femme lui cracha au visage, et aussitôt il devint le Christ. Depuis qu'il a souffert et qu'il est mort, les hommes n'ont pas été moins cruels, il n'y a pas eu moins sang versé, mais les victimes ont été recrées une seconde fois à l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu —même sans le savoir, même sans le vouloir."³

It is so easy to treat the world as a text and to clutter our minds with notes while missing the drift of the thing: so easy to specialize in fragments of the text, that it fails to come home as a whole. The Pharisees, says Mauriac, were exegetes. To the Anglo-Saxon mind every situation is the only cloud in the sky, and the only progress beyond it is by circumvention. It meets the situation by snubbing it. We ourselves are not exempt from this historical and geographical formation, we have Anglo-Saxon minds as surely as we have twentieth-century sensibilities. It is not therefore reasonable either to make the English way an inflexible norm for the Italians and the Irish, or even for ourselves, as England has done in the past, nor to deny that the Incarnation endorses whatever is still positive and vital in the whole, and not merely the intellectual, life of any nation. It is not by setting the international versus the national, the personal versus the individual, God versus man, that we can prepare our own or other minds for the re-entry of the God-man. Who then can deny that God has prepared the contour of our individuality, all the material of personality in race, sex and temperament (even in education), for that adoption of sons, so that our history, and the places where we were born which seem almost physically continuous with us, and the friends we have known who have been integrated into us, and the direction of our growth which is also largely the work of environment, so that all these are not finally shut out, all the grace that the memory gasps in resisting and that draws out the last spasm of our strength, the tenderness

³ François Mauriac: *Vie de Jésus*, p. 254.

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of a music of which we are always echoes, fibre of our fibre to which we make an almost psychic response?

That sensitive movement of the mind towards the real, that tentative rhythm of being meeting being, that reaching out to the beauty as the light inhabiting persons and things, is only a wave in that tremendous tide out of which the universe and ourselves flowed into time, and back to which their current is always subconsciously ebbing. The aesthetic recreation of things is like a prayer, a perpendicular thrust of the mind beyond what it sees to what it does not see, always from the base of the real to an apex with which the eyes have no contact. There must be an economy of sense, a penitential diet, a self-denial of the pastries of the world-scene, before the impact of beauty will throw the mind high enough to describe an unbroken lyrical curve. It requires too such an economy, such an inner reality, the senses in tears, before the mind is washed enough, to see in a boy, and to see prayerfully, in a night not at the beginning of the world but within historic memory, to see with an onrush of all we have of tenderness, that first great lyrical curve which the joy of God swept outside any finite radius and to see it beginning at the familiar base at which our own children begin, and in a poverty and friendlessness which even a slum-child hardly shares.

The city of God on earth is a city of night. There are times when the aesthetic mind collapses before the negative power that never deserts man so long as he is human. That negative love, that weakness, that sickening kiss of those Christian mobs whose first saint was Judas. "Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the world?" The scalding language of Christ unveils a negativeness in everybody. "Who is scandalized, and I am not *burning*?" That terrifying unreality is to-day a post-Christian façade which we must first demolish in ourselves, as time itself is washing off the powder and rouge with which liberal theory made up the face of the extended Christ. A night of unreality, a society of lies, in which the mind always liked shadow better than substance in the subjective illumination of its inner check, its emotional reason. But there is a reality in that society, a candle apart

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from the glaring and vacuous electric lights that show up the inanity of the city, pathetically modest with its primitive razor-like flame, the beauty of which seems so little to hold against the wind, the rain and darkness, but which we, rain-sodden, wind-sodden and darkness-sodden, hold to as a valid criterion inside and outside the time-series, in its significant simplicity and its functional economy an extension in history of the logic of God.

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