

Beauty and the Beasts

FALSEHOOD ABOUT BEAUTY

"Beauty is altogether in the eye of the beholder," said Maire Lloyd, 1870-1922, an English music-hall singer. It was also said by Lew Wallace, 1827-1905, an American soldier and writer.

It is not true.

Even dropping the 'altogether' and reducing the mantra to, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder", it is still false because, lacking such qualifications normally imposed by 'the' or 'a' or 'some', it is a generality, i.e. it purports to be a general truth. *And it is not.*

Beauty is in the thing itself, not in the eye of the beholder, whether it is a physical object like a lake or its painting, or a noble idea or ideal in mind and will.

The recognition of beauty can be subjective, and some people will need help to develop their sensitivity to perceive particular beauties which are really there.

If I say, "It's not beautiful for me," or "I don't like it," I may be expressing my own inadequacy.

TRUTH AND GOODNESS

A parallel situation occurs with truth. Truth is *not* invented by the mind which formulates it in thoughts or words. Rather, **truth is an objective correspondence of the mind with reality.** If it were only in the mind of the thinker, it would be a subjective quality. This would reduce a man, albeit unwittingly, to being a relativist, that is, an intellectual anarchist.

Similarly with goodness. Goodness does not depend on our judgement of it: it is objective.

A man's intellectual perception of truth is impoverished by leaving out beauty, goodness and God. Thus in *Man the Unknown*, 1935, Alexis Carrel wrote:-

... divide the mental activities [of man] into intellectual, moral, esthetics, and religious...

This adds a fourth item to the Platonic trilogy. It becomes **Truth, Beauty, Goodness and God.**

Pope Benedict XVI often speaks of beauty. Beauty indicates a big-mindedness and big-heartedness, in other words, that love of truth and goodness which go hand in hand with beauty, and with gratitude for its source, Almighty God, of Whom St Augustine wrote, *Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty, So Ancient and so New!*

BORED or BORING?

Contrast the exactly opposite situation in the frequently used disparagement of persons or things, "**It's boring.**"

Such people project their feelings onto a thing. What they mean is "That thing or situation is boring for me," or "It bores me," or more bluntly, "I'm bored."

Yet it is an utterance unworthy of a Christian:-

- **It is not true:** boredom *is* in the utterer, not the object.
- It is **unproductive** to voice such negative feelings and renders one less likely to be helpful to others.
- It is **an imperfection** to revoke the Morning Offering of all the prayers, works, joys and sufferings by complaining at the pinpricks of tedious things.

IMPLEMENTING THE RESURRECTION

CHRISTIANS live to implement the Resurrection by working at Christ's plan to share His Resurrection with others. This lay apostolate involves many activities, some positive, some negative:-

- Work for the reign of Christ as King in all human hearts, even our enemies, especially our enemies.
- Work against Satan's greatest evil, his promotion of atheism and man denying or ignoring God.
- Work for goodness in every situation: uphold virtue, both natural and supernatural, by practising it.
- Work against Satan and his 'culture of death' and all immoralities 'legitimized' by governments.
- Work for marriage & family: God-created them, also bread-winner and home-maker as complementary.
- Work against false ideals of 'child care' and child-abuse by sex ed and doctrineless Church schools.
- Work to spread truth, justice, peace and clear thinking in spite of disappointments and opposition.
- Work against misuse of phrases like 'outcomes-based', 'praxis', 'no negatives permitted'.

Today's Idols, Golden Calves and Molochs

The pagan environment of our Modern Society is the environment of our apostolate today.

Worshipping idols is back in fashion. Some sacrifice human life to them, e.g. abortion and infanticide are like the statue of Moloch with the fire in front on which the babies and young children were tossed and burnt to death.

Some modern Golden Calves and Molochs are:-

- **sex** • **dreams** • **the world**
- **speed** • **drink** • **the flesh**
- **sound** • **drugs** • **the Devil.**

There is also the idolatry of making **me myself** or **man** or the **environment** or **cyberspace** into idols.

Has **www** of the internet replaced **666** as the Number of the Beast? i.e. internet pornography and terrorist information on making bombs.

TOLKIEN ON ESCAPISM

Against the popular pejorative usage of 'escapism', Tolkien made the acerbic declaration that science fiction is the ultimate escapism — before today's escapism in computer games and "surfing the net". See his *Tree and Leaf*, p. 54, or in a later edition, p. 61.

He condemned the cowardly escape of the deserter and praised the heroic flight of the fugitive.

In his defence of fantasy, he distinguished:

- fiction as in novels and short stories
 - historical fiction
 - **fantasy fiction**, his own speciality
 - drama
 - science fiction (often outer space)
- and today we might add:-
- cyberspace fiction — living in unreality (not healthy for human relationships, conversion, salvation).

DARWIN

THIS YEAR 2009 is the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th Anniversary of his *Origin of the Species*.

The following excerpt is from "*Going Ape*" for **Darwin in 2009** under the pen name *Idiota* (Greek adjective in neuter plural for private, personal, peculiar things) in *Catholic* April/May/June, 2009:-

In Darwin's second book, *The Descent of Man*, he went even further off the rails than in *The Origin of the Species*. Darwin went so far as to rank races in terms of what he believed was their nearness and likeness to gorillas. He further proposed the extermination of those races which he 'scientifically' described as inferior. To not do so, he claimed, would result in those races, which have much higher birth rates than his designated superior races, exhausting the resources needed for the survival of better people, and eventually dragging down all of civilization. Darwin even argued against advanced societies wasting time and money on caring for those who are insane, or suffer from birth defects. To him, these unfit members of our species ought not to survive.

By the time Darwin died in 1882 his theory was practically the gospel of atheism.

As it turned out, Hitler's Nazism practised some of Darwin's brutal racism (though he is not named in William Shirer's *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*), and Chinese Communism promoted Darwin in the late 1940s (cf. Pope Pius XII in *Humani Generis*). G.K. Chesterton is also quoted:-

The Darwinians have this mark of fighters for a lost cause, that they are perpetually appealing to sentiment and to authority. Put your bat or your rhinoceros [Editor: in context of a common ancestor] simply and innocently as a child might put them, before the Darwinian, and he will answer by an appeal to authority. He will probably answer with the names of various German professors; he will not answer with any ordinary English words, explaining the point at issue. God condescended to argue with Job, but the last Darwinian will not condescend to argue with you. He will inform you of your ignorance; he will not enlighten your ignorance. And he will add this point of merely personal experience of humanity: when men have a real explanation they explain it, eagerly and copiously and in common speech, as Huxley freely gave it when he thought he had it. When they have no explanation to offer, they give short dignified replies, disdainful of the ignorance of the multitude.

BASIC COURTESIES

SAYING *please* and *thank you* are basic courtesies in speech. So also are *I'm sorry* and *I'm so glad*.

These are not mere formulas of words, but **outward signs of inner goodwill**, our expressions of honesty and humility before another person. Nor is it hypocrisy to try to appear better than we are — as long as we are striving to become better by such goodwill.

Using them helps our wayward selves to really mean them. They are a **sort of sacramental**, like the liturgical year itself, in that they *help* to bring about what they signify, i.e. akin to the sacraments.

THE LORD

THE HALLOWED NAME of God, the mysterious word written by the letters JHWH, was revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush, Exodus 3:14.

It can be rendered "I am Who am" and "He Who is", cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §206.

Throughout the 20th century it was commonplace for Catholic apologists to point out that the Protestant rendition, **Jehovah**, was inaccurate. That word was a late Hebrew invention for a lector to read silently *Jehovah* (thus preserving the consonants JHWH) and be prompted to use its vowels to say aloud **Adonai**, Lord. Earlier written Hebrew had no vowels. Later, the vowels were added by a code of small marks.

The Holy See has now ordered the Bishops to remove *Jahweh* from all texts used at Mass. Hence a number of popular hymns have recently been edited.

The reason: *Jahweh* was never used by the first Christians: the Greek of the New Testament followed the usage of the Greek Version of the Hebrew Old Testament called the Septuagint, and consistently used "The Lord", nowadays printed as THE LORD, and the New Testament writers applied it to Christ Himself.

Another reason put forward locally, not by the Holy See, is that devout Jews might resent Catholics attempting to utter the ineffable Name of God.

There is a curious usage in the King James Version of the Bible, and in the psalter used in the Church of England's *The Book of Common Prayer*:-

Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by **his name JAH**, and rejoice before him.

Psalm 68:4 (which would be Psalm 67 in our old numbering)

This "JAH" used to puzzle the Anglicans, and it would puzzle most Catholics, too. Yet we are already familiar with IA at the ends of words like ALLELUIA (cf. Apocalypse 19:1,3,4 ,6) also spelt HALLELUJAH (as in Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*), and which means "Praise (=hallel) the Lord (Jah)". Likewise the name Joshua, the Prophet who succeeded Moses, means "The Lord saves" — it is actually the Holy Name of Jesus. Similarly, Isaiah means "the Salvation of the Lord", and Jeremiah, "the Lord is exalted".

Thus "Jah" was short for Jahweh, the latter now forbidden by the Congregation for Divine Worship.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BISHOPS

ALMIGHTY GOD, help the successors of the Apostles implement their witness to Christ's Resurrection in our fallen world by the ministry of priests, and with the apostolates of Religious and lay people, for Thy glory and the salvation of all souls, and even unto martyrdom, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created,
and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.
Our Lady, help of Christians, pray for us.
St Paul, apostle to the nations, pray for us.
St Theresa of the Infant Jesus, pray for us.