

# SUBJECTIVISM & THE DEATH WISH

*He whom Jupiter wishes to destroy, he first makes mad.*

Homer<sup>1</sup>

Since the inception of this website, we have maintained that the outstanding evil of the age is subjectivism, the attitude of mind that says that what matters is not reality, but what the individual thinks about reality.

All modern philosophy is rooted in subjectivism which has its source in that turning of philosophy on its head represented by Descartes with his *cogito ergo sum*.<sup>2</sup> Once the thinker moves away from reality as the basis of thought, he is stuck on a merry go round of his own devising. No longer is reality the measure of reason, but his own ideas.

Subjectivism's ultimate ground is not philosophical, however, but theological. For Martin Luther turned religion on its head when he asserted that in interpreting holy writ the individual believer should no longer accept Divine, and certain, authority but rely instead on his own authority. In doing so he laid subjectivism's foundations. The appearance, subsequently, of a thinker like Descartes was inevitable.

All philosophy comes to influence the generations that follow its propounding and finds expression in the streams of thought they entertain. Subjectivism reached its ultimate absurdity in Sartre's *Existentialism* whose teaching might be summed up in the advertising slogan *if it feels good, do it!* As Paul Johnson has remarked<sup>3</sup> the genocide in Cambodia under Pol Pot can be laid at the feet of Sartre and his philosophy.

In the last 150 years subjectivism has flourished in the form of ideologies. Indeed, ideology is its obvious outlet. Every ideology asserts that the world is bound, not by reality, but by the *idea* it promotes. In those 150 years the world has been influenced by a succession of doctrines which will not bear rigorous analysis; which have risen to prominence and then passed from fashion, replaced by another. Hegelian Idealism; Marxian Dialectical Materialism; Freudian Analytical Psychology; Feminism; Secular Humanism: each was grounded in an idea propounded by its founder, or founders; each sought to sanction its world view by a compulsion based, in the end, on nothing more objective than assertion<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Quem Jupiter vult perdere dementat prius*, reproduced in his *Homeri Gnomologia* (1660) by James Duport (1606-1679), Dean of Peterborough.

<sup>2</sup> *I think therefore I am*—the reverse of the truth which is *I am and therefore I think*. Descartes makes the thinker the source of reality.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, London, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> In parallel in the theological order has appeared a plethora of man-made religions likewise based on nothing more than mere assertion—for example, Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnessism, the sect of Iglesia ni Cristo; and, worse, and even earlier, the flourishing of the Devil's parody of true religion, Freemasonry.

Subjectivism harms society; and the greater the influence, the greater the harm. It destroys the ability of society to think logically. It substitutes for judgement, pre judgement, which is another name for prejudice. In place of logic, it has recourse to emotion. There is a generic name for the categories of prejudice grounded in subjectivism—*political correctness*—a communal attitude of mind exercised by a substantial body of the citizenry endorsing, without rational analysis, a standard in respect of some social or moral issue and vigorously opposing any argument, or anyone arguing, against that standard.

Political correctness is perhaps the most telling manifestation of a society's inability to think, or better, of the substitution in society of emotion for thought. Italian theologian, Romano Amerio, analysed the effects of Luther's revolt against the authority of God and His Church<sup>5</sup>. He summarised those effects in a sentence which encapsulates the effect of political correctness perfectly—*It is not the thing which demands assent, but assent which gives value to the thing*. The body of the citizenry say that it must be, therefore it must be so! Political correctness is subjectivism triumphant.

The media generally panders to this collective weakness, recognising that if they should fail to do so, they might lose the public attention that, with it, brings their income. The outstanding sign of the influence of subjectivism in Australian society at the time of writing is the collective hysteria over the execution of the convicted drug dealer, Nguyen Truong Van. Australian society in the bulk seems incapable of assessing the issues involved dispassionately.<sup>6</sup>

This weakness is perhaps best illustrated by an incident that occurred two weeks prior to Nguyen's execution. A young woman approached the members of a group praying and protesting outside a Sydney abortion clinic and told them that they should make better use of their time by, inter alia, making representations to prevent the execution of the drug dealer. She was quite sincere, and also, quite mad. According to her view, it was more important to try to save the life of a wrongdoer who acted with full knowledge of the risk of the death penalty he was taking, than to try and save the lives of many who have done no wrong. It was more important to save the guilty than the innocent.

The worry for Australia is that a great number of the Australian populace are just as mad as she. In an interview reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005, Tasmanian Senator, Michael Ferguson, offered the following sound criticism on the current push for legalization in Australia of the abortifacient drug RU 486—

*It's breathtaking hypocrisy for some people in the Australian parliament to be fighting to save one young man's life, while at the same time fighting for a drug*

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<sup>5</sup> Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum*, [translated from 2nd Italian edition by Fr John P. Parsons], Sarto House, Kansas City, 1996, p.p 23-25.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, attributing blame where there is no blame. Cf Ian Moore, *Don't blame PM for other people's sins*, at [http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5744,17382701%255E7583,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,17382701%255E7583,00.html).

*which will allow the death penalty to be imposed on unborn babies... [I]n the new year when the abortion debate begins anew, I think that we ought again to be reminded of this week in Australian parliament, of this week in international relations, when people were fighting for the sanctity of life.*

For daring to raise the issue of the killing of the unborn in the same context as the politically correct condemnation of the Singapore authorities, Mr Ferguson was extensively criticized.<sup>7</sup>

Any society that can't think straight is headed for destruction. That is the force of the quote from Homer which heads this paper. This society can't think straight; it gives itself reasons to justify the killing of its innocent members.

By definition, it is already beginning to destroy itself!

Michael Baker

8<sup>th</sup> December 2005—*Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. for instance, <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/lib-mp-links-hanging-with-abortion-pill/2005/12/01/1133311134675.html>